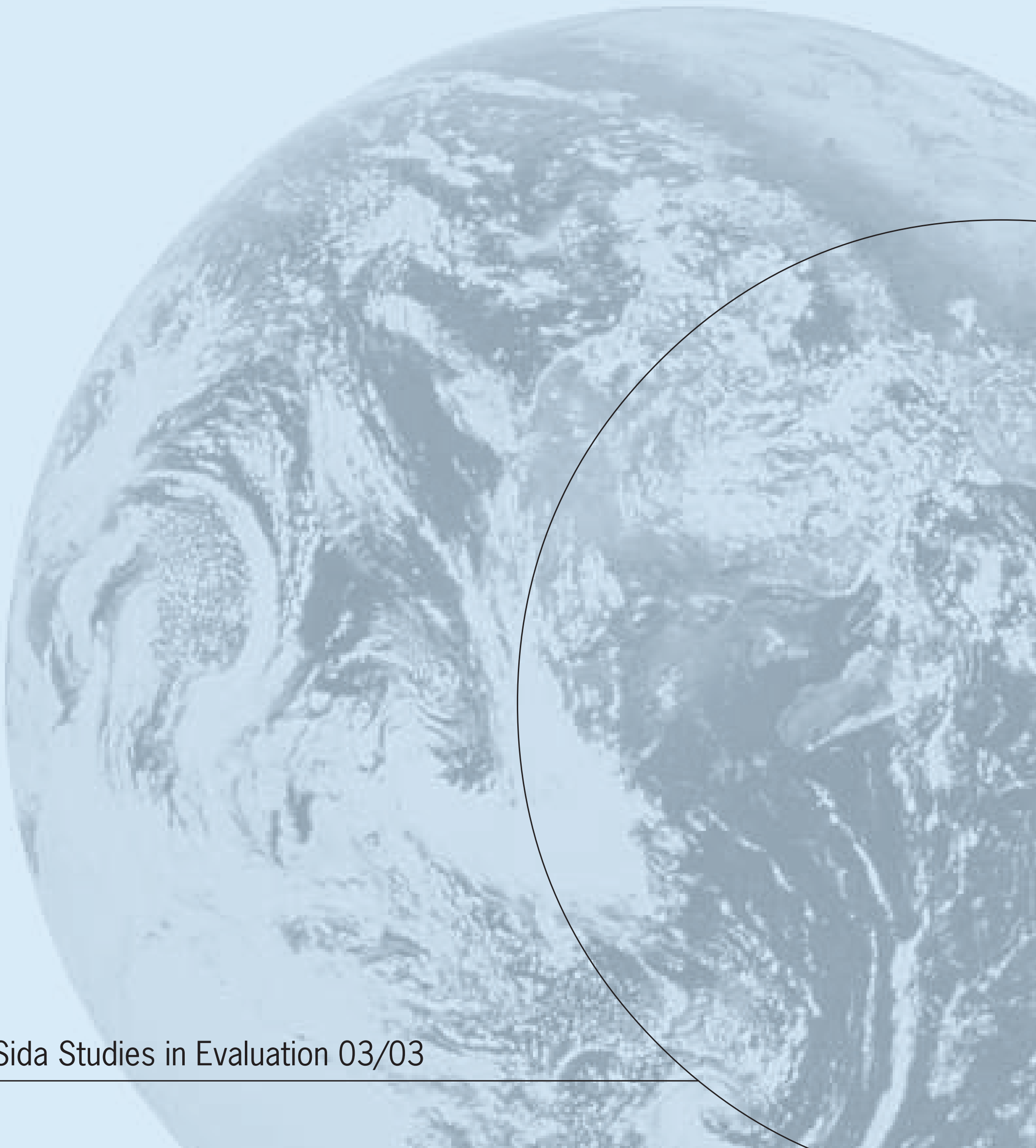
Donorship, Ownership and Partnership

Issues Arising from Four Sida Studies of Donor-Recipient Relations

Gus Edgren



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Preface

The attached paper by Gus Edgren summarizes and constructively interprets four recent Sida evaluations dealing with the theme of ownership in development cooperation. While faithful to the main arguments of the studies, the present paper does not claim to be exhaustive as each of the underlying studies contains a wealth of interesting material. Although it is based on studies of Sida's experience in trying to promote ownership, the paper contains findings and lessons regarding ownership in international development cooperation we believe to be of value also to readers outside Sida. As usual in this kind of publications, the views and interpretations belong to the author and are not necessarily embraced by Sida.

Eva Lithman
Director
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Abstract

National or local ownership is commonly regarded as a precondition for sustainable results of development cooperation. In 2002, Sida commissioned four major evaluation studies, covering ownership aspects in different modalities of aid in a number of partner countries. The present paper examines the four studies with respect to effects on ownership of the aid relationship, leadership and management, institutions and modalities, stakeholder participation and multiple donor situations. It concludes that national ownership is an elusive quality that must be deliberately strived for by both partners. Ownership is no mystery, but it requires careful analysis and monitoring, and above all patience and sensitivity by all participants in the dialogue. Programme aid modalities are still trying to find their form and are not always as supportive of national ownership as they could be. Further study of the ownership aspects of sector programme support is suggested.

Chapter 1
Introduction

The question who *owns* a project or programme has always figured prominently in discussions on development cooperation, but the terminology has shifted, depending both on the experience made and on the shifting focus of the global debate. In the heyday of state planning of the 60s and 70s, the main emphasis was on *priority:* when the planning authorities had approved a project for funding, this was an indication of the government's intention to make the project a success, hopefully also a sustainable one. Towards the end of the 70s and throughout the 80s, it became increasingly obvious that development cooperation too often failed to meet its objectives, due to a combination of flaws on either side of the partnership, such as weak institutions in the recipient countries and strong disbursement pressure on the donor side. The dimension of ownership that came into focus in the ensuing discussion of structural adjustment programmes was *commitment,* or *political will* in the more serious cases.

The focus moved to *ownership* as such in the mid-90s after an embarrassing series of failed cases of structural adjustment, supported by the World Bank and IMF (Devarajan et al, 2001). The failure was largely attributed to the lack of ownership on the part of the borrowing countries, which wanted to borrow from the IFIs but were not committed to the reforms that conditioned the loans. Since by that time aid dependency in many countries had made the relationship between recipients and donors – bilateral as well as multilateral – quite openly donor-driven, the metaphor of ownership became attractive to all critics of past performance, ranging from those who wanted the recipients to shape up and 'buy' their proposed solutions, to those that were prepared to sit back and listen more carefully to what the recipients actually wanted.

It is no coincidence that this redirection of focus to ownership occurs simultaneously with a much wider debate about globalisation, national ownership and influence. While the critics of globalisation in its various forms claim that these forces reduce the freedom of action in weaker states, its proponents claim that it offers all participants new possibilities and expanded options. Multinational enterprises like McDonald's, international NGOs and evangelical missionary societies all proclaim that their national branches and subsidiaries are "locally owned" and that they develop their own local applications of the general ideas propagated by their multinational mother organisations (Hunter and Yates, 2002).

