

Evaluation of the Implementation of the Paris Declaration

Donor Study

SWEDEN

Executive Summary

Purpose and background

As part of the agreement on the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness 2005, an international monitoring and evaluation mechanism was introduced. At the meeting in Accra, where the Accra Agenda for Action was endorsed, the first phase of the evaluation was completed. Later the same year Phase 2 was launched. This phase of the evaluation included 28 country evaluations and seven headquarter studies on the implementation of the Paris Declaration. The findings from Phase 1 and Phase 2 respectively will be synthesised and reported at the High Level Forum in South Korea November-December 2011.

This evaluation is one of the seven headquarter studies that together with the country evaluations and a number of special studies will form the synthesis report.

Methodology

The evaluation deals with the Swedish implementation of the Paris Agenda, not with its effects. It is focused on Swedish bilateral development cooperation through Sida's headquarters. It should, however, be noted that the degree of delegation to embassies is high.

The Swedish cooperation through multilateral channels – approximately half of Swedish development cooperation – is mentioned but not analysed. Primary data has been collected through review of documents, interviews and a questionnaire. The analysis is of a qualitative rather than quantitative character.

Overall conclusions

The Paris Declaration and the Accra Agenda for Action are two crucial agreements, which when implemented, increase the effectiveness of development cooperation as tools in achieving development results. It is equally clear that the Paris Declaration and the Accra Agenda for Action cannot be applied uniformly in all countries with which Sweden is a partner in development. Contexts do matter. The principles contained in the Paris Declaration do not carry the same weight in all countries. In some countries, non-alignment is a deliberate choice given the political conditions in that country. This may also change over time. The practical application of the Paris agenda and the Accra Agenda for Action, therefore, needs to be constantly revised and updated as contexts change.

Key lessons

It is not possible to give a firm answer to whether recent changes in Swedish development cooperation have also been a result of the Paris Declaration as many of the elements of the Declaration were already present in Swedish development cooperation before 2005.

The Swedish Government has incorporated much of the Paris Declaration in steering and policy documents and Sweden has been highly active in advancing the aid effectiveness agenda internationally.

The progress of implementation has varied between contexts and sectors. Sweden has a long tradition of emphasising national ownership, and the status in this area seems to be good.

In relation to *alignment* there has been progress in respect to several indicators.

The progress and status in relation to *harmonisation* is satisfactory, and this seems to be the principle in which most achievements have been made.

Despite a number of initiatives from Sida and Swedish government/Ministry for Foreign Affairs much still remains to be done in implementing *managing for results*.

Hardly any signs of progress are found in terms of *mutual accountability*¹, and the practical implications of this principle are not well understood.

The fundamental principles of the Paris Declaration generally enjoy strong support and commitment at all levels of Swedish development cooperation.

Capacity raising measures have been taken and the quality of for example training and guidelines appears to be high.

There are practically no specific incentives, neither at individual nor at organisational level, to facilitate the implementation of the Paris Declaration. What drives the implementation process, apart from formal steering and strong signals by government, is rather the commitment of individuals to contribute to better and more effective aid, as well as a belief that the Paris Declaration can be a part of this endeavour.

The practical application of the Paris Declaration and the Accra Agenda for Action needs to be constantly revised and updated as contexts change.

Key recommendations

Based on the observations and conclusions in this report, the government, the government offices/Ministry for Foreign Affairs and Sida are recommended to address the following issues.

The government is recommended to:

- *advance* the aid effectiveness agenda both internationally and at country level, and, recognising different contexts, operationalise the Paris Declaration and Accra Agenda for Action;
- *maintain* reporting to Parliament on results of international development cooperation, with emphasis on challenges and opportunities to improve aid effectiveness;

¹ Although a reportedly higher degree of predictability due to longer-term commitments might be a sign of progress.

- *communicate* efforts on “Managing for Results” and “Results-based Management”;
- *clarify* the applicability of Paris/Accra in fragile and conflict/post conflict states, Eastern European countries and so called Category 4 countries.

The government offices/Ministry for Foreign Affairs and Sida are recommended to:

- *advance* the aid effectiveness agenda both internationally and at country level, and, recognising different contexts, operationalise the Paris Declaration and Accra Agenda for Action;
- *maintain* the dialogue between the government offices/Ministry for Foreign Affairs and Sida in line with the Joint Action Plan, to facilitate further implementation of the agenda;
- *enhance* the system for competence development in a way that maximises knowledge sharing and learning between headquarters and embassies;
- *include*, in training programmes, training modules covering aid effectiveness, coordination and negotiation in complex environments;
- *ensure* that staff, both at headquarters, and embassies, deepen the experience and expert knowledge of Public Sector Management in a developing country context;
- *enhance* and increase the use of skills of local staff.

The government offices/Ministry for Foreign Affairs is recommended to:

- *communicate* the Paris Declaration and the Accra Agenda for Action, as an instrument for advancing the aid effectiveness agenda;
- *communicate* the relations between the five principles of the Paris Declaration, as well as the meaning and practical implication of each principle, in particular the principles of “Managing for Results” and “Mutual Accountability”;
- *ensure* that results frameworks are useful and easy to understand;
- *develop* means to enable the public, civil society organisations, academics and politicians to better understand how Sweden is delivering aid according to the effectiveness agenda;
- *communicate* the difference and relationship between the policy for global development and international development cooperation.

Sida is recommended to:

- *seize* the opportunity when reorganising Sida to provide the necessary conditions and resources for implementation of the aid effectiveness agenda;
- *ensure* knowledge and understanding among staff of the Swedish governance model;
- *ensure* understanding of the Paris Declaration and Accra Agenda for Action, including the preconditions for implementing the Declaration and Agenda in a particular context; and
- *invest* in competencies, including negotiating skills, knowledge of different aid modalities, public sector management, and sector competencies.