The Environment and Sida's Evaluations

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Department for Evaluation and Internal Audit



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Sida Studies in Evaluation 96/4

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Sida Studies in Evaluation is a series concerned with conceptual and methodological issues in the evaluation of development cooperation. It is published by Sida's Department for Evaluation and Internal Audit. Reports may be ordered from:

Biståndsforum, Sida S-105 25 Stockholm Phone: (+46) 8 698 5722 Fax: (+46) 8 698 56 38

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Registration No.: UTV-1995-0029 Date of Final Report: November 1996 Printed in Stockholm, Sweden 1996. ISSN 1402-215X

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Executive summary

In 1988, the Swedish Parliament formulated a new objective for international development cooperation: the sustainable use of natural resources and the protection of the environment. This study is an analysis of how Sida¹ has treated the environment in its evaluations in the period 1994–95. The results are intended to provide a basis for better use of environmental assessments in evaluations.

The study identifies and addresses 66 evaluations, distributed almost equally between 1994 and 1995. An overall screening of the projects shows dismal results with regard to assessments of environmental performance. These results are discussed below.

An important part of the work consisted in developing an appropriate methodology for analysis. As a first stage, each of the 66 evaluations were tested against seven performance indicators, of which three were of special importance:

- Is environmental performance given importance in the evaluations' Terms of Reference (ToR)?
- To what extent is environmental performance addressed in the evaluation?
- What has been the projects' impact on the environment?

The bulk (65%) of the evaluations was commissioned by SIDA, the rest by other aid organizations (SwedeCorp, BITS and SAREC). In the evaluations, Africa is the most important region in terms of number of projects (45%), followed by Asia (26%), Latin America (12%), Eastern Europe (9%) and other countries (8%).

According to Sida recommendations, all evaluation reports should include the ToR. More than 20 per cent of the reports studied did not include the ToR.

The importance/relevance of the environment was measured using a scoring system based on a 4-point scale, with 1 as the lowest and 4 as the highest score. According to the results of this scoring system, the environment was not considered particularly important in the ToR for the evaluations (generating an average score of 1.6 for the whole population). In the evaluations themselves, the evaluators treated the environment as slightly more important (generating an average score of 1.8). By contrast, the consultants' judgement on the projects' presumed impact on the environment was significantly higher (generating an average score of 2.6).

¹ The four Swedish aid organizations SIDA, SwedeCorp, BITS and SAREC were merged into a new organisation, Sida, on 1 July 1995. In this report, Sida refers both to all four former organizations and to the new organization. SIDA refers to the organization that existed prior to 1 July 1995.

The presumed environmental impact of the projects evaluated in 1995 was higher than those evaluated in 1994. On an average, SIDA's projects were assessed to have a stronger environmental impact than did projects of the other Swedish aid organizations.

Another way to present the results was made. Of 66 projects evaluated, 37 had a strong presumed environmental impact. Of these, Sida only considered 14 to be environmentally important (as stated in the ToR).

In addition, 21 questions, grouped under 9 subject headings, were developed to analyse different aspects of the evaluations in more detail. Some of the results of the analysis follow below.

Although it was mandatory within SIDA to carry out an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) prior to project implementation, the consultants could only identify three projects where EIAs had been carried out. Almost 60% of the evaluations assessed or discussed the long-term impacts of the project, but only 13% of the evaluations included the environment in the discussion. The financial analyses were poor, and no project included an assessment of environmental benefits and costs. There was a striking lack of functioning monitoring systems, and there were hardly any indicators to measure the environmental impact of projects. Not even 20% of the evaluations made reference to methodological literature. About half of the evaluations included discussions of sustainability, and only three evaluations included discussions of environmental sustainability.

In sum, it can be argued that evaluations of Swedish international development cooperation generally has ignored environmental effects. The results of this study pose an important challenge to Sida's management.

The concluding chapter provides a series of recommendations with a view to improve the evaluations of projects that have environmental effects. The recommendations include measures to improve:

- the formulation of the ToR;
- the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) system;
- the monitoring of the environmental impact of projects; and
- the quality of baseline studies.

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1. Introduction

Prior to 1988, the objectives for Swedish international development cooperation were to promote economic growth, economic and social equality, economic and political independence and the democratic development of society. In 1988, a fifth objective was adopted by the Swedish Parliament: "the sustainable use of natural resources and protection of the environment". In 1995, a sixth objective was added: the promotion of gender equality. Some of these goals can be perceived to be in conflict with each other, and at times there may exist trade-offs between the various objectives. It is sometimes claimed that there is a conflict between the fifth objective and economic growth. It is becoming increasingly apparent that without the sustainable use of natural resources, long-term economic growth will be difficult to achieve. The ultimate objective of economic growth is not growth per se, but human welfare that obviously depends on the quality of the environment.

As is stated in the ToR for this study (see appendix III),

the study will through an analysis of existing evaluations provide a current assessment of how environmental¹ issues have been treated in a sample of representative evaluations from a certain period. The inventory should form a basis for further analysis of how to improve the use of environmental assessments within evaluations of different types of development assistance.

This study² deals with evaluations commissioned by Sida³ and conducted in 1994 and 1995. At an initial stage, it was decided to analyse a sample of 23 out of 66 evaluations. Subsequently, it was agreed to expand the survey to include the whole population.

This study is divided into five sections, addressing the environment in evaluations, the environment in Sida's evaluations, findings, and conclusions and recommendations, respectively.

¹ The term "environment" is used variously in different disciplines. In economics, for example, there are two sub-disciplines: environmental and resource economics. Here the term excludes natural resources (renewable and non-renewable). In this study, the term is used in the broadest sense, to include environmental issues as well as issues regarding natural resources (renewable and non-renewable).

² Jessica Andersson, a Ph.D student in environmental economics, is responsible for the main work in analysing the individual evaluations and to make an assessment of these. Tom Alberts, Ph.D in economics, has overall responsibility for the study.

³ The four Swedish aid organizations SIDA, SwedeCorp, BITS and SAREC were merged into a new organisation, Sida, on 1 July 1995. In this report, Sida refers both to all four former organizations and to the new organization. SIDA refers to the organization that existed prior to 1 July 1995.

2. The environment in evaluations

Lewin, E. 1994, Evaluation Manual for SIDA,⁴ identifies three main reasons why evaluations are necessary: to ascertain if objectives have been achieved; to investigate which results and effects the activities have had, including constraints and problems incurred; and to ascertain if the efforts made have been worth the funds invested. Thus, the objectives of evaluations may be divided into three broad categories:

- 1. improving strategies, projects and programmes;
- 2. increasing knowledge of development mechanisms and the effectiveness of different strategies; and
- 3. reporting on the results of development assistance.

In July 1995, four different Swedish cooperation development authorities—SIDA, SwedeCorp, BITS and SAREC—were merged into a single authority: Sida. At the time of the merger, the different environmental policies of the four authorities were reformulated into one common policy. Prior to the merger, SIDA was the only one of the four to have an explicit environmental policy, formulated in *Riktlinjer för miljökonsekvensbedömning i biståndet* ("Guidelines for environmental impact assessments in aid", SIDA: April 1991). This document states that all SIDA *projects* are required to conduct an EIA before they are implemented. Also, the evaluation manual (Lewin, 1994, p. 51) states that all evaluations must include an EIA.⁵. This means that the evaluation should include an investigation of any environmental impact that the project might have caused or is likely to cause.

The remaining authorities either did not have or had not completed the formulation of an environmental policy. BITS was just abut to launch a policy when the merger took place. This means that, apart from SIDA, the only requirements and guidelines the evaluators had to comply with in terms of the environment was the fifth development objective, regarding the "sustainable use of natural resources and protection of the environment". In addition to its regular programme activities, Sida also provides funds to NGOs and similar institutions. Projects receiving such funding support are not required to meet specific environmental requirements.

In the literature of evaluation methodology, there is still little information about the methodology for evaluating environmental impact. This may explain why most evaluations have not included an environmental analysis. Although there are many project areas where environmental concerns arguably are of key relevance, and therefore should be discussed in evaluations, in an assessment of SIDA evaluations carried out in 1994 it was found that only 20% of the evaluations touched on environmental issues (Kim Forss, 1994).

⁴ The first version of the Manual was published in Swedish in 1992. A revised version was published in 1993 and was subsequently translated into English in 1994.

⁵ The Environmental Impact Assessment in the project appraisal stage is called the EIA in this study. The environmental impact assessment carried out in the evaluation is denoted ex post EIA.

3. Methodology

The consultants have reviewed a list of about 130 studies. Several studies were excluded for various reasons. Some evaluations were not commissioned by Sida (SIDA, SwedeCorp, SAREC and BITS). Other studies listed were not evaluations and some were not within the time period considered (1994–95). In the end, Sida and the consultants identified 66 evaluations that met the criteria for the study, as defined in the ToR.

3.1 Identifying and surveying the population of evaluations, 1994–95

The 66 evaluations selected were reviewed with the objective of assessing how the environment is treated by Sida and by the evaluators in the evaluation process. For each project a "summary assessment of evaluation" was prepared. The three variables mentioned above (the importance of the environment as stated in the ToR; the presumed environmental impact of the project; and the importance of the environment in the evaluation) were assessed by using a scoring system providing a scale of values from 1 (minimum) to 4 (maximum). The questions and score criteria used are given in table 1.

In order to develop a common methodology, a number of studies was analysed independently by both consultants. The two sets of scores were compared and

Table 1. Summary assessment of the evaluation.

Exists ToR? (Y = yes, N = no)

Importance of the environment as stated in the ToR

- 1. No reference or reference only to Swedish development cooperation objectives in general
- 2. Reference to environmental objective
- 3. Specific or detailed reference to environmental issues
- 4. Special focus on environmental problem areas

The presumed environmental impact of the project

- 1. No impact
- 2. Only secondary impact
- 3. Small direct impact
- 4. Major direct impact

Year of evaluation

Aid organization commissioning the evaluation

Geographical focus

The importance of the environment in the evaluation

- 1. Not mentioned
- 2. Mentioned shortly in a section or incorporated into other sections
- Well covered in a section
- 4. Considered in detail and at several levels

⁶ This study was carried out in two stages. In the fist stage, all evaluations were subject to a summary assessment, and for a sample of 23 studies a more complete questionnaire was developed. At a second stage this questionnaire was used on the whole population.

the criteria discussed in depth to achieve common baselines and values. In the end, a close agreement was noted in the individual scores. While it remains an open question whether two other persons would reach exactly the same scores for each of the projects reviewed, the consultants assume that the averages would coincide fairly well. The main conclusions would only be affected if large discrepancies were to be noted between the consultants' results and the hypothetical results of another group. The validity of the scoring system could be tested by making a random sample.

3.2 The method of analysis

Following this first survey, the 66 evaluations were assessed using 21 different questions, grouped into 9 sections. These are given in table 2 below. Each of these sections represent different assessments on how well the respective evaluations consider environmental aspects. The answers also provide information on the method used by the evaluators, and information on how well the evaluation was carried out. The questions were constructed to allow one of three possible answers: "yes", "partly" or "no". In some cases the

Table 2. Questions posed regarding Sida's evaluations.