For Swedish development cooperation, it is no trivial or semantic question where Sida should stand on the issue of ownership, whether in interpreting the concept at the policy level or in finding operational expressions for these policies. Government directives advocate a high degree of recipient ownership, and in its policy documents Sida enunciates the same principle. To initiate a discussion on how such principles are applied in practice, Sida-UTV has commissioned a series of evaluation studies, which have examined the question of project/programme ownership from different angles. The present issues paper will particularly deal with four Sida studies completed in 2002, namely

- Weeks et al, *Ownership of Sida Projects and Programmes in East Africa* ('East Africa Study'),
- Ostrom et al, *Aid, Incentives and Sustainability* ('Incentives Study'),
- Apthorpe et al, *KTS and Local Ownership: An Assessment of Sida's Contract Financed Technical Co-operation* ('KTS Study') and
- Farrington et al, *Evaluation of Sustainable Poverty Reduction through Area Development Projects* ('Area Development Study').

Taken together, these studies provide Sida with an unparalleled source for understanding the problems of ownership and a multifaceted feedback on how they are handled by the agency's staff and by their counterparts on the recipient side. The purpose of this paper is to identify issues that are particularly important for *understanding* how different aspects of ownership affect development outcomes, and for *identifying approaches* that are useful for formulating Sida's policies and operational rules in support of increased recipient ownership of projects and programmes. Some *additional studies* will also be suggested to further examine institutional and behavioural factors that seem to be positively correlated with a high degree of recipient ownership and good development outcomes.

Chapter 2 Definitions and Approaches

2.1 Sida Sources

In the context of development cooperation, the term "ownership" is most often used as a metaphor covering all aspects of the joint effort of the partnership, from adoption of the plan or idea through control of project inputs and outputs and finally, to the sustainability of its results. The four studies take their starting point for the definition of the ownership concept in Sida's operational manual, *Sida at Work* (1998, pp 16–17). This definition emphasised the recipient's control over project inputs and his willingness to assume responsibility for achieving a successful outcome. By inviting political bodies and communities (such as "the target group") to participate in decision-making and offer their support to the undertaking, the project partners can "gradually extend the ownership of the project during the course of implementation". As evinced by Molund (2000) as well as by the four studies, this definition is ambiguous in attributing ownership to different stakeholders and it is based too heavily on government-to-government partnerships, offering domestic stakeholders participation rather than true ownership. It also leaves out cases where donors and recipients share the ownership and where ownership moves from one side to the other.

In his discussion paper *Ownership in Focus* (Sida 2000), Stefan Molund analysed a number of aspects on ownership, as a starting point for the East African study. He discussed definitions and linkages presented by earlier studies and rulebooks and stressed the importance of strategic management and control rather than mere participation. While remaining sceptical of those definitions that were based on feelings and other subjective factors, he accepted the need for indications of commitment to an agreed outcome. Partnerships at national level as well as at local or project levels were important for creating a stable framework for local ownership. This would also help solving the apparent conflict between the donor's need for administrative control and the local owners' need to be in command. The paper suggested that further studies should examine ownership at both programme and project levels, in multi-donor situations and in the perspective of community participation. Institutional factors like programme versus project support should also be studied with regard to their relevance for ownership.

2.2 The East Africa Study

A general definition of ownership was given by Sida in the terms of reference (ToR) for the East African study. Ownership was defined as "the exercise of control and command over development activities. A country or an organisation within a country can be said to 'own' its development programme when it is committed to it and able to translate its commitment into effective action". This definition incorporates institutional dimensions such as the control of both input and output resources, political ones such as commitment and behavioural ones such as an observed ability to achieve results. The terms of reference specifically requested the study to discuss various indicators of ownership, some of which were being used by Sida.

Weeks et al. propose an explanatory model where ownership is heavily influenced by the quality of the government-to-government *partnership* within which the projects emerge, and where ownership can grow and move both in the government-to-government dimension and by involving *domestic stakeholders*. The model also recognises situations with *multiple donors*, whose partnerships with the recipient may differ in ways that affect overall ownership. The quality of partnerships is affected by several factors, most importantly the sharing of basic values regarding development, mutual recognition of legitimate interests and responsibilities and the type of conditions laid down by the donor side for access to the resources. Recipient ownership is contrasted with the traditional "donorship" syndrome in which all initiative emanates from the donor side and donors determine which values and objectives are good for the beneficiaries of aid.

The critical instrument for establishing ownership and making it produce successful outcomes is *dialogue.* The model distinguishes between three levels of dialogue, *partnership dialogue* between donor and recipient governments, *donor dialogue* between donors and *social dialogue* between the government and civil society representatives. Conditions that impinge on the projects and programmes undertaken within a partnership can be of different types, some more technical and administrative, others more policy-related. When the latter type of conditionality differs from the government's own values or strategies, ownership suffers and development outcomes as well. A good overall partnership creates some leeway for bridging such differences, but only up to a point. Where several donors are supporting policy conditionalities led by the IFIs, even individual partnerships may be eroded.

These linkages are best studied through a case history approach, since the enquiry must trace a dynamic evolution driven by interventions by different actors on either side during the life of a project. The study chose half a dozen projects in each one of the three countries with the help of certain criteria (covering the major modalities of cooperation) and made in-depth interviews with actors on either side of the partnerships. The national economic, social and political setting was examined as a starting point for the analysis, as well as the history of Swedish development cooperation with each of the three countries.

The study found a very strong relationship between the quality of the overall government-to-government partnership and the way ownership was exercised in the three countries. It found the partnership particularly strong in Tanzania, where it had enabled Sida and its Ministry counterparts to develop innovative approaches that were owned by government. By contrast, the partnership with Kenya was strained, which was reflected in several programmes and in the approach of working extensively through NGOs. Strained partnerships often give rise to policy conditionalities that weaken recipient ownership, and the study warned Sida against pursuing such a path, for instance when multi-donor undertakings are led by the IFIs. It would be more consistent and produce better results if Sida terminated such relationships rather than resort to arm-twisting[1].

2.3 The Incentives Study

Ostrom et al. are mainly concerned with the problem of perverse incentives in collective action for development, and in this context they see ownership as a necessary but not sufficient condition for the sustainability of aid results. Ownership is characterised by including four processes:

1. Participation in *provision* by identifying and proposing the development activities wanted by the owner-to-be.
2. Participation in *production* by making tangible contributions in time, efforts and other resources to the proposed development activity.
3. Participation in the *consumption* of the benefits that flow from success (and in sharing responsibility in case of failure).
4. Participation in decisions related to *alienation* of the rights to a project, i e the decision to continue or terminate it.

