



WORKING PAPER OCTOBER 2024
**SWEDISH MULTI-BI AID AND
DEVELOPMENT EFFECTIVENESS**

Lennart Wohlgemuth and Anna Sjöberg Tibblin

Swedish Multi-Bi Aid and Development Effectiveness

Lennart Wohlgemuth

Anna Sjöberg Tibblin

Working Paper, October 2024

to

The Expert Group for Aid Studies (EBA)

The EBA Working Paper Series constitutes shorter overviews, surveys, mappings and analyses that have been undertaken to bring about discussion and advance knowledge of a particular topic. Working Papers are not subject to any formal approval process by the Expert Group. Just as in the EBA reports, authors are solely responsible for the content, conclusions and recommendations.

Please refer to the present report as: Wohlgemuth, L. and Sjöberg Tibblin, A. (2024), *Swedish Multi-bi Aid and Development Effectiveness*, Working Paper October 2024. The Expert Group for Aid Studies (EBA), Sweden.

This report can be downloaded free of charge at www.eba.se

Cover design by Julia Demchenko

Lennart Wohlgemuth is a board member of the Swedish Development Forum (FUF) and has a lifelong experience of research as well as practical work on development cooperation, recently as Guest Professor at the School of Global Studies, Gothenburg University. He previously worked as the Director of the Nordic Africa Institute for twelve years, and for a number of years with Sida, the Swedish Ministry for Foreign Affairs, IMF and UNDP. He has published extensively on development cooperation.

Anna Sjöberg Tibblin is the Director of the Swedish Development Forum (FUF), where she has also served as both a Program and Project Manager. Her previous roles include managing the youth peace organization PeaceWorks. She has been actively involved in international establishment and initiatives at both organizations, as well as educating and engaging young people in global development issues.

Acknowledgements

We would like to extend a warm thank you to all the embassy staff worldwide who have taken their time to answer questions regarding the topics covered in this report. Without you – no study. We also want to thank EBA for the opportunity to conduct this study and for valuable input throughout the process. Last but not least, we want to thank all the young people – in Sweden and all over the globe – with an interest in global development issues who dedicate their time, energy, intellect and passion in lecture halls, in organizations like FUF, and in volunteer and internship assignments. Your knowledge, skills and commitment are crucial not only for effective development cooperation, but also for what it aims to achieve: a just and sustainable world. Thank you!

Table of Contents

Foreword by EBA	1
Sammanfattning	2
Summary	4
Introduction	6
Background: Multi-bi aid and development effectiveness.....	8
Multilateral development cooperation and multi-bi assistance.....	8
Development effectiveness	11
Swedish policies on development effectiveness.....	16
Tools and instructions for ensuring development effectiveness in the multi-bi support.....	18
Findings	20
Increased importance of multi-bi support	20
A shift in the definition of development effectiveness	23
Varying opportunities for dialogue on development effectiveness.....	28
Conclusions and reflections	42
References.....	47
Appendix	50

Foreword by EBA

The use among OECD donors of earmarked aid through multilateral channels, so called multi-bi support, has been increasing over the years. Multi-bi can result from the earmarking of core support to multilaterals (a “bilateralization” of multilateral aid) or from using multilateral organizations in bilateral aid (a “multilateralization” of bilateral aid).

Sweden’s increase in multi-bi funding has in general been an effect of the latter. At least since 2006, Sida has channelled an increasing share of its bilateral aid through multilateral organizations. However, the earmarking of core contributions (decided by the Government) has increased sixfold since 2018, amounting to over 2.6 billion SEK in 2023. With a total of over 13 billion SEK, multi-bi is now the single largest channel for Sweden’s bilateral aid. This is in line with the Government’s ambition to decrease the share of multilateral core support and to increase the weight on multi-bi aid.

Given the size of multi-bi aid, the effectiveness of this channel will have implications for the effectiveness of Sweden’s aid at large. EBA therefore commissioned this working paper on how Sida works with the internationally agreed development effectiveness principles in its multi-bi support. The authors study how the principles are promoted in, what is labelled the structural, normative, and operational dialogue with Sweden’s multi-bi partners. While the authors note that the effectiveness principles are of great importance to Sida, they find that promoting these principles in relation to multi-bi partners is challenging, in particular concerning the operational dialogue.

We hope that this study will be of relevance to the Swedish development cooperation offices at embassies that work with multi-bi support, but also for those working with development effectiveness at large.

EBA working papers are shorter studies that investigate a question of limited scope or that complements a regular EBA study. Working papers are not subject to a formal decision from the expert group but instead reviewed by the secretariat before publication. The authors are, as with other EBA publications, responsible for the content of the report and its conclusions.

Stockholm, October 2024

Jan Pettersson, Managing Director

Sammanfattning

Denna studie undersöker Sveriges arbete med utvecklingseffektivitet. De internationellt överenskomna principerna om effektivt utvecklings-samarbete – lokalt ägarskap, fokus på resultat, inkluderande partnerskap, transparens och ömsesidigt ansvarstagande – är en del av det Globala partnerskapet för utvecklingseffektivitet. Grunden till dessa principer lades redan under 1960-talet men effektivitetsagendans innehåll och fokus vidareutvecklades avsevärt i samband med antagandet av Paris-deklarationen 2005 och Busankonferensen 2011.

Studien undersöker specifikt hur Sverige arbetar med utvecklings-effektivitet i sitt multi-bilaterala (multi-bi) stöd, det vill säga det bilaterala biståndet som kanaliseras via multilaterala organisationer. I rapporten diskuteras också hinder och möjligheter i implementeringen av utvecklingseffektivitetsprinciperna med syfte att identifiera förbättrings-potential. Studien baseras på en genomgång av relevant dokumentation kring multilaterala organisationer och biståndseffektivitet samt en empirisk analys av Sidas pågående arbete med utvecklingseffektivitet i sitt multi-bi-stöd. Det empiriska material som ligger till grund för studiens resultat och slutsatser har samlats in genom intervjuer med representanter från åtta av Sida biståndskontor i olika partnerländer samt med medarbetare på Sida, UD och UNDP som är eller varit involverade i planering och genomförande av Sidas multi-bi-stöd.