Environmental consequences

- 1a Was an EIA been carried out before project start?
- 1b Is an EIA carried out in the evaluation (ex post EIA)?
- 1c Does the evaluation point out that an EIA is missing?

Achievement of objectives

- 2a Are any environmental aspects mentioned in the project objectives?
- 2b Are these assessed in the evaluation?

Side effects

3 Are side effects considered in the evaluation?

Impact

- 4a Are long-term impacts of the project/programme assessed in the evaluation?
- 4b Is the long-term environmental impact included in the assessment?

Sustainability

- 5a Is sustainability discussed in the evaluation?
- 5b Is environmental sustainability included in this discussion?

Cost-effectiveness

- 6a Is a financial analysis included in the evaluation?
- 6b Is an economic analysis included in the evaluation?
- 6c Are environmental costs and/or benefits considered in the economic analysis?

Monitoring and indicators

- 7a Was a monitoring system set up for the project?
- 7b If not, does the evaluation recommended it?
- 7c Are environmental indicators discussed in the evaluation?

Choice of evaluator(s)

8 Does/do the evaluator(s) have competence in assessing environmental impact?

The methodology of evaluating the environment

- 9a Are any references made to material concerning evaluation methods?
- 9b Is there a methodological discussion of evaluating environmental issues?

questions were not applicable. Comments and relevant information regarding the evaluations were added in each case and included in the analysis.

Each of these nine sets of questions is analysed in terms of frequency, correlation and specific comments under separate headings in section 5.

4. The environment in Sida's evaluations 1994–95

4.1 The population

A total of 66 evaluations provided the population under study. Of these, 34 evaluations were from 1994 and 32 evaluations from 1995. As is shown in table 3, the bulk of these evaluations was carried out by Sida.

Table 3. Organization responsible for the evaluation.⁷

Organization	Number of evaluations	Percentage	
SIDA	43	65	
BITS	11	17	
SAREC	8	12	
SwedeCorp	4	6	
Total	66	100	

As shown in table 4, most of the evaluations were carried out on projects/programmes in Africa.

Table 4. Geographical distribution of projects under evaluation.

Continent	Number of evaluations	Percentage	
Africa	30	45	
Asia	17	26	
Latin America	8	12	
Eastern Europe	6	9	
Others	5	8	
Total	66	100	+

4.2 The importance of the environment in the ToR

The *Evaluation Manual for SIDA* (1994) states that the Terms of Reference for the evaluation must be included in the report.⁸ Nevertheless, 21 per cent of the evaluations studied do not contain the respective ToR. There is a significant difference between SIDA and the three other Swedish aid organizations . While 88% of the SIDA evaluations include the ToR in the evaluation report, the corresponding figure for the other organizations is 61%.

⁷ Although several studies were published by Sida, most studies were commissioned prior to the merger in 1995.

⁸ See page 72. However, in the introduction it is stated that: "The manual has no 'official status' in that it establishes compulsory instructions for evaluations activities. Formal regulations are published in Sida's Development Assistance Manual".

Sustainable use of natural resources has been a Swedish objective in international cooperation since 1988. A reasonable hypothesis is that most ToR for the evaluations include specific references to environmental issues. However, as table 5 shows, environmental issues are not particularly emphasized in the ToR for the projects.

In table 5, the importance of the environment in the ToR is expressed as a value between 1 and 4, in accordance with the scoring system presented in table 1. The average score for 1994 is 1.4 and for 1995 1.8. The average for SIDA projects is 1.6; for the other Swedish aid organizations it is 1.4, which is significantly lower. The values show that environmental questions are assigned little importance in the evaluations when the ToR were formulated. Still, there is a significant increase (0.4 points) during the period under review. Whether this increase is due to a greater concern for environmental effects and/or an increase in the number of environmentally relevant projects is discussed below.

Table 5. The importance of the environment as stated in the ToR.

	Scor	·e				Total	Average	
Year	1	2	3	4	n. a.			
1994	21	5	0	2	6	34	1.4	
1995	11	10	1	2	8	32	1.8	
Total	32	15	1	4	14	66	1.6	

4.3 The importance of the environment in the evaluations

To what extent did the evaluators address environmental issues in their work? As shown in table 6, the tendency to give greater weight to the environment in the ToR is also reflected in the work of the evaluators. While the average score is 1.6 in 1994, it increases to 2.0 in 1995. It should be noted that the evaluators attach more weight to the environment than is expressed in the ToR.

Table 6. The importance of the environment in the evaluations

	Score						
Year	1	2	3	4	Total	Average	
1994	20	9	4	1	34	1.6	
1995	14	7	8	3	32	2.0	
Total	34	16	12	4	66	1.8	

Comparing SIDA with the other aid organizations reveals some interesting results. Evaluations of SIDA projects score an average of 1.9, while evaluations of non-SIDA project score an average of 1.5. This suggests that the environment was less of a concern for the other Swedish aid organizations. Moreover, SIDA was the only agency that had formulated environmental guidelines.

4.4 The presumed environmental impact of the projects evaluated

Another question is whether the environment is important in the projects evaluated. In practical terms, this translates as the consultants' assessment of the project's impact on the environment.

Again, because the environment is a Swedish development cooperation objective, one would expect an increase in the number of projects with an environmental component, and that particular emphasis is put on evaluating projects with an important environmental impact.

As shown by the values presented in table 7, the environmental impact of the projects is gauged to be greater than expressed in either the ToR or in the evaluations themselves. The average score for environmental impact is 2.6. This can be compared with the average scores of 1.6 and 1.8 given in tables 5 and 6, respectively.

Table 7.	Table 7. Presumed environmental impact of projects evaluated						
	Score						

	Score						
Year	1	2	3	4	Total	Average	
1994	6	10	15	3	34	2.4	
1995	5	8	11	8	32	2.7	
Total	11	18	26	11	66	2.6	

4.5 Is the environment sufficiently dealt with in the evaluations?

The data was also analysed in another way. It seems reasonable to assume that the environment should be stressed in the ToR for the evaluation of projects with a high presumed environmental impact. By dividing, in each case, the score indicating the importance of the environment as stated in the ToR with the score for the presumed environmental impact of the project, a measure is obtained of Sida's ability to gauge the given project's environmental impact, as expressed in the ToR.

For example, if the score for the importance given to the environment in the ToR is 1, while score for the project's presumed environmental impact is 2, the value derived is 0.5. This would suggests that the project is environmentally more important than expressed in the ToR. A value of 1 suggests a close correspondence between the importance attached in the ToR and the project's presumed environmental impact, while values greater than 1 suggest that Sida attaches more weight in the ToR to the environment than is motivated. Conversely, values lesser than 1 suggest that Sida does not attach sufficient weight to environmental problems in the evaluations.

The average value for the whole population was 0.6. A frequency distribution of the results is presented in table 8. (The individual values for all evaluations are given in Appendix II.)

As shown in table 8, in most cases (73%) the presumed environmental impact of the project is greater than was expressed in the ToR (giving a ratio less than 1). Given the importance currently given to environmental factors, one would have expected several cases where Sida expressed a stronger environmental concern than would actually have been warranted by the project. However, there was no case where the environment is overemphasized in the ToR (giving a ratio greater than 1).

Table 8. The importance of the environment as stated in the ToR in relation to the project's presumed environmental impact

	Number of studies	Per cent	
Ratio less than 1	38	73	
Ratio equal to 1	14	27	
Ratio greater than 1	0	0	
Total	52	100	

Did the evaluators underestimate the importance of the environment as well? By dividing, in each case, the score indicating the importance of the environment as assessed in the respective evaluation with the score for the presumed environmental impact of the project, a measure is obtained of the evaluators' ability to gauge the given project's environmental impact.

Again, a value lesser than 1 suggests that the evaluators consider that the importance of the environment is less than the consultants' assessment (the presumed environmental impact of the project). Conversely, a value greater than 1 suggests that the evaluators consider the environment to be more important than the consultants' assessment.

The average value for the whole population is 0.7, suggesting that the consultants' assessment of the importance of the environment is higher than the evaluators' assessment. Table 9 provides a frequency distribution of the results. (The individual values for all evaluation are given in Appendix II.)

Table 9. The importance of the environment as perceived by the evaluators in relation to the project's environmental impact

	Number of studies	Per cent	
Ratio less than 1	39	59	
Ratio equal to 1	25	38	
Ratio greater than 1	2	3	
Total	66	100	

As shown in table 9, in more than half the cases (59%) the presumed environmental impact of the project is greater than is assessed by the evaluators (giving a ratio less than 1). It will be recalled from table 8 that the corresponding figure for the ratio regarding the importance of the environment

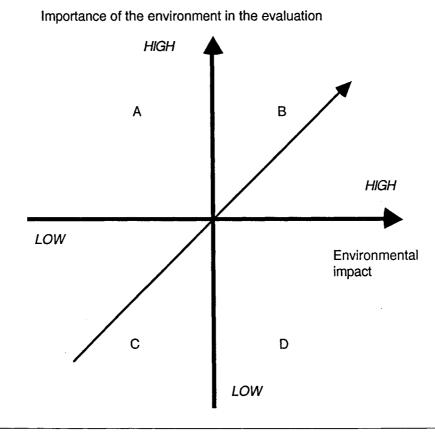
as stated in the ToR is 73%. In other words, the evaluators assign greater significance to the environment than is expressed in the ToR.9

On the basis of this analysis it is possible to construct a figure summarizing these findings.

The thick vertical arrow in Figure 1 expresses the importance of the environment in the evaluation (as expressed in the ToR or in the evaluators' assessment), while the thick horizontal arrow expresses the presumed environmental impact of the project (the consultants' assessment). The quadrants can be interpreted as follows:

- A The project has little environmental impact but the evaluation assigns high priority to the environment.
- B The project has a great environmental impact and the environment is also important in the evaluation.

Figure 1. The importance of the environment in evaluations *versus* environmental impact of the projects under evaluation.



 $^{^{9}}$ In two evaluations, the environment was considered to be more important than the presumed environmental impact.

- C The project has little environmental impact and the environment receives little attention in the evaluation.
- D The project has a high environmental impact but the environment receives little attention in the evaluations.

The thin arrow along the C–B axis marks the ideal correspondence between the degree of attention assigned to the environment in the evaluation and the actual environmental impact of the project ("ratio equal to one" in tables 8 and 9).

Plotting the projects onto this matrix shows that very few fall along the ideal axis. ¹⁰ In figures 2 and 3, the x-axes provide a measure of the projects' presumed environmental impact. The y-axis provides a measure, in figure 2, of the importance of the environment as expressed in the ToR, and, in figure 3, of the importance the evaluators assign to the environment in the evaluation.

Quadrants C and B, along the axis indicated by the thin arrow, represent a desirable situation where the environmental impact is reflected in the evaluation. In both figures, there are many projects in quadrant D, indicating that environmental impact is greater than is assumed in the evaluations.