By using an interaction model with eight different categories of actors including government agencies, contractors, civil society and beneficiaries ("The International Development Cooperation Octangle") the study examines the influence of agency factors on ownership and sustainability at both at theoretical level and empirically. Two in-depth case studies were made in India and two in Zambia, and a series of interviews were made with Sida staff about behaviour and attitudes of relevance to incentives in

[1] Incidentally, this is the same position as was taken by the Parliamentary Commission on Swedish Policy for Global Development (Globkom), Stockholm 2001.

collective action. Institutions were examined with a view to assessing their sensitivity to good or perverse incentives, comprising Sida's organisation and a whole range of aid forms and modalities. The analysis of institutions and aid forms demonstrates how the complexities and divergence of interests among participants in the 'Octangle' may lead to other results than those intended by the principals on either side of the partnership. The country case studies give many examples of unintended consequences, for instance where recipients and beneficiaries have different interests and power asymmetries undermine sustainability.

The conclusions regarding ownership are cautionary indeed. The study on the whole finds it very difficult to apply the concept of ownership to actual development cooperation relationships. The large number of actors involved gives rise to information and motivation problems which obscure the development goals to many of them, and the responsibility and accountability that would normally be vested in an owner is transformed to nearly unrecognisable forms by the system of development cooperation. The study recommends Sida to revisit its concept of ownership, since it is currently being used without any incentives to change in the direction of greater sensitivity to the wishes of recipients and beneficiaries.

2.4 The KTS Study

Contract Financed Technical Cooperation (KTS) is a specific modality that was developed in the early 80s to promote technology transfer through the use of Swedish consultants. Since it was administered by BITS, a small government agency with very limited capacity, it was decided that KTS should primarily be offered to local partner organisations (LPO) which had the capacity to determine whether cooperation with the Swedish partner was in their interest and to appraise and implement the project, which in most cases was proposed by the Swedish consultants. This meant that most KTS projects were undertaken in countries with more management capacity than the regular Swedish programme countries. KTS projects should also be limited in time and the Swedish aid contribution should only cover the cost of consultants, not imported equipment or project costs in local currency. The funding agency – from 1995 BITS merged with Sida – was not a signatory to the contract between the consultant and the LPO and its role was supposed to be remote and limited. The focus of the present evaluation was to find out which elements among those that constitute the KTS modality contributed to local ownership.

The KTS study defines ownership both in terms of management control and commitment to a certain result, but it recognises that ownership is a rather abstract metaphor and it tries as far as possible to focus on observed behaviour rather than on attitudes. The operational definitions are broken down into ownership of project *objectives*, *inputs* and *outputs* (material as well as in terms of knowledge) and *processes*, such as project identification and choice of consultants. It also allows for *co-ownership,* by which more than one actor (usually from the triangle created by the LPO, the consultant and Sida) can exercise effective ownership. Respondents on either side of the project partnership determine the degree of ownership over each one of these operational elements by classifying ownership as high, medium or low.

This approach gives a large number of measurements, which can be compared between countries and projects, but it does not allow for any analysis as to how ownership develops and transforms over time, which is a major feature of the two studies presented above. But since the study is limited to one aid modality (and a supposedly short-term one), it gives much more information of how the KTS elements interact in different local situations than if it had focused on a few detailed case histories.

The conclusions are positive regarding the effects of the key KTS elements on local ownership. First, the selection of LPOs on the basis of management and technical capacity 'filters out' the high-risk environments and limits the partners to those that are professional and committed to technology transfer. Second, the interaction between the Swedish consultant and the LPO is mostly positive, which may be natural since the consultant wants to sell more of his services. Local ownership is generally strong in the case of knowledge outputs (which is critical for success), but much less so regarding the project processes of formulation, choice of consultants and final evaluation. Project implementation is most often co-owned, which seemed to be to the satisfaction of most LPOs. It appears that with the spread of KTS to the transition economies of Eastern Europe and the CIS[2], its application has become more flexible and has lost many of its distinctive features. Of particular interest from the point of view of comparison with other ownership studies is that wavering the requirement on LPOs to provide local cost contributions to the projects did not seem to reduce the degree of ownership.

2.5 The Area Development Study

The focus of the Area Development Study was not on ownership *per se*, but on in-project learning and sustainability. Its purpose was to examine three area-based multi-sector poverty reduction projects to see how effectively they promoted participation by the poor and integration of learning by local agencies concerned with development. One question specifically

[2] Commonwealth of Independent States (formerly the USSR)

mentioned in the terms of reference was to what extent the projects experienced a trade-off between short-term delivery of services to the poor and longer-term development of capacity for local management of development.

The study found that none of the projects were actually designed to benefit the poor directly and that local power structures and social stratification had been insufficiently taken into account in their design. Although ownership had not been specifically mentioned in the ToR, the study dealt extensively with factors that promote local ownership through its emphasis on integration and sustainability. Integration and ownership were strong where government agencies exercised direct control, but this often occurred at the expense of the participation of the poor. The study suggested that wider participation of civil society organisation might help spreading local ownership. There was often a bias towards short-term service delivery at the expense of long-term capacity development, in many cases because capacity development objectives were vaguely formulated and were unrelated to other targets. Disbursement pressure on Sida often undermined local ownership by hastening the pace of implementation beyond the capacity of local communities. There was a curious disconnect between the partnership dialogue at technical level and at policy level, suggesting that Sida interpreted government ownership as an injunction against intervention at policy level, even when the policy threatened the success of a major project.

Chapter 3

The External Setting: Partnerships and Shared Values

In the current Swedish aid discussion, it is almost axiomatic that national ownership of development cooperation projects flows from *government-to-government partnerships* built on mutual trust and shared values. This is the position of the Parliamentary Commission on Swedish Policy for Global Development (Globkom) as well as by the Foreign Ministry Report *Partnership with Africa – Proposals for a New Swedish Policy towards Sub-Saharan Africa* (MFA 1998)[3], and it echoes those of a number of World Bank studies published in recent years. The East African Study is emphatic on the importance of strong partnerships, mutual trust and joint experience for generating projects with strong local ownership. It contrasts Sweden's partnerships with Kenya and Tanzania and concludes that due to the long and close relationship between Sweden and Tanzania and to a changing Tanzanian approach to development, both partner dialogue and social dialogue (involving stakeholders) are very constructive. In Kenya, on the other hand, the overall partnership is moribund and does not allow any social dialogue to take place.

The Incentives Study also attributes importance to the overall partnership setting and predicts the sustainability of projects by means of a model for strategic choice by both sides. The donor can choose between a long-term or a short-term commitment and between designing his own projects or funding projects designed by the recipient. The recipient can choose between sticking to his own development strategy or accepting the donor's choices, fully or partially. The most sustainable outcomes – and hence also the ones providing strong recipient ownership – are those where the recipient sticks to his own development strategy and the donor chooses to provide long-term funding for projects designed by the recipient.

The KTS Study takes a different position on the importance of the macro setting by arguing that it is not the external setting which matters most for local ownership of a KTS project, but the choice of its host, the LPO. This is understandable given the technical/professional and micro-level nature of many KTS projects. Macroeconomic or governance studies are

[3] For an overview, see Molund, *op. cit.* p. 5.

rarely undertaken in preparation for KTS interventions, and the number of projects are in some countries so small that the government-to-government partnership is a sometime thing. But the point made by the KTS Study is nevertheless interesting, since it may revive a thirty years old discussion between policymakers at the Ministry for Foreign Affairs and technical people at Sida as to whether it is possible to 'make good projects in bad countries'.