The overall conclusion from reviewing 66 evaluations is that environmental issues have not been important in the formulation of ToR. The projects have greater environmental impact than is expressed in the ToR. Even though the evaluators assign more importance to the environment than the ToR, the results are discouraging.

There is another way to present the results. Of 66 projects, 11 have great environmental impact (attaining a maximum score of 4). Of these, only 5 projects are considered environmentally important in the ToR (attaining a score of 3–4). In other words, in 55 per cent of the cases the ToR do not adequately address relevant environment issues.

A further 26 projects were identified as having a significant environmental impact (attaining a score of 3), but for only 9 of these is the importance of the environment expressed in their respective ToR (attaining a score of 2–3). In other words, in 65 per cent of the cases the ToR does not address environmental issues of relevance to the projects.

To summarize, it can be argued that Sida has not given sufficient attention to relevant environmental issues in either the evaluations or the formulation of the evaluations' Terms of Reference.

¹⁰ In order to present the results graphically, a smaller figure was added to each of the observations in order to separate them from each other in the graphs.

¹¹ Assuming a certain environmental bias on the part of the consultants, projects that scored one point less rgarding the ToR than the consultants' assessed score regarding environmental impact are also included.

Figure 2. Environmental impact and ToR.

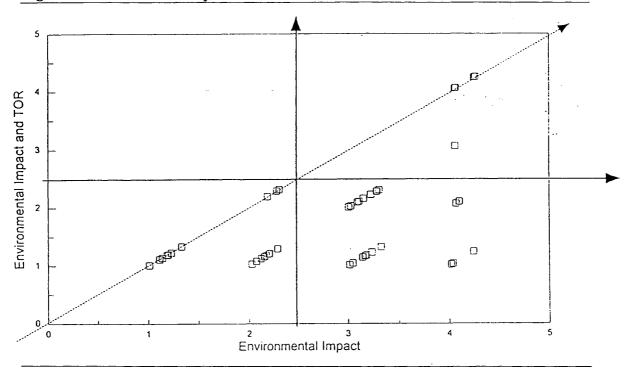
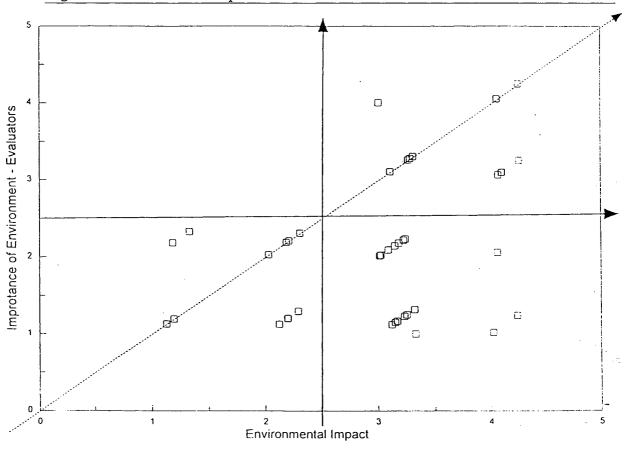


Figure 3. Environmental impact and evaluators' assessment.



5. Findings

In the following, the questions presented in table 2 and discussed under section 4.5 above are developed in further detail, in order to highlight interesting and relevant findings from the evaluations. The intention is to investigate the current state of evaluations for the surveyed period, with particular emphasis on the evaluation of environmental aspects. For this reason, the focus is not only on evaluations of projects having a significant environmental impact, but also on evaluations of methodological interest, regardless the environmental implications of the projects themselves.

5.1 Environmental consequences

It is worth repeating that during the period when the evaluations were carried out, SIDA, SwedeCorp, BITS and SAREC merged into one authority, Sida. Prior to 1995, only SIDA had a recommendation that all evaluations should include an ex post EIA. The other authorities had advanced less in their policy work on the environment, and they had not formulated guidelines for ex post EIA.

For SIDA, this meant that the evaluation should include an investigation of any environmental impact that the project might have caused or is likely to cause.

The three other authorities were "only" required to comply with the fifth development objective, regarding sustainable use of natural resources and protection of the environment. As Lewin (1994, p.51) points out, this is not a small requirement:

The concept environment is awarded, in this context, a wide interpretation and encompasses everything that surrounds us and forms our life environment: the soil, the seas and oceans, the climate, natural resources, plants and animals and their natural environment, the immediate surrounding of human beings and their health.

Question 1a: was an EIA carried out before project start?

Only 3 projects out of 59 (5%) had conducted some sort of EIA.¹² It should be recalled that 37 projects had a high presumed environmental impact (see table 7). This means that of the presumed environmentally important projects, only 8% had carried out an EIA. It was assumed that if evaluations do not mention that an EIA has been carried out for the project, none had been carried out.

Keeping in mind that SIDA commissioned 65% of the evaluations, and the fact that it is SIDA's policy that all projects should conduct an EIA, the result is discouraging. The fact that some of the projects were initiated prior to 1991, when SIDA's guidelines were distributed, is an inadequate explanation.

¹² This question could not be applied to seven of the project evaluations. Whenever the number of evaluations analysed is smaller than the population (because an evaluation may not be applicable for the type of question posed), the total number is mentioned.

Discussion and analysis

Why had so few of the projects conducted EIAs? Is there a lack of methodological knowledge and information? Are policy directives not sufficiently clear? What measures have been taken to secure consistency between policy and actual work?

Riddell (1995) points out that what is needed is a procedure to alert projects to relevant requirements and to help deepen awareness of the sort of factors that need to be incorporated in an assessment.

There is a need to formulate easily understood instructions and guidelines on how to carry out EIAs and to introduce these already in the appraisal stage. The SIDA manual from 1991 is currently being updated. Hopefully, this will improve the situation.

If policy directives are not implemented, the problem may either be that the policy is not sufficiently operational or that policy directions are largely ignored. With respect to EIA, the directives are clear and operational. Since they have not been implemented, this indicates a serious management problem within Sida. Because EIAs are lacking, possibilities to carry out adequate ex post EIAs are limited.

In only one case was the environmental policy of the recipient country discussed. Thanks to increased pressure from several international organizations, including the introduction of the NEAP (National Environmental Action Plan), most developing countries have formed committees on environmental impact assessment. There seems to be a lack of interaction between the evaluators and these committees. These committees can be a valuable resource if supported and managed correctly.

Question 1b: is an EIA carried out in the evaluation (ex post EIA)?

An examination of the number of ex post EIA carried out gave a better, but far from satisfactory result. 11 of the evaluations (17%) conduct ex post EIAs, and a further 3 evaluations (5%) conduct partial ex post EIAs.

The ex post EIAs vary considerably, both with respect to methodology and scope. Not even one of the evaluations follows the guidelines provided in the *Methods for Evaluations of Environmental Consequences* (Annex 5, Lewin 94). For this reason, the answers provided to question 1b ("yes", "partly" or "no"), reflect, a large extent, the consultants' own assessments.

Discussion and analysis

As pointed out above, an ex post EIA should be carried out in every SIDA evaluation. Given this, and considering that SIDA accounted for 65% of the evaluations, the frequency of ex post EIAs carried out must be considered low. The results also show that for projects with a high presumed environmental impact, the frequency of ex post EIAs is low. For example, in an evaluation of

support to a country spanning almost three decades, the environment is only described as an "issue", and environmental impact is not assessed at all.

Why this low frequency? It is often pointed out in the evaluations that the assessment of the environmental impact was constrained by poor project appraisals, lack of environmental baseline surveys and a deficient monitoring of the environmental impacts during the project cycle. Considering these constraints, there is an immediate need for stricter monitoring of EIAs in the project appraisal stage. When an evaluation is initiated, why not survey what information is needed and available? Perhaps there is a need to give evaluators more time to generate such information. This is also a means to generate useful data.

Missing and incomplete data

Since a large proportion of the evaluations state that missing data is the reason for not carrying out an ex post EIA, there is a need to formulate guidelines on how to carry out an impact assessment in situations with insufficient or missing data. One evaluation (Interconsult AB, 1995) presents a good example on how to overcome the problem of insufficient data. The main points are:

- 1. The data that is missing and needed for a proper assessment is identified. This might seem as an obvious thing to do, but in fact it is not. Most evaluations simply note that data and information is missing.
- 2. Alternative data and figures are estimated and presented. For example, the Interconsult evaluators state that they needed figures on ground water replenishment to carry out a proper analysis. Since this data was not available, they searched for qualitative information from secondary sources, such as documents showing that only limited amounts of water is extracted in rural areas. This was then combined with available quantitative data (such as information, in this case, that while 20% of the water supplied in the project is consumed in rural villages, 60% of the population live in these settlements).
- 3. Hypothetical impacts and scenarios are presented and discussed. The Interconsult evaluators point out that the yields of many bore holes have fallen, and predict a severe water shortage on the basis of the known population growth rate.
- 4. The risks of drawing faulty or unsubstantiable conclusions on the basis of such hypothetical scenarios, and the extent to which they can replace EIAs based on hard data, is discussed.
- 5. Implications based on the conclusions are presented. For example, the Interconsult evaluators note that over-pumping may have long-term implications for the development and sustainability of some settlements.

How should an ex post EIA be carried out?

With regard to the assessment of the environment in evaluations, there are two broad questions to consider:

- 1. Should the same methodology be used for all evaluations? If not, what criteria should be used to identify project/programme categories where EIAs are of greater or lesser relevance?
- 2. What procedure or method should be used to assess the environmental impact in an evaluation?

Regarding the first question, *Methods for Evaluation of Environmental Consequences* (Annex 5, Lewin 1994) states that before an evaluation is carried out, projects should be divided into two categories: environmentally neutral and environmentally consequential. The same categorization and method is described in *Guidelines for Environmental Impact Assessment* (SIDA, 1991).

Environmentally neutral is here defined as projects that do not have any effects on the environment, or that have small indirect effects. Environmentally consequential are such projects that cannot be considered to be environmentally neutral. In other words, this means that before the evaluation is carried out, the team needs to assess to what extent the project will have an impact on the environment. None of the evaluations discuss whether the projects were to be considered environmentally neutral or consequential.

Riddell *et. al.* (1995) suggest an alternative approach for projects in the planning stage that could be applied for evaluations as well. According to this, all applicants for projects funds are required to answer a standard set of questions, whereby they declare either how the issue of the environment is to be addressed in the project, or why it is not considered relevant. Similarly, all evaluator could be required to complete a similar checklist, regardless if the project appears to be environmentally neutral or environmentally consequential. This means that a project would not need to be categorized on the basis of pre-determined relevance criteria. If, for a particular project, evaluators consider items on the checklist regarding environmental impact to be of no practical relevance, they would have to explain why. In this way, the categories of environmentally relevant projects will be determined during, not prior to, the evaluation. The checklist answers would constitute part of the expost EIA. The most efficient method would be to formulate a list that is a follow-up of the pre-project EIA.