The question of the partnership setting becomes further blurred by introducing the dimension of *shared values,* as has been done in most of the Swedish political documents dealing with partnerships. Among the values that are supposed to be shared by good partners are commitment to reduction of poverty, democracy, good governance, respect for human rights, gender equity and protection of the environment and natural resources. The East Africa Study raises doubts as to how far donors can go in advocating some of these values without resorting to the traditional "donorship" syndrome. Donors and recipients can mutually discuss their respective values, objectives and shortcomings without doing harm to the equality of the partnership, but when the donor uses his financial muscle in an attempt to make the recipient change his development strategy, ownership is at risk. This applies to policy-conditioned programme aid that will be further discussed below, and it applies with particular strength to cases when projects are terminated or funding suspended for political reasons that are unrelated to the projects themselves.

It will remain an open question to what extent and how the external partnership setting influences the degree of local ownership of projects and programmes. The East Africa Study holds out Tanzania as a model setting in this regard, and yet the Swedish-Tanzanian partnership has been through some heavy weather as well as the most recent sunshine days. The Catterson-Lindahl study (1999) of sustainability in Sida-funded projects offers an impressive list of donor-driven and unsustainable projects, many of which seem to have been promoted by the good partnership setting rather than restrained by it. Conversely, the case histories of the East African Study give the impression that some Sida projects in Kenya (in particular NALEP) may have attained a high degree of local ownership, in spite of the 'moribund' overall partnership. It is not possible in either case to establish a clear linkage.

Chapter 4
Leadership and Strategic Management

An essential element of Sida's definition of recipient ownership consists of political leadership and strategic management. Metaphorically speaking, ownership of development is something that is *taken*, rather than given. It is difficult to conceive of a project or programme as being owned by the recipient if there is no sense of direction given by political leaders or by senior managers – even if formal 'ownership' has been given to the recipient. The most promising signs emerging from the East African development cooperation front in many years have been deliberate attempts at leadership, in Uganda by the President's initiatives on external aid to the Poverty Eradication Action Plan beginning in 1995 and in Tanzania with the President's commitment to reform of the education sector. In the late 90s a new generation of public managers emerged in Tanzania, willing to take over the initiative. Similar tendencies have occurred in other aid-dependent countries, welcomed by many donors who are frustrated by a sorry trail of failed donor-driven projects.

The East Africa study warns that if donors try to impose strategies that differ from the home-grown ones, ownership will be lost and even reforming governments will slide back into the donorship syndrome. Talking about a lack of *political will* is misleading, since there is always some sort of political will but it may either be constrained by the configurations of political power or it may simply prefer another strategy than the one presumed by donors to be what the people need. If differences are too big between donor and recipient regarding the choice of development strategies, the outcomes will be better for both if they refrain from engaging in a joint undertaking. The Incentives Study draws a similar conclusion in its lessons from the donor-recipient negotiating process.

Even if the donor chooses this rather non-interventionist approach to development strategies at large, there is still a lot of room for *policy dialogue* within the scope of the partnership. Sida like other donors have a legitimate interest to discuss policies and institutions which affect the success of programmes and projects adopted by the parties. It is a recurrent criticism in many evaluation studies, that Sida does not make full use of these opportunities to improve the chances for a successful outcome. Based on study of an area development project in Ethiopia, the Area Development Study warns that Sida's hands-off approach to the policy environment "limits Sida to a technocratic role of a monitor of project implementation rather than as a stakeholder in a broader learning process beyond the project boundary". An earlier evaluation of Sida's balance-of-payments support found very little evidence of attempts to conduct policy dialogue (White 1999). The East Africa Study makes a similar point in relation to multi-donor dialogue (section 7). Making good use of the policy dialogue entails walking a tightrope between passivity and intervention, and in order to ensure national ownership Sida may have been erring on the passive side. A clear policy directive that explains the roles and legitimate concerns of the partners may be required.

Management is key to asserting ownership, and the Incentives Study remarks that Sida's operations manual *Sida at Work* persistently talks about *implementation* rather than management. This distinction is not only a matter of semantics, since management entails taking strategic decisions on how the resources shall be deployed, while implementation means carrying out what is contained in the project document. There are several characteristics of project management that are important for establishing ownership, and the four studies under review have given many examples of practices which promote or undermine national ownership. The best way of demonstrating the effects of these practices is to break down the management *process*. Some of the lessons follow.

Project idea and design: It seems to be less important to ownership who originally came up with the idea than who took an interest in it and what forces supported it on either side of the partnership. It is particularly important not to hurry the design phase but to allow all stakeholders enough time to form an opinion. The donorship syndrome entails a conviction that recipients will learn to adopt the idea when they have tried it out through the project. Several studied projects reflect this assumption, many without supporting it. The donor's hope for "ownership later" as the East Africa Study calls it was fulfilled in the debt management project in Kenya but not in the expected manner in the HESAWA project of Tanzania, nor in the Kenyan health sector programme. The KTS study on the other hand makes a convincing case for *joint ownership*, allowing the partners to agree on operational targets for the transfer of ownership for each phase or function of project management.

Management units: It is common practice in East Africa as well as elsewhere to bring most of the project management functions together in one organisational project management unit (PMU) rather than dividing them among mainstream departments that are normally responsible for such functions. This problem is only noticed in passing in the ownership studies[4]. The Area Development Study even seems to advocate such organisations since they help integrating functions of different departments. Apart from the problems that PMUs have created for the integration of national governments, they also contribute to identifying the activity with the donor rather than with the ministry. At best joint ownership can be achieved in such an organisation, and sustainability of results is often doubtful once external funding has ceased.

Budget authority: A manager's sense of ownership depends to a high degree on budget authority. Where funds are committed for reasonable time periods and managers have the authority to use them within government rules and the stipulations of the aid agreement, they can be expected to take personal responsibility for results in a way they would not do if the donor is the real decision-maker. Sida's practice of granting multi-year planning frames and relatively firm annual budget allocations makes it possible for the treasury to delegate such authority to managers.

Disbursement pressure: It is well known that the donor agencies' pressure to disburse budgeted funds rather than returning them to their exchequers is a major factor behind donor-driven projects with little recipient ownership. After undertaking interviews with Sida staff and examining Sida budget procedures, the Incentives Study concludes that disbursement pressure is a reality in the organisation[5]. It appears to have been one important reason for the difficulties of the ANRS/SARDP project in Ethiopia, reported by the Area Development Study, and it has contributed in the same way to some of the unsustainable Tanzanian projects examined by Catterson and Lindahl. The management problem offered by this phenomenon is dual: the donor must exercise patience and restraint and the recipient must avoid being carried away by high expenditure levels. (Unfortunately, however, political leaders are often mesmerised by them).