As to the second question, there is too little material in the evaluations surveyed to allow any general conclusions to be drawn regarding procedures or methods for assessing environmental impact in an evaluation. What can be said is that there is a clear need to formulate easily applicable guidelines and to make sure that these are followed. These guidelines should also include information on how to carry out an impact assessment for projects with insufficient or missing data.

In formulating ToR and in carrying out EIAs, Sida officers should have the requisite support from competent experts.

Question 1c: does the evaluation point out that an EIA is missing?

Hardly any EIA was carried out prior to project implementation. Surprisingly enough, only 8 of 63 evaluations (13%) point out that an EIA should have been carried out. Those evaluations that conduct an ex post EIA are, with few exceptions, the same ones that point out that an EIA is missing.

Discussion and analysis

In some instances it was not only highlighted that an EIA is missing but also that there is clear a need for one. One example is the evaluation of a relief project. This report states that "normally, environmental impact analysis is missing from relief intervention strategies. This could have disastrous effects in some circumstances" (Apthorpe, Ketel, Salih and Wood, 1995).

Projects that do not explicitly address environmental concerns seem in general to be unprepared in their approach to environmental issues. With this in mind, it is important that guidelines in evaluation methodology encompass this type of project as well, and that the Sida officers concerned not only have access to relevant methodological and practical expertise, but that they are encouraged to make use of it.

5.2 Achievement of objectives

An important part of an evaluation is to assess to what extent the project in question has attained its original objectives. This sort of analysis concerns objectives at different levels. The broadest perspective is represented by the development objectives adopted by the Swedish Parliament, where one addresses environmental concerns. Depending on the character of the project, environmental impacts could be found on any goal level defined in Lewin; output, immediate objectives (projects objectives), sectoral objectives and development objectives. Below follows a discussion regarding if and how environmental considerations are incorporated in project objectives, and how projects with environmental objectives are evaluated.

Question 2a: are any environmental aspects mentioned in the project objectives?

Of 63 evaluations, 23 (37%) assessed projects with environmentally related issues or considerations stated in their project objectives. These are mainly projects in areas with explicit environmental focus, such as forest, water, sanitation and agricultural projects.

A positive correlation was found between evaluations pointing out that an EIA is missing and projects with environmentally related objectives.

Discussion and analysis

If environmental objectives were formulated for the project, the project is likely to have an environmental impact. However, the opposite is not always true, that is, even though the project has an environmental impact this is not always reflected in the project objectives.

To their credit, some evaluators suggest that environmentally related objectives should be added to the project objectives.

If environmental goals are not included in the project objectives, this does not exclude the possibility that environmentally relevant activities are included in the project document. For example, the goal of a NGO project in Bolivia is to reduce external political and economic dependency. To do this the project has supported the cultivation of commercially viable indigenous crops and introduced soil restoring practices and agricultural diversification (A. Bebbington and A. Kopp, 1995). In this case, improved environmental performance is used as a means to achieve other objectives. This environmental dividend should not be confused with a side effect (see section 5.3 below). Rather, the approach highlights the need to change the overall objectives of the project. This case illustrates how important it is that the project management and Sida are sufficiently flexible to adapt project design to changing circumstances.

• Question 2b: are environmental objectives assessed in the evaluation?

For projects where environmental objectives are specified, these are assessed in all respective evaluations but two.

Discussion and analysis

Evaluations of projects with environmentally related objectives also assess compliance with these objectives. This suggests that there is a greater chance that environmental impact is assessed if mention of the environment is made in the project objectives.

There are also instances where the environment was not included in the project objectives, but where environmental impact is assessed anyway. This occurs in cases where evaluators found that objective achievement was undermined because the environment was degraded.

The means of assessing environmental objectives vary considerably. Most assessments centre on qualitative discussions of how well objectives have been achieved. In some cases this is discussed in a separate section, but few evaluations include a section entitled "achievement of objectives". More often the point is made implicitly and under various headings.

Few evaluations include quantitative assessments. Often apparently a reflection of the unquantifiable nature of the objective in question, this is better explained by a lack of pre-established indicators. In the few cases where quantitative

targets are assessed, indicators had been determined or the target was specific and clear. One report notes that "[t]he emphasis on quantitative targets should have been modified by other considerations", meaning that there should be a combination of quantitative and qualitative information.

5.3 Side effects

Side effects are defined as positive and/or negative effects that were not anticipated in the early stage of a project. Unanticipated environmental effects are not unusual and it is, therefore, crucial that these be identified and assessed.

Question 3: are environmental side effects considered in the evaluation?

In all, 16 evaluations (24%) consider environmental side effects, and a further 5 (8%) consider them partly. The number of evaluations considering environmental side effects is higher than the number carrying out environmental impact assessments. In some cases, it seems as if the evaluators felt that a few lines or a short discussion about certain side effects is sufficient to meet the requirement for an EIA.

Discussion and analysis

Examples of side effects mentioned in the evaluations are increased environmental awareness, consequences of resettlements for indigenous people and, in a project involving income generation through goat herding, overgrazing.

In the evaluation of the Hifadhi Ardhi Dodoma (HADO) Dodoma Region Soil Conservation Project (1995), a whole section is dedicated to the assessment of the effects of the different activities encompassed in the project. Environmental effects are considered in a separate section, but they are also woven into the assessment of other issues. For example, a consideration of gender aspects also examines women's relationship to the environment.

In most cases, discussions of side effects focus on a project's unanticipated effects on the environment. Interestingly, some evaluations note that as environmental concerns are translated into policies, these may introduce constraints on commercial and project activities that could, in turn, affect the efficiency of the project. For example, Grettve (1994) presents a qualitative discussion about linkages between different sectors and economic consideration. The study looks at tourism, industry and agriculture, and examines how the environment has an effect on the economic situation. For example, legal and economic constraints on waste water collection and treatment place practical limits on the expansion of the number of hotel beds in many locations.

A common complaint raised by evaluators is the lack of benchmark studies and data, and the fact that few monitoring systems have been implemented. This limits the possibilities of properly evaluating side effects.

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5.4 Impact

Several different definitions of impact are in use.¹³ A determining factor distinguishing the various definitions is the time dimension. Here, impact is defined as a lasting, long-term effect. Several of the non-anticipated environmental effects will not become apparent in the short run, but only after the project has been completed. This could have disastrous consequences and could change the goal achievement of the project completely. On the other hand, impacts, like side effects, may also have unanticipated positive effects.

Immediate effects or effects during the project cycle are discussed either as achievements of objectives or as side effects.

• Question 4a: are long-term impacts of the project/programme assessed in the evaluation?

In all, 38 of the evaluations (58%) assess or discuss the impacts of the project and 14 (21%) assess them partly.

Discussion and analysis

It is crucial that the long-term impact of a project is incorporated in the assessment. This is emphasized in a survey of different overview studies. Here, it was found that many projects are concerned with short-term survival at the expense of what their long-term role in development should be. However, it is difficult to assess long-term impact since it is not an effect that can be measured at the time of the evaluation. Making predictions about future impacts involves risky assumptions. In most evaluations, therefore, impacts are discussed rather than actually assessed.

• Question 4b: is the long-term environmental impact included in the assessment?

In all, 9 evaluations (14%) include environmental variables in the assessment of long term impacts, and about as many partly consider the environmental impact.

Discussion and analysis

Considering that 37 out of the 66 projects have a presumed high environmental impact, the above result is remarkably low. As evaluations commonly assess—or at least discuss—impacts in general terms, why do they not assess environmental impact to a greater extent?

The situation is illustrated by an evaluation of several projects (Riddell at. al. 1995). Here the evaluators assess the overall development impact, as measured

¹³ For example, in *The Logical Framework Approach (LFA)*, *Handbook for Objectives-Oriented Planning* (NORAD, 1992), "impact" is defined as "the positive and negative changes produced, direct or indirect as the result of a programme or project", while in Lewin (1994) it is defined as "effects which remain in place also in the long run".

against nine broad criteria common to all projects. One of these criteria regards environmental impact.¹⁴ When the projects were judged against the broader criteria, including the environment criterion, their aggregate performance rating dropped progressively. This is in keeping with the consultants' finding that the assessment of long-term environmental impacts is comparatively low.

The Riddell evaluation discusses the implications of long-term environmental impacts in general, but there are also examples where the evaluators consider specific and project-related long-term impact. For example, one evaluation anticipates that drought relief projects undermine villagers' preparedness for droughts, and another discusses how the provision of water could encourage settlements in fragile ecosystems.

Two of the evaluations provide an in-depth analysis of the long-term environmental impact by assessing the impact of each project activity in separate sections. In these analyses, both qualitative and quantitative data are presented, together with one or two hypothesis of future impacts. These are combined with risk analyses. Other evaluations that address environmental impact either present the environmental impact of the overall project in a separate section or incorporate a general discussion in the text. Common to all evaluations assessing the long-term environmental effects is that they concern projects of explicit environmental relevance.

5.5 Sustainability

Sustainability is a vague concept. There are a number of different definitions for environmental sustainability alone.

According to Lewin (1994), there are seven factors that determine a project's degree of sustainability:

- 1. recipient government policies;
- 2. management, organization and local participation;
- 3. financial factors;
- 4. level of technology;
- 5. social/cultural factors;
- 6. environmental factors; and
- 7. external factors.

Question 5a: is sustainability discussed in the evaluation?

Of all evaluations surveyed, 53% discuss sustainability and an additional 9% discuss it partly. Of the evaluations discussing sustainability, about 40% consider the sustainability of the project *per se*, about as many consider the project's financial sustainability, about 25% consider institutional sustainability, 15% consider the sustainability of human resource and about as many consider technological sustainability.

¹⁴ The environment criterion is formulated as: "the extent to which environmental factors were considered in designing and executing the project and what the environmental impact of the project is and has been".

Discussion and analysis

As indicated by these percentages, a relatively large proportion of the evaluations discuss the concept of sustainability, and often dedicate a separate section to the issue. What is actually discussed under the heading sustainability varies considerably. The most common focus is the sustainability of the project itself and the issue of financial sustainability. A question that is frequently raised in this context is: will the project continue to operate when donor funds are withdrawn?

The evaluations that discuss sustainability only partly refer to the issue in the text but do not devote a separate section to it.

• Question 5b: is environmental sustainability included in this discussion?

In all, 3 evaluations (5%) discuss the issue of environmental sustainability. It should be recalled that in the surveyed population there are 37 evaluations of projects presumed to have a high environmental impact.

Discussion and analysis

Although several evaluations discuss sustainability, few address the issue of environmental sustainability.

Two of the evaluations that discuss environmental sustainability cover the issue thoroughly. One of the two even presents a lengthy and comprehensive description of what sustainability involves for the natural environment. Sustainability is here defined as "... the property of an ecosystem to adapt to environmental changes, thereby retaining over time its fundamental structure and functions, e.g. its integrity and productivity" (B. Lundgren *et. al.* 1994). Both evaluations raise the critical issue of meeting human needs in the face of rapid population growth while respecting criteria for environmental balance and sustainability.