Cost sharing: It is generally assumed that the recipient's contribution to the total costs of the project – whether this contribution consists of local staff, the use of buildings and equipment or by cash – is a measure of his commitment to the whole undertaking. An earlier Sida study of cost-sharing (Gustafsson, 1997) suggested that the proportion of total costs funded by Sida was positively correlated with Sida's wish to see the project implemented, and the Incentives Study makes a similar assumption. Increasing aid dependency has gone together with falling shares of recipient contributions. The only one of the studies that examines the cost-sharing hypothesis empirically is the KTS Study. It has always been a basic principle of the KTS modality that the recipient should make a significant contribution by defraying the local costs of a project, but the study finds that this

[4] Cf the NALEP project in Kenya in the Country Reports of the East Africa Study.

[5] This is also recognised by Molund, p. 20.

rule has been observed in the breach in many transition economies, surprisingly with no loss of ownership as a result. This finding is based on rather few observations and may not even be valid for the KTS project modality as a whole, but it raises pertinent questions about how to apply cost sharing principles. It is quite possible that the either the organisation structure or the budget process may impose the local project cost on some other party than the presumptive owner, in which case the incentive weakens or disappears[6].

Procurement of equipment and *recruitment of consultants* involve strategically important management decisions. In most cases, such as those reported from Tanzania and Uganda, Sida has empowered national project managers to take these decisions, with Sida acting in an advisory role. If the national project managers rather than the donor agency hire the consultants, it is conceivable that consultants will no longer be able to interpose themselves as Sida's representatives. In some countries – the Incentives Study cites Vietnam as an example – national managers have responded by becoming extremely possessive about these decisions, leading to obvious risks of agency problems. In other cases, national managers have seen more red tape than power in receiving this authority and have even asked the donor agency to carry out the procurement or recruitment on their behalf (Uganda case in Baser and Morgan, 2001). There may be a trade-off between the amount of money and influence involved in the transaction and the amount of work required to fulfil all the screening and tendering requirements of the donor.

Decentralised management: Decentralisation to local administrative levels is often mentioned in Sida documents as a step that will enhance ownership by bringing decision-making closer to the beneficiaries. The Area Development Study favours decentralisation because it facilitates civil society participation as well as the integration of area development projects. The Incentives Study on the other hand warns that delegating to local authorities may not necessarily lead to more effective ownership. Local authorities are often weak, in particular in relation to local vested interests. The study gives the example of the social forestry project in Orissa, which vested the authority in a bureaucracy that had interests and objectives quite different from those introduced by Sida in the project document. If ownership is not to be pre-empted by interests inimical to the agreed development objectives, new incentives must be introduced for instance by engaging beneficiaries and civil society (see section 6).

Exit strategy: Both the Incentives and the East Africa study recognise the importance of a consistent and transparent exit strategy for ownership

[6] The example of the budget process of the Indian Union Government in relation to State budgets in the Incentives Study (pp 191–194) is a good example of such disincentive effects.

and sustainability. The HESAWA project in Tanzania is an unfortunate example of a project that went on for too long without recipient ownership, and of an exit strategy that was announced too late and in a non-transparent fashion. Uncertainty about the donor's time horizon may give rise to perverse incentives, which favour short-term gains over long-term capacity building. When this has been going on for some time, as the Incentives Study demonstrates with the use of games theory, the donor's presence is taken for granted and nobody on either side cares about sustainability.

Evaluation of outcomes and impact: All the studies declare unanimously that evaluation of Swedish projects is owned exclusively by Sida. The Area Development Study sees great merit in learning from evaluation and recommends Sida to make learning from field experience more systematic and to involve civil society. The Incentives Study also suggests that recipients might take more interest in evaluations if they involve participation of stakeholders. The East Africa Study, while believing that evaluation should be owned by the recipient side, suspects that the current lack of interest from recipients is a result of a "focus on outcomes that reflect donor priorities and mandates rather than the outcomes that are most important to recipients and stakeholders". Looking at it from the recipients' point of view, donor-funded projects may not always be the most interesting sources of learning. The topic of 'South-led evaluations' is currently being studied by the ECDPM.[7]

[7] See for instance http://www.capacity.org/16/annotated.html

Chapter 5
Institutions and Modalities

The four studies under review have paid attention to how institutions like legislation and organisational structures facilitate transfer of ownership, and they have also examined different modalities like programme and project aid from this point of view. The Area Development and the KTS studies are both concerned with the properties of one particular modality, while the other two studies cover a wider range of aid forms.

A *legislative framework* is required for transactions under development cooperation agreements to be safe and predictable and to provide for sanctions when corruption or mismanagement threatens the success of projects and programmes. When laws and regulations on auditing, procurement, banking etc are strict and stable enough, it will be easier for donors to hand over control to the recipient administration. The KTS Study points out that the framework for that modality is still based in Swedish law, which places the LPO at a disadvantage in relation to the Swedish partners in the case of a legal conflict.

The *management and administration capacity* of local institutions sets limits to the credibility of the legal framework as well as to the effectiveness of project execution. It is an express objective of Swedish aid to help develop capacity to reduce this hurdle to local ownership, and almost all the projects reviewed by the studies had some more or less explicit capacity development purpose. It is also true that countries like Tanzania have developed their management capacity over the years, as witnessed by the Tanzania country study. But there is often a trade-off between immediate service delivery and long-term capacity building, as described by the Area Development Study. It is indeed possible to do both, if the partners have sufficient patience and concern with sustainability, but these qualities are too often missing (Edgren, 2001). Disbursement pressure and eagerness to show 'results on the ground' lead to the type of failures recorded by Catterson and Lindahl (1999). Low management capacity, lack of ownership and aid dependency may turn into a self-reinforcing spiral. It is backward logics to blame a certain country for not having the capacity to assume ownership of a donor-funded project: it is the designers of the project who should be blamed for building it on unrealistic capacity assumptions (e g HESAWA or Kenya health sector programme).

Regarding *modalities,* the four studies[8] differ in their views on effects on ownership of programme and project aid. The Area Development Study favours the project modality because of the possibilities to direct interventions to target beneficiaries, and it also facilitates the integration of operations and learning. The Incentives Study believes that project aid is more conducive to recipient ownership than budget support or SWAPs, first because programme aid is conditioned by macro policies rather than by the actions under the control of the intended owners, second because in practice the current SWAPs operate as a donor dominated "shadow sectoral ministry" and third, because the management models used for programme aid tend to centralise control in a way which discourages decentralisation and participation by civil society. Small projects with few layers of political and administrative actors provide the best framework for promoting local ownership.

The East African Study, on the other hand, expresses confidence that programme aid is more conducive to national ownership because it entails giving the money to the government and using its institutions for managing it. Shifting from project to programme aid is in fact a *sine qua non* of Sida's quest for national ownership. The study recognises that shifting to programme aid might instead lead back to donorship if Sida were to condition its support by policies that differ very much from those of the recipient. The rules of the game must be completely clear to all participants, and the donor should not be able to change them unilaterally. Under these circumstances, programme aid will foster ownership in a way that project aid cannot do.