One of the evaluations uses conditions in the country hosting the project's Water Master Plan as starting point for a discussion of environmental sustainability. According to the Plan, if a project extracts more than 25% of the available water reserve it will be subject to a detailed study. Whether the 25% limit is appropriate in a sustainability perspective is discussed and evaluated. Alternative approaches are suggested and a risk analysis is included. Again, however, the evaluation concludes that data needed to perform a sound analysis is not available.

On the positive side, several evaluations discuss solutions for reaching environmental sustainability, for instance by promoting greater efficiency and by providing incentives for reduced consumption of environmentally costly goods.

One evaluation assesses a project's institutional sustainability by using what is referred to as a staircase model. The assumption is that it is necessary for the

organization to reach one stage before it can move on to the next. It would be interesting to look at this approach from the point of view of environmental sustainability.

5.6 Cost-effectiveness¹⁵

All evaluations are required to include a calculation of financial costs and benefits and to provide an assessment of how efficiently resources have been used. Performance in this regard can be measured by means of financial and economic analyses. In a financial analysis, only the costs and benefits accrued by the project itself are considered. In an economic analysis, all costs and benefits that accrue as a result of, but not necessarily to, the project are considered. For instance, putting price tags on side effects forms part of the economic analysis. It is not uncommon to find examples where financial costs and benefits differ significantly from economic costs and benefits.

Question 6a: is a financial analysis included in the evaluation?

About 40% of the evaluations present a financial analysis and less than 20% do so partially, in the sense that they provide a disaggregated total budget of the respective projects.

Discussion and analysis

Few evaluations make serious attempts to carry out a proper cost-efficiency analysis. Approaches and methods vary considerably. Some evaluators simply conclude that "cost-efficiency has been above average". This suggests that there is a need to standardize the method for conducting a financial analysis.

Question 6b: is an economic analysis included in the evaluation?

None of the evaluations include an economic analysis, with estimates of costs and benefits. Three of the evaluations make an attempt at an economic analysis and an further three discuss the possibility of doing so.

Discussion and analysis

Not surprisingly, the data available to the evaluators is insufficient to carry out an economic analysis. In addition, several evaluators acknowledge that they lack the expertise, tools and methods for conducting an economic analysis.

Still, one would expect more discussions of benefits and costs in the evaluations. The concept of economic analysis is discussed more in detail below.

• Question 6c: are environmental costs and/or benefits considered in the economic analysis?

¹⁵ The term "cost-effectiveness" is based on Lewin (1994, p. 48) and used as a generic term to describe all forms of financial and economic analyses. ODA defines cost-effectiveness as the relation between the costs (input) and impact of a project. This is basically an economic notion. Cost-efficiency is defined as the relation between the costs (input) and output of a project. The latter is basically a productivity concept.

Of 63 evaluations, 4 (6%) discuss environmental costs and benefits. These four are among the six evaluations that attempt to carry out or discuss an economic analysis. All four concern projects with a strong environmental focus, and are therefore practically obligated to at least mention environmental costs and benefits.

Discussion and analysis

To carry out an economic cost-benefit analysis, including environmental costs and benefits, is a time-consuming and at times a complicated task. How this sort of analysis can be conducted and what sort of variables that need to be taken into consideration is illustrated by an example from one of the evaluations.

It makes little sense to carry out an environmental analysis unless basic economic concepts are understood clearly. These include: discounting (estimating future costs and benefits), opportunity cost (alternative uses of scarce resources), uncertainty and externalities.

In the Dodoma Region Soil Conservation Project (SIDA and MTNRE, June 1995), the overall objective was to decrease soil erosion. Thus, the basic questions for the evaluation to address should have been: what would the situation have been without the project and what is it now? The evaluation should have looked into the future as well. What is the likely development, with and without the project?

Based on the identified causes to the erosion, several sub-projects were implemented to counteract these. One involved raising seedlings in central nurseries, either for distribution, free of charge, or for planting in wood lots by project staff. The aim was to support reforestation.

If the project had not been implemented, what would the situation have been? Already at this stage some heroic assumptions must be made. One is that without the project, there would be a continuous decline in the value added of the agricultural land.

Assuming that the major benefits are derived from an increase in the value of production (or halting the decline in production), the net benefits of the project would be the difference in the value added of production, with and without the project. As these increases in value added are spread over different years, it is necessary to discount future net increase in the benefits.

It is not uncommon that a project such as this generates further benefits. Other farmers may learn from the project and initiate soil erosion control themselves. Reforestation often generates additional benefits, such as recreational value and through the positive effects on biodiversity. These benefits result from project activities and should thus be included in the calculation. From a practical point of view, the evaluators would as a first step identify the benefits. If they are deemed to be of significance, they should be considered in the calculation.

The costs involved in this project can be divided into the three broad categories; production costs, distribution costs and planting and maintenance costs.

In the production costs, several variables need to be included, such as labour costs of the people working in the nurseries and equipment costs (pots, soil, water, etc.). In addition, external effects caused by the production of seedlings need to be taken into consideration.¹⁶

The distribution costs involves transport costs, labour costs and the cost of designing a functioning distribution system.¹⁷

Planting and maintenance costs involve mainly labour costs. From the point of view of a financial analysis, these labour costs can be ignored since they are not paid out of project funds. But in the economic analysis, this labour time has alternative uses, translating into opportunity costs that need to be taken into account.

The economic analysis thus involves a comparison of costs and benefits, with and without the project. Often, the analysis also includes a projection into the future. If there is a net increase in the benefits, the project is justified.¹⁸

A discussion such as this is lacking in practically all the evaluations. How did the evaluators of the Dodoma Region Soil Conservation Project address the task? They present an interesting discussion on benefits and costs, but in the end the relied simply on project data. The evaluators used the number of seedlings produced and distributed by the project. This is a typical monitoring indicator, but it says very little about the environmental impact of the project. It is understandable that the evaluators used the available information as much as possible. But the number of seedlings distributed was probably a poor indicator. Farmers produced less of their own seedlings because of project activities. Therefore, all of the seedlings cannot be used as an indicator. And what happened to the distributed seedlings? Were they actually planted? Moreover, assuming that each reforested hectare is a fairly good proxy for project impact, it would have been necessary to develop indicators on how much land was actually reforested. (The number of seedlings actually planted and survival rates could have been used as indicators.)

In other words, the evaluators select a system to monitor project activities and output (e.g. seedlings) that is clearly insufficient to make an assessment of the environmental impact. The monitoring system does not permit a financial analysis and is useless for making an assessment of benefits and costs.

¹⁶ It was discovered that the planting pots were filled with local soil from a forest nearby. Because of the large number of seedlings involved, the negative environmental impact on the forest needs to be included in the production cost.

¹⁷ For example, it was discovered that the distribution of free seedlings by the government discouraged individual farmers from taking up the production and distribution of seedlings as an income-generating, household activity. It was found that the seedlings tend to be better cared for if they are paid for than if they are received cost free.

¹⁸ In an economic analysis, the future stream of benefits and costs need to be discounted. This means that benefits and costs further off into the future carry less weight in the analysis.

In order to carry out a complete analysis, a lot of data and information needs to be collected and analysed. This means that not only must such data be available, but also that the evaluator must possess knowledge and experience of the project type and be capable of carrying out economic analyses.

5.7 Monitoring and indicators

Irrespective of which method the evaluation team uses when assessing a project, it needs to have access to data and information on the pre-project situation (a baseline study) as well as on the situation at the time of the evaluation. At an early stage during project implementation, a method needs to be developed for assessing how the situation would develop without the project. In addition, a monitoring system needs to be set up, using relevant and adequate indicators.

Consequently, information and data need to be collected throughout the project lifetime, from planning to implementation and completion. This requires that the project incorporates a well-functioning monitoring framework that meets specified evaluation requirements

Question 7a: was a monitoring system set up for the project?

Only about 20% of the evaluations state that a monitoring system existed for the project, and about 16% state that some sort information material was available.

Discussion and analysis

Few of the evaluations state that a monitoring system was set up for the project. Throughout, evaluations stress the lack of data and of continuous project monitoring.

Since the collection and processing of information is costly, and projects often find themselves with limited resources for monitoring, there is a need to develop indicators that can be monitored relatively easily. While indicators easily are identifiable for project activities and output, they are more difficult to establish for impact and for monitoring compliance with intermediate objectives. One reason for this is probably Sida's programming sequence, whereby monitoring activities are negotiated and fixed on a yearly basis. In this process, long-term effects are often overlooked. Moreover, the frequent rotation of Sida's desk officers means that project management more easily focuses on immediate and short-term rather than on the long-term needs, such as mechanisms for monitoring and evaluation.

The design and implementation of a monitoring system should be considered before project implementation, and should commence with a baseline study. This is a collection of primary and secondary sources that describe and analyse the situation in the designated project area at a certain point in time. This can then form a benchmark for measuring change at a later point. There seems to be a need to develop a handbook or guide for such benchmark studies. Such a handbook should discuss all the variables needed to compile a comprehensive

profile of the socio-economic and environmental situation in any given area. The recommendation given in one of the evaluations, that the recipient country should be encouraged to undertake this sort of studies, merits attention.

The next step is to establish indicators to demonstrate change that can be used for monitoring and evaluation. Several evaluators point to the lack of established indicators and targets for measuring project achievements as an impediment to their evaluations. Of all 66 evaluations studied, only one used formulas to calculate indicators. Examples of formulas used in this instance are:

material productivity = value added/material cost

and

labour productivity = value added/labour cost

Again there seem to be a need to establish guidelines on how to formulate indicators.

• Question 7b: if no monitoring system was set up for the project, does the evaluation recommend it?

All of 56% of the evaluations recommend, emphatically or in passing, that a monitoring system should be set up for the project.

Discussion and analysis

This high figure is another indication of the pressing need to set up monitoring systems for projects. The broad response from evaluators reflects the fact that many recognized that proper analyses could not be made due to the lack of relevant data. Many evaluations discuss the competence of the project team to undertake assessments and to collect data. Generally, the teams seemed to lack such competence.

A greater share of monitoring activities should be the responsibility of the host country. This has many advantages, not the least promoting sustainability and helping build local capacities.

One evaluation, the Hifadhi Ardhi Dodoma (HADO) Dodoma Region Soil Conservation Project (1995) mentioned above, recommends that external evaluations should be carried out regularly. It points out that the absence of external evaluations has deprived the project of valuable opportunities, such as obtaining analyses of the effectiveness of project activities, and stimulating discussions of cross-sectoral issues, such as environmental impacts, that normally do not figure in annual reports.

Question 7c: are environmental indicators discussed in the evaluation?

Environmental indicators are discussed in only slightly more than 10% of the evaluations.

Discussion and analysis

Evaluations that discuss environmental indicators concern projects with a strong environmental focus. It would have been surprising had they not mentioned them at all. The remaining 90% of the evaluations completely ignore the issue of environmental indicators.

In general there seems to be some confusion regarding methods for generating indicators. In many instances, the indicators generated were not measurable. Finding indicators requires imagination and extensive experience, as well as openness to interdisciplinary approaches.

In *The Logical Framework Approach (LFA), Handbook for Objectives-Oriented Planning* (NORAD, 1992), the term "indicator" is defined as "... the performance standard to be reached in order to achieve an objective."

Not one evaluation provides information on what indicators are missing. They simply conclude that information is missing and that, as a result, it is not possible to conduct an ex post EIA.

5.8 Choice of evaluator(s)

The evaluation team needs professional expertise. The type of competence that is needed to conduct an evaluation depends on the nature of the project. In projects that clearly have or are suspected to have an environmental impact, at least one person on the team should have relevant EIA competence.

Question 8: does/do the evaluator(s) have competence in assessing environmental impact?

In 60% of the evaluations, there is no information about the competence or background of the evaluators. Often the names of the evaluators are presented but no information is given of their background. Only slightly more than 10% of the evaluations state that the team includes an environmentalist or an evaluator trained in resource management.

Discussion and analysis

It is not uncommon that sector specialists are assigned the task of conducting environmental assessments. For example, in the evaluation of a forest project the environmental impact is assessed by a forest inventory specialist, and in a water and sanitation project the environmental impact is assessed by a hydrogeologist.

On the other hand, having an environmentalist on the evaluation team did not necessarily mean that an ex post EIA was made. Of the eight evaluations with environmental competence on the team, only four present an ex post EIA and a fifth evaluation does so only partly.

In general, the evaluations leave the impression that the environmental competence of the evaluation teams was weak. The lack of environmental competence is stressed in an evaluation of a relief project: "There is a need for integration of environmental assessment capacity in relief operations" (Apthorpe *et. al.*, 1995, p. 74).

5.9 The methodology of evaluating the environment

Do guidelines or methodological material exist on how to evaluate the environment? Are these used by evaluators? To what extent are methodological issues discussed in the evaluations?

Question 9a: are any references made to material concerning evaluation methods?

Less than 20% of the evaluations make references to methodological literature.

Discussion and analysis

The most common reference was the Evaluation Manual for SIDA (Lewin, 1994). Others were A Checklist for Measuring The Performance of Developments Projects: A Method Adopted by BIFO to Promote an Evaluation System (BIFO) and the NGO Developments Guidelines and Evaluation of Development Assistance, Handbook for Evaluators and Managers. More common is that evaluators refer to earlier assessments, either because they concern the same sector or the same geographical area or because they were deemed to have some methodological relevance. For example, an evaluation of the electricity sector in Malaysia makes reference to the methodology used in a BITS evaluation of development cooperation in Uruguay (Utvärdering av 10 års samarbete med Uruguay, June 1994).

• Question 9b: is there a methodological discussion of evaluating environmental issues?

Only slightly more than 15% of the evaluations discuss of methodology of evaluating the environment. Moreover, half of these evaluations were part of the series of studies that Sida had commissioned to improve the methodology of evaluating cost-effectiveness.

Discussion and analysis

Most of the evaluations that discuss the methodology of assessing environmental issues do so in the context of an economic analysis or a cost-benefit analysis. Again, this underscores the urgent need for guidelines in this area.

6. Conclusions and recommendations

The "sustainable use of natural resources and the protection of the environment" is a stated objective of Swedish development cooperation. Based on the results of this evaluation, covering the period 1994–95, it can be stated that this development objective had not been translated into policy with regard to Sida's evaluations.

The report points out a series of deficiencies in the project cycle. One effect is that the environment has not been adequately treated in the evaluations. Some recommendations follow to improve the present situation.

A major conclusion of this report is that the *Terms of Reference* do not adequately address the environmental impact of the projects to be evaluated. Prior to finalizing the ToR, there is a need to analyse these in the light of possible environmental impacts, and to incorporate relevant requirements regarding EIAs. Sida's Department for Evaluation and Internal Audit processes 40–45 evaluations yearly.¹⁹ It is recommended that Sida scrutinizes and revises the ToR for each project in the light of its anticipated environmental impact. To secure that the fifth Swedish development cooperation objective is not overlooked, perhaps a standard phrase along the following lines could be included in the ToR:

The evaluator(s) shall make an analysis/assessment of the project's (programme's) effects with regard to the Swedish development cooperation objective "the sustainable use of natural resources and the protection of the environment".

Sida finances development cooperation that is implemented by other actors (e.g. NGOs and international organizations). In the agreement with these organizations, the consultants recommended that a standard clause be included requiring that an ex post EIA is made.

To improve the quality of evaluations for projects that are environmentally relevant, it is necessary to improve the primary phases in the project cycle (project identification, planning, appraisal, programming and monitoring). To this end, the consultants recommend that stricter rules are applied during the different phases of the project cycle.

Since so many projects lacked an *Environmental Impact Assessment*, it may be surmised that many ongoing projects lack an EIA as well. Therefore, it is recommended that for all ongoing projects, or at least for projects of some magnitude (for instance, projects with budgets of SEK 5 million or more), a control be done to check whether an EIA has been made. For projects lacking an EIA, it is recommended that one be made as soon as possible. An EIA is absolutely essential for future monitoring and evaluation, and can also be used to establish priorities for needed baseline studies and for monitoring.

¹⁹ According to information from the Department for Evaluation and Internal Audit.

Baseline studies are essential for future evaluations. In some cases, the EIA will suffice to provide the necessary information. In other cases, there will be need to conduct baseline studies to provide necessary benchmark data. These are particularly important for monitoring the environmental impacts. Reviews of the monitoring system should also include a check on baseline studies. Where lacking, such baseline studies should be conducted as soon as possible. Perhaps a review of existing baseline studies may be needed as well.

Monitoring, with a view on future evaluations, is not being done systematically. This problem needs to be addressed. The Logical Framework Approach (LFA), which has been introduced in Sida, is a very good method, but if it is only used at the planning stage, and not implemented, its usefulness is greatly reduced. A systematic review of EIAs will provide important information on the design of monitoring systems. Furthermore, during project implementation, these need to be tested and reviewed, and possibly improved or adapted. Without proper monitoring, evaluations can provide little useful information to improve Swedish aid. It is recommended that Sida's Department for Policy and Legal Issues takes more active part in improving monitoring systems.

A good monitoring and evaluation system will generate benefits beyond the project itself, particularly for environmentally relevant projects, because it will provide knowledge to improve Swedish and international aid cooperation at large. For this reason, the costs for monitoring and evaluation can be larger than justified by the individual project. The reason is that the benefits of a monitoring system will accrue to activities not directly related to the project (e.g. improving aid at large).

In order to carry out an ex post EIA, an assessment of costs and benefits is needed. In order to do this, an economic analysis is necessary. Most studies lack financial data. Research suggests that to evaluate the environmental impact of a project, detailed information is needed. In real life, much of the needed information will be lacking. To deal with this problem, there is a need to develop—and, not least, to use—guidelines on how to carry out ex post EIAs with insufficient data and information. Without such guidelines, the evaluators will continue to ignore the problem and to refer to insufficient data.

The evaluation procedure commonly followed by Sida is to draft the ToR and then to contract a team of consultants to carry out the evaluation. In some cases, the *systematic collection of information* on the environmental effects, on costs and benefits, prior to launching the full evaluation, can provide substantial benefits. In the case of environmentally relevant projects, it is recommended that a few pilot evaluations be made to test the viability of this approach.

Masking an environmental impact assessment is a difficult task, and there is not yet a "best practice" developed. The 66 projects reviewed were very heterogeneous and the evaluations also differed greatly. Practically all of the evaluations were methodologically weak. In order to develop appropriate approaches, Sida might consider inviting or requesting the evaluators to have a

methodological discussion on how the evaluators intend to analyse the environmental impact of the project. These methodological discussions could then provide the basis for formulating future guidelines on how to deal with the environment in evaluations.

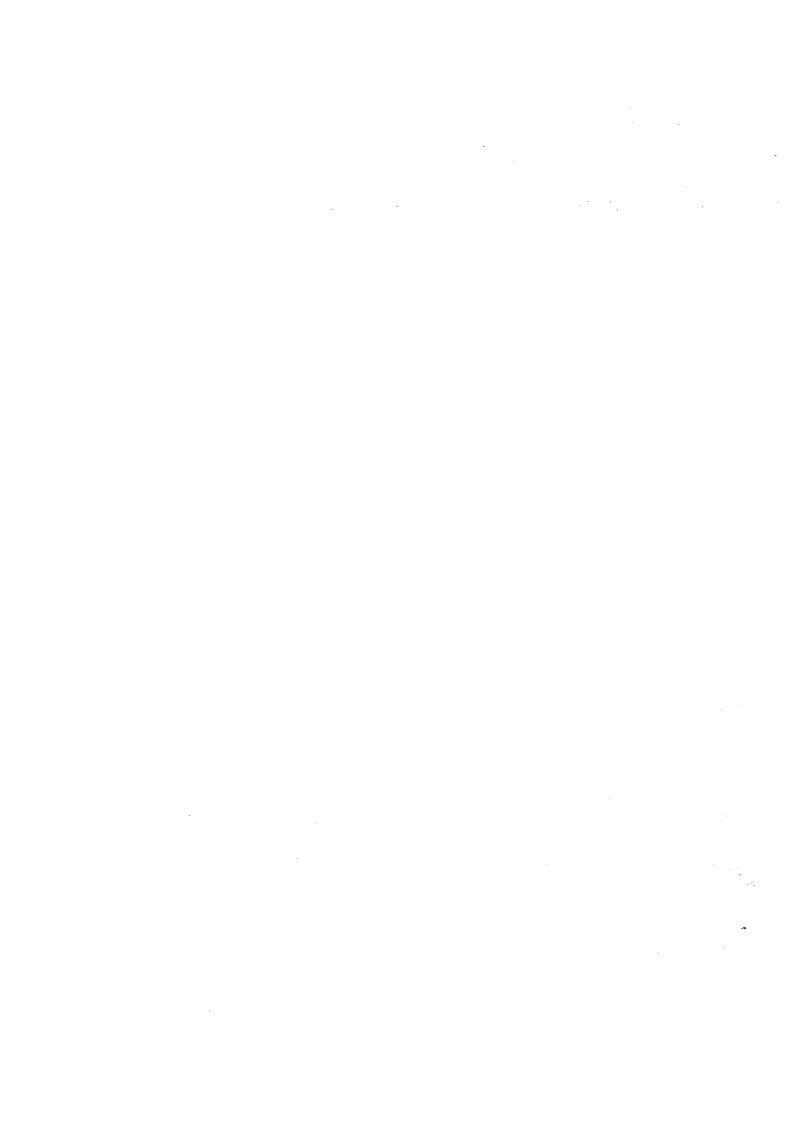
If projects have an important environmental impact, the evaluation should address this problem. In such cases, therefore, it is recommended that particular care be taken in finding *evaluators with the necessary competence* for this evaluation task.