These arguments are still rather conjectural, however, since the empirical base for a comparison between projects and programmes with respect to ownership and sustainability is weak and muddled. The sector programmes examined by the East Africa Study are still trying to find their form and the experience so far does not herald any victory over donorship. The potential reduction of transaction costs is often wasted by the donors' insistence on additional measures of control and study, and the Incentive Study's remark on "shadow ministries" is not wide of the mark. But while some projects have indeed been successful in promoting ownership, there are many more that have failed. The success of either modality obviously depends on how it is being managed, and on the willingness of the partners to allow national ownership to develop. Before writing new operational rules to achieve this, Sida is well advised to undertake some further study of how some if its modalities like budget support and SWAPs are actually handled on the ground[9].

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[8] For obvious reasons, the KTS study is exclusively concerned with the project modality.

[9] A number of case studies have been made for instance by ECDPM and the World Bank. It is important to take into account those findings as well.

The East Africa Study gives two interesting examples of Sida *using NGOs as agents* for the Swedish objectives on democracy and human rights in countries where such activities cannot be channelled through government. Assistance through NGOs has sustainability problems even when the NGOs are pursuing their own strategies (Riddell et al., 1995), but ownership problems may become acute when they are hired to implement the donor's agenda. A particularly noteworthy case is that of the National Civic Education Programme (NCEP) in Kenya, which is implemented by a selected group of NGOs but directed by a group of donors and managed by their consultants. The evaluation concludes that it "smacks of donorship" – the donors set the agenda and define how the civil society organisations should function. A similar project in Uganda, HURINET, is described as less donor-dominated, but not surprisingly, it also has its ownership problems. Ownership will always be problematic when government donors try to bypass national governments – and it will actually be more problematic, the more authoritarian the government is.

Both the Incentives study and the KTS study gave examples of ownership problems when the implementation of projects are *subcontracted* to enterprises, government bodies or an international agency. The agency problems that may arise are caused by the interests and objectives of the subcontractor and by the effect of the subsidy. If the subsidy goes to a profit-making enterprise, it may delay necessary reforms (as in the case of the Incentives Study's electricity project in Maharashtra) and help the rich rather than the poor. Or the economic returns may go to beneficiaries outside the agency, as in the KTS farm project in Ukraine, in which case the project is not financially sustainable. The Incentives Study gives examples of consultants playing down the need for financial sustainability in order to hang on to projects for commercial reasons. The structure and organisation of project implementation has a lot to do with eventual ownership and sustainability.

Chapter 6
Stakeholder Ownership

All the studies[10] subscribe to the idea that stakeholder participation in the design, management and accountability checks will strengthen the national ownership of a project or programme. Some confusion was initially caused by the term "participation" used by *Sida at Work*. It may indicate support and access but it does not necessarily entail any degree of control. *Sida at Work* contributed to further confusion by suggesting that participation can be developed into "popular ownership", but it was unclear to what extent this concept was different from or stronger than participation.

The studies generally see participation by beneficiaries as a positive factor in strengthening national ownership, but not all of them see it as a necessary precondition for genuine ownership. It is recognised that broader participation is less feasible in some projects, e g when the beneficiaries are institutions or intermediaries. The Area Development Study goes to some length explaining the importance that beneficiaries take direct part in planning, management and learning from experience in rural development, thus generating effectiveness, transparency and support. The Incentives Study acknowledges that participation by beneficiaries strengthens national ownership but questions the willingness of donors to go through the time consuming and unpredictable process of inviting beneficiaries to articulate their preferences. The staff interviews suggest that Sida is less than strenuous in promoting participation by beneficiaries, and the case studies do not indicate otherwise. In concluding, however, the Incentives Study recommends Sida to "put the beneficiaries first" by helping users rather than recipient agents take ownership of all dimensions of the development prospects. Sustainable ownership will have to be based on a broader involvement of stakeholders than merely recipient government agencies.

The East Africa Study devotes particular attention to the question of participation under programme aid, which is its preferred modality. The study maintains that under programme aid, it will become impossible for Sida to foster the direct participation of beneficiaries, because the beneficiaries would be so numerous and so distantly related to Swedish funding,

[10] The KTS Study does not deal with this aspect specifically, since the constituents of the 'KTS triangle' are given by the nature of this modality.

that they could only be consulted through representative institutional mechanisms in which it would be inappropriate for Sida to play a major part. In the future, as the study sees it, "the view that the 'direct beneficiaries' of an activity 'should have their voices heard', will be seen as part of the donorship syndrome". In the context of programme assistance, the government is responsible to the beneficiaries and other stakeholders through the general democratic processes rather than through specific representation by donors.

In my view, these views dismiss Sida's interest in beneficiary participation a bit too easily. As a result of several years of public discussion about poor results from development aid in Africa, there is a growing interest among both donors and recipients to show *accountability* for the use of the funds, not only by demonstrating effects and impact on the supposed beneficiaries but by allowing them to voice their views. This is done not only in conventional projects but in major sector programmes like in the education sector where parents organise to monitor the quality of the schools or in regional development programmes where community-based organisations take an active part. Along the same line of reasoning, the East Africa Study makes the very valid point about budget support, that the government's budget is a matter for Parliament, and government should be accountable to Parliament even for the use of the external contributions. It does not have to be seen as an expression of donorship if Sida helps facilitating more participation of political as well as community stakeholders in overseeing the use of external resources.

While participation by beneficiaries may help directing the programmes towards their felt needs and priorities, there is no set piece for linking their participation to national ownership. In large sector programmes or area development projects there are many groups of competing stakeholders, and as the Incentives Study points out, the beneficiaries are often the weakest of them all. There are ministry departments and local bureaucrats and politicians, and there are commercial interests that influence procurement and other expenditure through them. The Tanzania education sector programme as described by the East Africa Study shows how complex and unstable the stakeholder configuration can be in such a programme, and how difficult it is at any point in time to judge whether a bid for ownership by one group or the other will in the long run be beneficial for the programme. The Orissa social forestry project as described by the Incentives Study makes the case for undertaking better stakeholder analyses so as to avoid entrusting implementation to a bureaucracy whose interests compete with those of the beneficiaries. Likewise, the Area Development Study suggests that strong bureaucratic ownership of the Ethiopian ANRS/SARDP project might lead to a *pre-emptive* assumption of ownership, which constrains a constructive commitment by other stakeholders.

The stakeholder analyses produced by the case studies do not support the idea that ownership follows the principle of "the more the merrier". Some of the East African case studies in fact warn against *fragmentation* of ownership, when the configuration becomes too complicated by conflicting interests (e g Tanzania education sector). These are mostly cases where the roles and responsibilities of all the actors were not clearly defined in the basic agreement from the beginning, or where the setting changed during implementation and new actors and roles emerged. It is clear from these studies that ownership by many stakeholders may not in itself be conducive to effectiveness and sustainable outcomes – in some cases, it may even be counterproductive. Strong ownership may not produce good and sustainable outcomes, if it generates incentives that undermine the development objectives of the project.