This meta-evaluation of 66 Sida evaluations carried out in the period 1994–95 has pointed out several deficiencies in the project cycle, not regarding how the environmental objective is treated in the evaluations. This state of affairs should be improved. The consultants recommend that a similar meta-evaluation be made in a few years' time, in order to assess to what extent there has been an improvement.

The recommendations provided in this report will practically all require additional human resources. To do this when Sida's administration costs are being reduced and further cuts can be envisaged requires new approaches. For this reason it is recommended that Sida should consider to rely even more on external expertise in the process of evaluating the effects on the environment of Sida-supported projects and programmes.



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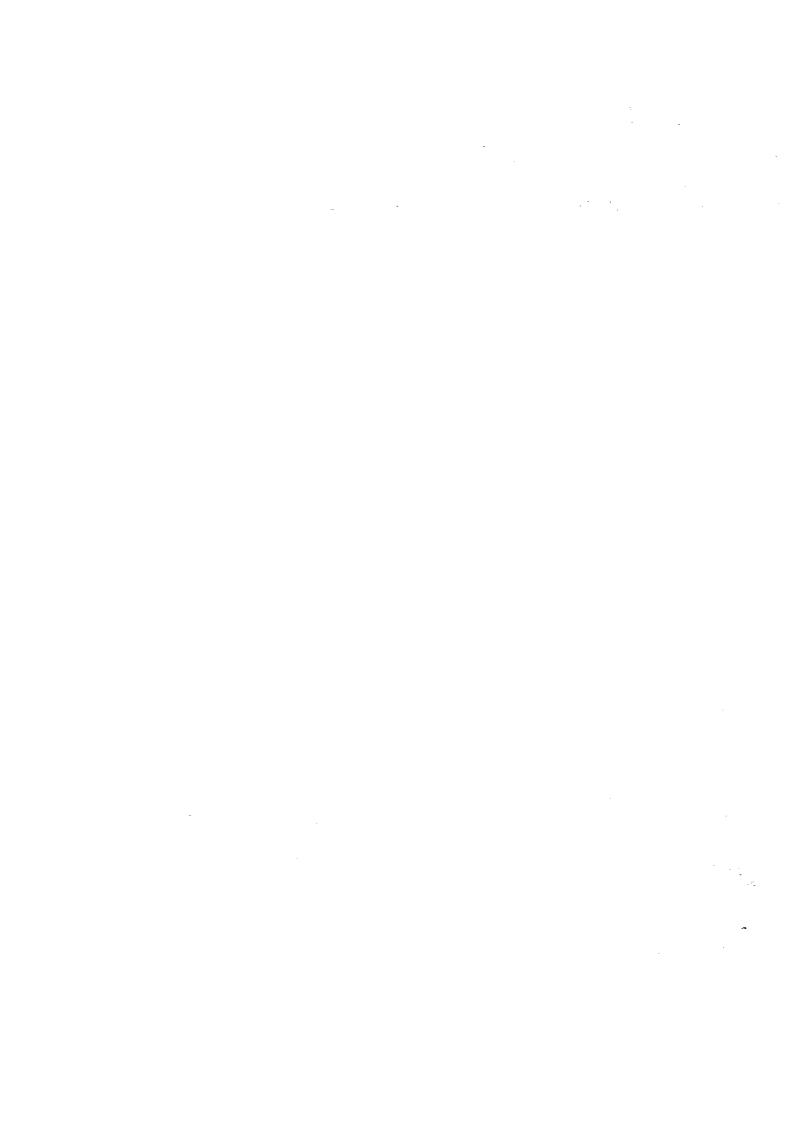
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STATISTICAL APPENDIX



Review of Sida's Evaluations 1994-95. Data Table on Summary Assessment.

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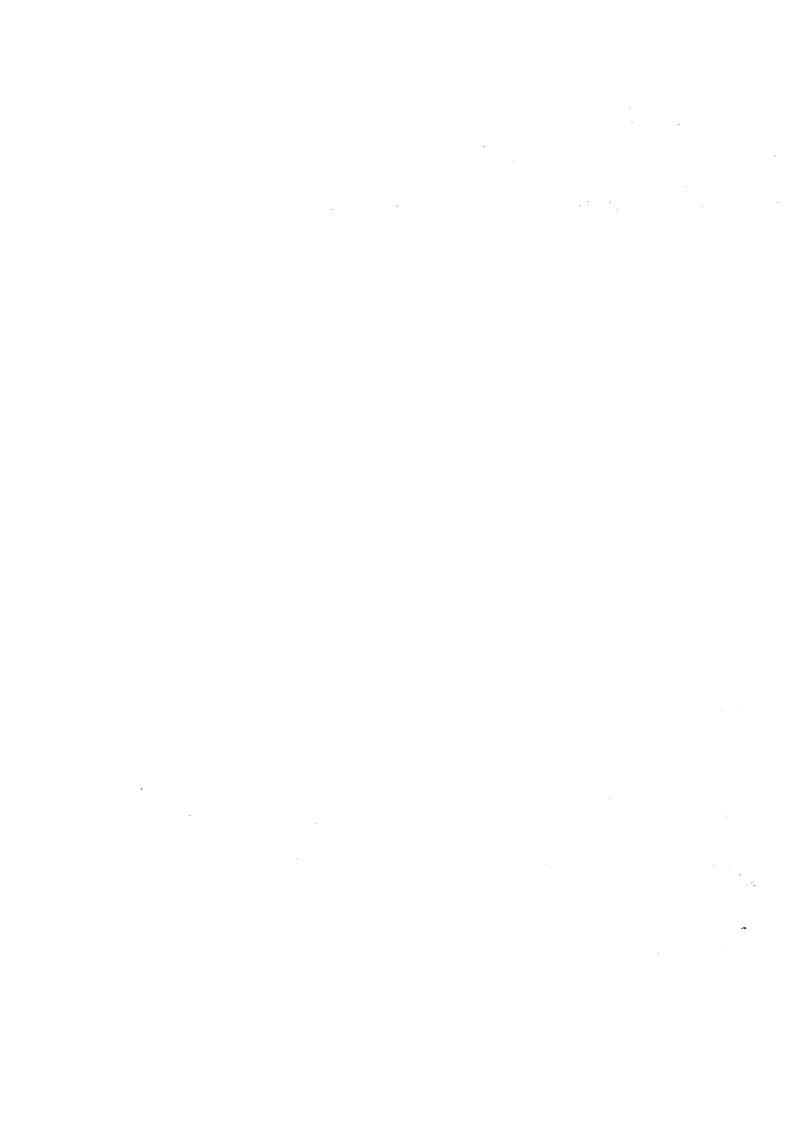
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Terms of Reference for a study on environmental impact assessments in evaluation

1. Background

In recent years, the need for developing mechanisms and methodologies for monitoring and assessing the environmental impact of Sida's development cooperation programmes has become increasingly apparent. In evaluations, the environmental impact of projects, like other cross cutting issues, are not always followed up to the extent or in the manner they should be.¹ There are many explanations why environmental aspects are difficult to treat satisfactorily in evaluations of development cooperation:

- Evaluation teams tend to concentrate on measuring the effects and impact of
 projects in terms of the explicit objectives, as formulated in project documents.
 Indirect effects and unexpected outcomes are harder to link to projects in terms
 of cause and effect, and are therefore harder to analyse.
- Assessing environmental impact requires meticulous data collection throughout the project cycle. There is often a need for comparative material in the form of a baseline study, completed prior to project implementation.
- The environmental impact of a project activity is, by definition, felt in the long term, which raises difficulties for project staff equipped for and focused on immediate and intermediate goals. Also, it often means that it is not felt until after donors have left the project, and there no longer is an operational need for a donor-financed evaluation.

These difficulties notwithstanding, there are many good reasons why evaluations should, to a greater extent, analyse the environmental aspects of development

¹ An a quality assessment survey of Swedish evaluations of development cooperation undertaken by SASDA in 1994 shows that approximately 15% of the evaluations deal adequately with environmental issues while more than 70% contain no analysis of environmental aspects at all.

cooperation, in the preparation, implementation as well as evaluation of projects. First and foremost, development cooperation will not contribute to sustainable development if the negative environmental impact of a project overshadows its positive contributions.

From the donor perspective, it could be argued that environmental impact assessments provide a means to adapt programmes to become more cost effective in terms of total resource use. To this end, environmental impact assessments made ex-ante should be followed up ex-post in order to achieve maximum use of data, monitoring and analysis resources.

Evaluations also serve as important training tools. The quality of development cooperation can hopefully be improved through systematic analyses and follow-ups of environmental impact assessments of past and ongoing projects.

2. Purpose and scope of study

The objective of the proposed desk study is to assess the extent and manner in which Sida's evaluations in recent years have assessed the environmental impact of Swedish development cooperation projects and programmes.

The study is to provide an up-to-date picture of how environmental issues are treated in a sample of representative evaluations from 1994–95. The inventory should form the basis for further analysis on how to improve methods for and applications of environmental impact assessments, including the use of environmental-specific indicators, in evaluations within different development cooperation sectors.

3. The Assignment

The assignment includes an assessment of all evaluations listed in Sida's evaluation database for 1994 and 1995 (see Annex 1), which covers all sectors and departments. Many of these studies deal little or not at all with environmental

aspects. On the basis of a preliminary inventory of all evaluations, the study should in a second stage concentrate on a representative selection. The focus should be on analysing the frequency, treatment and methodology of environmental impact assessments in the selected evaluations.

The study should determine and describe environmental aspects for which there are established evaluation techniques. What are the basic requirements for such analyses to be carried out within evaluations, and what type of data is needed for such analyses? Are there specific environmental aspects that have been ignored in evaluations, and, if so, for what reasons? The study should also examine to what extent existing project documents are being formulated to include environmental objectives and design, and to what extent these are reflected in the Terms of Reference for evaluations and in the texts of the evaluations themselves.

4. Methodology and evaluation team

The study should be carried out in three steps:

- 1. An inception report, outlining specific criteria that could be used for an inventory of evaluations regarding the issue outlined above, should be drafted and presented to Sida by the team leader.
- 2. A draft analysis of the evaluation reports should be prepared. In this, a number of evaluations are to be scrutinized systematically and in accordance with preestablished criteria. The inventory should be summarized in a first draft report, in which major findings within different categories of evaluations are presented.
- 3. After discussing main findings with relevant parties at Sida, a final draft, with recommendations and suggestions for possible improvements, should be produced by the team leader.