What is needed is a stakeholder analysis that takes into account the interests and incentives of all major actors, and explains them in a dynamic perspective, in which ownership develops over time. The 'Octangle' of the Incentives Study offers a framework for such analysis, although the examples show that it has to be adapted to each situation. The analysis should help the partners design the project so that it offers incentives towards constructive expressions of ownership rather than pre-emptive ones, and the follow-up should ensure that it is not taken hostage by any of the stakeholder groups further down the road.

Chapter 7
Multiple Donor Situations

Increasingly, the donor-recipient dialogue takes place in a context where there is more than one donor. Sector-wide programmes and budget support are obvious cases where donors pool or dovetail their contributions in a more flexible way than in traditional projects. Even project aid is being affected by a closer coordination of donor inputs, through partnership groups with representation by the recipient agencies, or in donor caucuses of various sorts. Apart from the impact that this increased coordination may have on aid effectiveness in general, the ownership of processes, inputs and outputs will also be affected.

The Incentives Study sees a situation of multiple donors mainly in the perspective of competition among donors. It strengthens the negotiating position of the recipient, if he can reject conditions imposed by one donor and choose to cooperate with another who is more flexible. This may exacerbate the incentive problems among recipients by reducing the effort they are prepared to make in order for a joint effort to give sustainable results.

The East Africa Study is deeply concerned with the multi-donor aspect of its preferred modalities, budget support and sector programmes. When several donors cooperate in support of a particular programme or project, the following factors will be brought to bear on the participants:

1) Any activity will be more important and strategic to some donors than others.
2) There will be an inherent tendency for the major contributor to the activity to presume right of leadership (if not dominance).
3) Differences will arise with regard to objectives among donors, and among stakeholders.

When Sida is a minority contributor, like in most cases of budget support and other macro-policy-based aid forms, both the first and the second points above will weigh against a significant Swedish influence on the programme. The IFIs are most often dominant donors in such configurations, and they also have the strongest strategic interest in bringing the government into line with their policy agenda. By contributing to joint financing of programmes of this type, Sida risks giving its support to a mode of ownership that is wanted neither by the Swedish government nor by the recipient. It is a risky proposition to assume that Sida can exercise leverage on other donors in a case like this. There may be other cases, where Sida is a major donor and can use its good relationship with the recipient for encouraging others to be more flexible, but the feasibility of such action must first be carefully examined.

Coordination of donor positions in negations with a recipient are seen by the East Africa Study and the Incentives Study from diametrically opposed perspectives. The Incentives Study sees competition between donors as a factor that reduces effectiveness by weakening the efforts of the recipient to reach sustainable outcomes. Donor coordination reduces this risk and provides for a higher efficiency of the system as a whole. The East Africa Study also sees the *donor dialogue* as means by which the donors increase their collective negotiating strength, but in a manner which reduces the ability of the recipient to pursue his own development priorities, and hence to assume ownership of development. When donors meet and discuss development cooperation without the presence of the recipient, this can only be a form of 'ganging up' against the absent party, and interviews with Sida staff confirm that they are often uneasy about this perspective. Complete transparency about objectives and plans is the only way to conduct dialogue, and Sida runs the risk of allowing bad company to spoil good manners.

On this issue, I find both studies a bit too schematic. The donors have a number of common interests as counterparts to a given recipient, problems which concern procedure and machinery as well as policies that would make their aid more effective. This can for instance concern measures to reduce corruption or to provide access to data and information, or taxation of equipment imported for externally funded projects. The whole negotiating system will function better with lower transaction costs, if donors agree on a common position before raising such issues with the recipient, rather than every donor presenting his or her own opinion at any time during the year. It is hard to see how a joint negotiating model for all donors on such issues would reduce the freedom of choice for the recipient, particularly since it would not constrain the bilateral parties' freedom to start or terminate projects. More likely, better coordination will facilitate harmonisation and simplification of procedures and rules.

Consultative Group (CG) meetings convened by the World Bank and a wide variety of partnership groups for sectors, themes and for contact with civil society have generated more information and contact between all actors of the aid relationship. The East Africa Study makes the valid point that those coordination meetings ought to be 'owned' by the recipient in a more substantive way than so far. The donors – IFIs and UN agencies in particular – dominate many of those coordination meetings through the sheer weight of their expertise and the material they present. Some countries (the study mentions Vietnam) have made an effort to gain strategic control over the coordination machinery, but the number of committees, partnership groups and coordination groups is so big and the information requirements so demanding that very few recipients have the capacity to exercise substantive leadership. It is a valid point that local ownership would be greatly enhanced if the recipient were to be in charge of the coordination agenda.

Chapter 8 Conclusions and Recommendations

Local ownership of development is a powerful metaphor, and it is topical in the current discussion about local empowerment in an age of globalisation. But it is a very elusive concept – when you try to use it for explaining a situation or a process, it soon dissolves into different elements like management, control, stakeholder interests and commitment. The metaphor of ownership is needed to convey a general idea, but it can rarely be used operationally without further definition. Ownership develops over time and may shift from one actor to another, it may be held jointly by donor and recipient in one phase and be shifted to one of them or to other stakeholders in the next. Stakeholders may compete for control over inputs or outputs, and the way some of them exercise ownership may sometimes be pre-emptive to a point where the project becomes unsustainable. Fragmentation of ownership among a large number of stakeholders with diverging interests may also be counterproductive. In short, the expression 'ownership' should not be taken lightly, it has to be defined and qualified for specific situations.

The four studies under review have analysed the problems of ownership from different angles, and taken together they produce quite a coherent picture of the factors that make the recipients take ownership. They also give an idea, although a much less clear one, of what type of ownership will produce the best results in terms of effective transactions and sustainable outcomes. They make a very valuable contribution to the understanding of the aid relationship and its operational problems and potential. This judgement is unequivocal in the case of conventional project aid, while the practice of programme aid is still in a state of flux that leaves open many of the questions that have been raised.

On methodology, the *case history* approach will give a more multidimensional picture, while a cross-sectional comparison across projects at one point in time will miss a lot of the dynamics in the evolution of ownership. So many different factors interact and change over time, that only detailed interviews with different stakeholders can capture the causes as well as the course of this evolution. The method of separating each phase of the *process* – identification, implementation, evaluation etc – has proved necessary in order to follow the shifts in roles and commitment of the parties during the life of a project. Where further studies based on this approach could be more thorough is first concerning the role of *management* – e g how strategic decisions are taken, financial systems and authority, cost sharing, exit strategies – and second regarding *stakeholder analysis*. Those are two key aspects of ensuring that the right type of commitment and machinery is in place for the project outcome to be sustainable and owned by the host country or community.

Apart from those conclusions and recommendations that have already been quoted from the studies, there are some that are more overarching ones that should be directed at Sida's top management. There are two important messages that come out very clearly from all the four studies:

1. Sida must be clearer in explaining its objectives, time horizon, procedures and modalities from the outset. If national ownership is an operational goal, the implications for roles and responsibilities of both government partners must be agreed before the project is launched. Where other forms of local ownership are the aim, major stakeholders should be involved in working out this agreement.
2. Project evaluation should be systematically used for collective learning on both sides of the partnership. Efforts should be made to make the topics and methods of evaluations relevant to those engaged in the projects, and their active involvement should be sought. Sida should make a greater effort at systematic feedback of findings.

Directives to that effect should be included in the new version of *Sida at Work*, and the ownership aspect be highlighted in Sida's training of staff assigned to manage programmes in the field or at headquarters. While local ownership is celebrated as a fundamental principle in all Swedish policy documents, it is obvious that the missionary zeal of officials pushing some of the Swedish advocacy themes like human rights, gender equality or public health priorities in many cases – as testified in particular by the East Africa Study[11] – results in donorship rather than ownership. This delicate balance of objectives ("ours and theirs") and how it is managed through the famous development dialogue should be given more attention in Sida's staff training. The topic of ownership should also become a regular topic of the agenda for partnership dialogue. Ownership is no mystery or enigma but it requires careful analysis and monitoring, and above all it requires patience and sensitivity by all participants in the dialogue.

While the factors that promote or undermine ownership may have been sufficiently examined in the case of project aid, the more flexible forms of

[11] The KTS study also gives examples of cases where Sida has imposed advocacy themes at the cost of a reduction in local ownership.

programme aid present a picture that is rather blurred. Such aid forms as general budget support or SWAPs should offer a straighter road to local ownership than project aid with its more complex management structure that is easily pre-empted by the donor. But evidence from the Tanzanian budget support programme and from programmes like the education sector programme in Tanzania and the health sector programme in Uganda[12] indicates that the flexibility provided through the money transfer is often progressively circumscribed by a series of informal arrangements by which donors are keeping a closer check on where the money goes. These arrangements are often throwbacks to earlier generations of project aid, and they prevent the programmes from delivering the expected reduction of transaction costs. In addition, these arrangements may undermine national ownership.

The problems connected with *budget support* seem to be caused mainly by a lack of clarity in directives and policies laid down by the Foreign Ministry and Sida-HQ. As explained by White (1999), this lack of clarity may also have contributed to the very low profile taken by Swedish embassy staff in local multi-donor discussions on the use of this modality. The close relationship of budget support with the PRS and HPIC processes opens a number of broader issues of macro policy conditionality and donor coordination.

A rather unintended consequence of moving to *sector programme support* is that the collective expertise assembled by the donors ("the shadow ministry") may vastly outnumber and outshine that of the ministry. Meetings of donor panels or joint missions tend to become more important than those of the ministries' own management team. The imbalance will get even more obvious when programmes are decentralised to district level. Since the externally funded programme is most often managed by a separate unit in the ministry, this arrangement creates a parallel structure and further uncertainty about leadership.

There is also some uncertainty among Sida staff about how to handle these new aid forms. Some sector specialists feel that project aid is preferable because it gives a more direct contact with developments on the ground, and it is easier to handle stakeholder participation where there are visible connections between aid money and activities. Others feel uncertain as to how far to pursue the policy dialogue, which may open policy issues for which the embassy staff has neither the competence nor the directives.

[12] The Kenya health sector programme, on the other hand, rather illustrates what may happen in the absence of an appropriate exit strategy.

These problems and uncertainties are not specific to Sida. Other donors are grappling with the new modalities and are jointly with Sida trying to find management models that facilitate national ownership while at the same time satisfying legitimate requirements for financial audit and control. Any solutions that can be suggested to manage the trade-off of flexibility and control must be acceptable at least to those donors who share Sida's ambition for genuine national ownership, in order for substantial reductions to be achieved in transaction costs.

It is suggested that some *further case studies* be undertaken, focussing on the ownership consequences of design and management of various forms of sector support. One hypothesis that emerges from the country case studies is that a national situation of aid dependency fosters management cultures that discourage recipient or beneficiary initiatives. For that reason it would be useful to study some countries which are less dependent on foreign aid than the East African ones. Another hypothesis that gets strong support from the studies is that multiple stakeholder programmes develop more constructive ownership configurations if they are preceded by careful stakeholder analysis, consultations and consensus. Sector support programmes in public services like education, health and area development (urban or rural) are particularly sensitive to the way stakeholder interests are accommodated in programme design.

It is suggested that sector programmes be studied in three or four countries, preferably countries that have a different management culture and a lower degree of aid dependence than the East African ones and Zambia, which were included in the studies reviewed here. Possible candidates are Sida's health sector programmes in Vietnam and Bangladesh and the education programmes in Bolivia and South Africa. The issues to be studied should be focussed on partnership and management, and the following questions should be given particular attention:

1. Where did important initiatives and leadership originate in different phases of the programme? Did political leaders express views and priorities? Have bureaucrats on either side exercised particular influence certain policy issues?
2. Were any specific attempts made to delimit the role of experts and consultants in the design of the programme? To whom did the consultants report? Who hired them?
3. Where does the authority to authorise expenditure lie? By what means are donors checking that decisions comply with the agreement or the rules?
4. How big in rough terms are the contributions from the budget or other national sources? Has the size of the national contribution had impor-

tance for the design of the programme? Does any of the parties have an exit strategy or a projection for financial sustainability?

5. Which are the main stakeholders on both sides of the partnership, and in what way do their interests and behaviour affect ownership and sustainability?
6. Who mobilises donor support and who coordinates the donor contributions? In what way are Sida's contributions related to those of other donors? Have any attempts been made to establish instruments for joint financing?

Each case study should be prefaced by a background analysis of the economic and political developments in the country and of development co-operation at large, including donor configurations, aid management systems and indicators of aid dependency. The findings of these studies should be examined together with those regarding sector programmes in the East Africa Study (Uganda health, water and judiciary, Kenya health and NALEP, Tanzania education and administrative reform) and comparable studies for instance made by ECDPM and the World Bank in order to find out how and to what extent the sector programme approach can be made a more effective instrument for achieving constructive and sustainable local ownership.

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Donorship, Ownership and Partnership

Issues Arising from Four Sida Studies of Donor-Recipient Relations

National or local ownership is commonly regarded as a precondition for sustainable results of development cooperation. In 2002, Sida commissioned four major evaluation studies, covering ownership aspects in different modalities of aid in a number of partner countries. The present paper examines the four studies with respect to effects on ownership of the aid relationship, leadership and management, institutions and modalities, stakeholder participation and multiple donor situations. It concludes that national ownership is an elusive quality that must be deliberately strived for by both partners. Ownership is no mystery, but it requires careful analysis and monitoring, and above all patience and sensitivity by all participants in the dialogue. Programme aid modalities are still trying to find their form and are not always as supportive of national ownership as they could be. Further study of the ownership aspects of sector programme support is suggested.

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