The team should consist of at least two persons. The team leader should have evaluation experience in team leading position as well as experience from

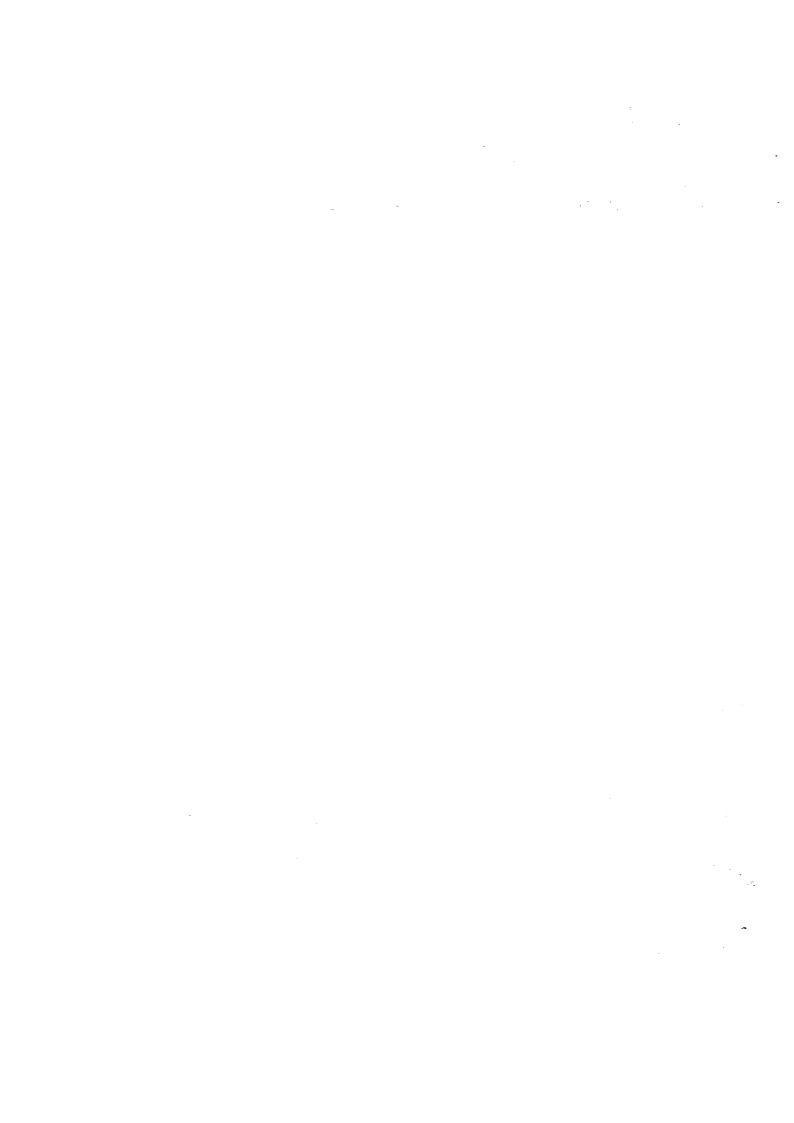
environmental impact assessments and should be familiar with formal evaluation techniques.

5. Reporting

The report should be concise, not containing more than 30 pages excluding annexes. The overview of evaluations is to be shown in a tabular format, summarizing main findings. Recommendations for further methodological improvements should be given together with specific recommendations for Terms of Reference for evaluation assignments within different sectors.

A draft report should be provided to Sida no later than June 30. The assignment is to include a summary which should follow the proposed outline for the Sida Evaluation Newsletter (see Annex 2).

LIST OF SIDA EVALUATIONS



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APPENDIX IV

List of Sida Evaluations 1994-95

Title	Institution eg BITS	Year of evaluation
Promoting Development by Proxy	SIDA	1995
Swedish African Musuem Programme	SIDA	1995
What Relief for the Horn	SIDA	1994
Facing a Complex Emergency. An Evaluation of	SIDA	1995
Evaluation of Development Cooperation	BITS	1995
Support to the Development of a Centre of Modern	SIDA	1995
The Beira Gothenburg Twinning Programme	SIDA	1995
Health Service in Transition, An Evaluation of the Uni	SIDA	1995
Educação Ambiental em Moçambique	SIDA	1995
HADO Dodoma Region Soil Conservation Project	SIDA	1995
Final Evaluation of the Sida Funded Rural Village Water	SIDA	1995
Down to Earth. Report of an External Evaluat	SIDA	1995
Evaluation of the Swedish Ngo Support Programme	SIDA	1995
Evaluacion Del Apoyo de Suecia al Proceso	SIDA	
Evaluation of Swedish Balance of payment	SIDA	1995 1995
Investigando En Una Isla, Evaluacion de la Coo	SAREC	1995
	SAREC	1995
Evaluation of SARECs Women Research Prog Evaluation of the Swedish NGO SupportIndia.	SIDA	1995
The Development Impact of The Swedish Gover	SIDA	1995
The VI Tree Planting Foundation	SIDA	1995
The Development Impact ofNGOKenya.	SIDA	1995
Evaluation of the Establishing of the Bank of Namibia	SIDA	1993
Insider Accounts the Monitoring and Ev. of Prim. Ed	SIDA	1995
Strategic Business Alliances (SBAs): The Swedish	SwedCorp	1995
Agitators, Incubators, Adviser - What Roles for the EPUs	SAREC	1995
An Evaluation of the Self-Help Action Plan for Educ	SIDA	1995
Evaluation of the Improve Your Business	SwedeCor	1993
Experience, Competence and Sustainability	SIDA	1994
Support Against Apartheid, An Evaluation of 28	SIDA	1994
•	SIDA	1994
Evaluation of Swedish Support to the Drought Operat	SIDA	1994
Routes of Funding Roots of Trust Evaluation of Sida Direct Support to the Vietnam Wom		1994
	SIDA BITS	1994
BITS-Financed Services in Emergency Planning		
Utvärdering av 10-års samarbete med URU Evaluation of the BITS Financed	BITS BITS	1994 1994
·	SIDA	
Support for Independence, An Evaluation of 27 Years Education Division Documents No 63. The 900 School	SIDA	1994 1994
	SAREC	
An evaluation of Swedish Support for Cooperation in	SIDA	1994 1994
An Evaluation of the Swedish Support to the Bureau of		
Chipping away the Glass Ceiling The Women's Bureau/SIDA Brainet 1000 1003 An ass	SIDA	1994
The Women's Bureau/SIDA Project 1990-1993 An ass	SIDA	1994 1994
Evaluation Study of the Multi-Drug Therapy Program in	SIDA	
Industrial Institute of Maputo	SIDA	1994
Kenya Transport Sector Evaluation.	SIDA	1994
Stockholm Dar es Salaam, Evaluation of a Swedish	SIDA	1994

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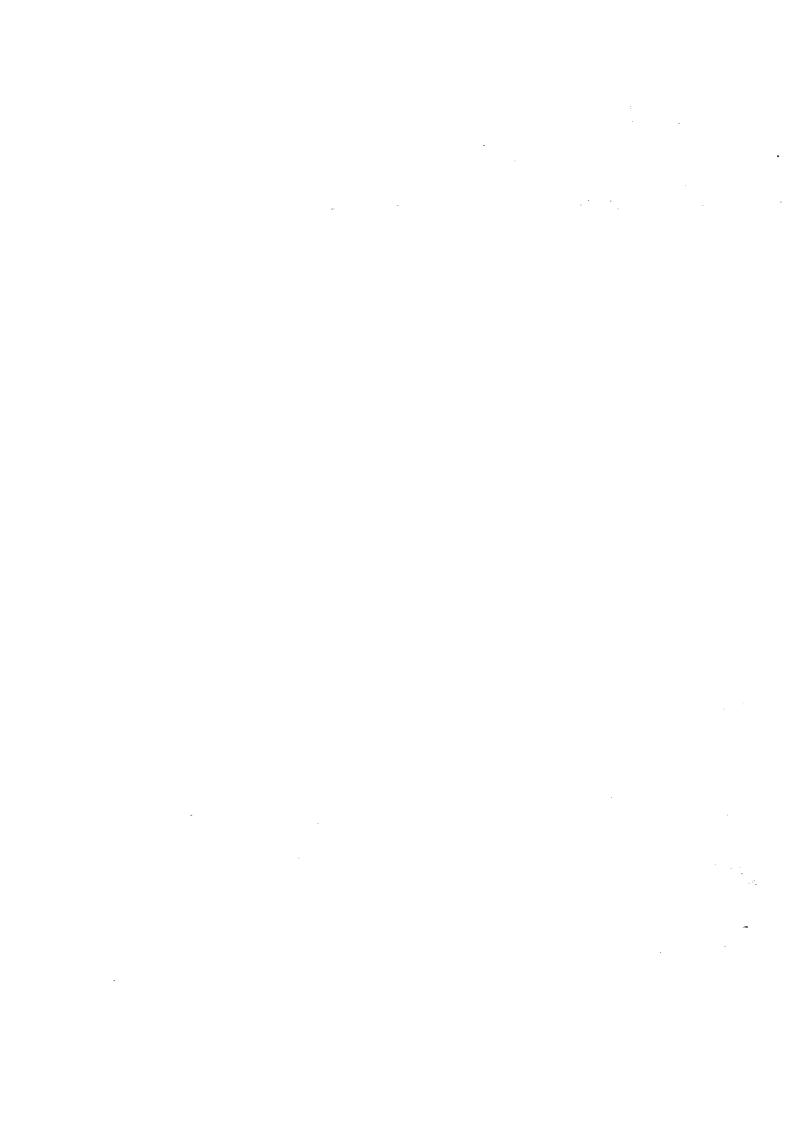
The Lao-Swedish Cooperation in the Road Sector SIDA: SWACH Evaluation Rajasthan: India. Joint Evaluation Report of the Forests, Trees and Pe Evaluacion Independiente del Programa Manejo Sost Cost-effectiveness of Water and Sanitation in Uganda. Cost Effectiveness in the Lao-Swedish Forestry Coo AFREPREN, The African Energy Policy Research Net SAREC Library Support Programme in VIE The International Science Programs of Uppsala Swedish Support to CGIAR Review of the SIDA/CIDA Support to the Water and San Review of the Sweden-Zambia Industrial Co-operation Evaluation of the Competence Development Pr Swedish Balance of Payment Support to Zambia	SIDA SIDA SIDA SIDA SIDA SIDA SIDA SIDA	1994 1994 1994 1994 1994 1994 1994 1995 1995
KODUKANT Supporting local development in Estonia Impact and Effectiveness of Development Cooperation The Pärnu Project. A Regional Business Development Evaluation of BITS Support to the Maritime Sector in E. Russian-Swedish Land Reform Cooperation Demokratiprojektet i Litauen	BITS BITS BITS BITS BITS BITS	1995 1995 1995 1995 1994 1995

1996-11-26

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Sida Studies in Evaluation - 1995/96

96/1 Evaluation and Participation - some lessons. Anders Rudqvist,
 Prudence Woodford-Berger
 Department for Evaluations and Internal Audit
 96/2 Granskning av resultatanalyserna i Sidas landstrategiarbete. Göran Schill
 Department for Evaluations and Internal Audit
 96/3 Developmental Relief? An Issues Paper and an Annotated Bibliography on Linking Relief and Development. Claes Lindahl
 Department for Evaluations and Internal Audit





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