Det svenska multi-bi-stödet har vuxit kraftigt de senaste åren och utgör nu över 40 % av det totala biståndet som kanaliseras via Sida. Som framgår av denna rapport har ökningen i multi-bi-stöd skett parallellt med en förskjutning, främst bland givare, i den (politiska och praktiska) vikt som fästs vid de olika utvecklingseffektivitetsprinciperna – från ägarskap och samordning mot ett starkare fokus på resultat och transparens. Studien pekar på att denna förskjutning inte beaktats tillräckligt i de policyer och direktiv som styr svenskt utvecklingssamarbete – till exempel när det gäller hur man ska hantera utvecklingseffektivitet i förhållande till de multilaterala organisationerna. Detta riskerar att resultera i mindre effektiva insatser.

I rapporten analyseras Sidas dialog med de multilaterala organisationerna kring utvecklingseffektivitet utifrån tre olika kategorier – strukturell, normativ och operativ. Vi ser varierande möjligheter till dialog om utvecklingseffektivitet inom de tre kategorierna, där den bästa potentialen för ett givande samarbete ligger inom den normativa dialogen. Baserat på dessa resultat reflekterar vi över de utmaningar som multi-bi-samarbete

står inför, och över vad som kan göras för att förbättra samarbetet när det gäller utvecklingseffektivitet. Förslag som förs fram är bland annat att uppdatera de regler som styr samspelet mellan Sida och dess multilaterala partners och att gemensamt se över principerna för utvecklingseffektivitet. Vi argumenterar även för att Sverige behöver stärka sin kapacitet och kompetens att hantera, följa upp och utvärdera utvecklingsbiståndet effektivt, i linje med sina höga politiska ambitioner.

Summary

This study focuses on the current status of the internationally agreed development effectiveness principles of country ownership, focus on results, inclusive partnerships, and transparency and mutual accountability. These principles date back to the 1960s, but evolved significantly with the adoption of the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness in 2005 and the Busan conference in 2011. The study specifically investigates how Sweden works with development effectiveness in its multi-bilateral (multi-bi) support, i.e. its bilateral support that is channelled via multilateral organizations. An effort is also made to identify obstacles and opportunities in the implementation of the development effectiveness principles to find potential for improvements. The study includes a document review on aid effectiveness in relation to the multilateral organizations and an empirical analysis of Sida's current work with development effectiveness in its multi-bi support. Empirical material has been collected through interviews with representatives from eight Sida development cooperation offices around the world, Sida's headquarters, the Ministry for Foreign Affairs and UNDP staff involved in the planning and implementation of Sida's multi-bi support.

Swedish multi-bi support has grown significantly in the last few years and now constitutes over 40% of Sida's disbursements. As shown in this report, this development has occurred in parallel with a shift, mainly among donors, in the (political and practical) weight given to the four development effectiveness principles, away from ownership and alignment and towards a stronger focus on results and transparency. Arguably, this shift has not been sufficiently considered in the policies and directives governing Swedish development cooperation – for instance when it comes to how to deal with development effectiveness in relation to the multilateral organizations, potentially resulting in less effective interventions.

In this study, the dialogue on development effectiveness between Sida and the multilateral organizations is structured into three different categories – structural, normative, and operational. We see varying opportunities for dialogue on development effectiveness within the three categories, with the best potential for good cooperation lying within the normative dialogue. Based on these findings, we reflect upon the challenges that multi-bi cooperation faces, and on what can be done to improve the cooperation when it comes to development effectiveness. Suggestions include to review the development effectiveness principles, as well as to

update the rules guiding the interaction between Sida and its multilateral partners. Additionally, we argue that Sweden needs to bolster its capacity and competence to manage and monitor development aid effectively, aligning with its high policy ambitions.

Introduction

In recent decades, the global power balance has shifted from the West towards the East and South, resulting in a multi-polar world. New communication technologies and international production chains have boosted globalization and mutual dependencies. Global challenges like climate change and environmental degradation have caused increasing migration, conflicts, and competition for resources and influence. This has led to a new aid landscape, reduced aid to poorer countries and increasing difficulties for international development organizations to tackle pressing development challenges. (Wohlgemuth and Odén 2019; Rachman 2024; Zhang 2023). Against this backdrop, the development effectiveness agenda, aimed to increase the impact of international development cooperation, is more relevant than ever – but also more difficult to implement.

In parallel with the above developments, multilateral aid organizations like the World Bank and United Nations (UN) agencies have received a growing share of earmarked funding – so called multi-bilateral support (hereafter referred to as ‘multi-bi’ support) – while the share of core support has decreased. In 2020, multi-bi support constituted around 50% of the multilateral organizations’ total budgets (Heinzel et al., 2023). This type of support provides donors with an opportunity to exert influence by affecting the purposes of projects and tailoring reporting. This, in turn, risks leading to less relevant, less efficient, and more unsustainable operations due to top-down management with too little adaptation to local contexts. According to some studies, it also comes with increased transaction costs and distorted spending priorities (Honig, 2018; Reinsberg & Siauwijaya, 2023).

Swedish multi-bi support (i.e. the Swedish aid to multilateral organizations that is channelled via Sida and earmarked for specific purposes) has totalled around 11 billion SEK annually during the last few years. This constitutes over 40% of Sida’s disbursements – for development as well as humanitarian assistance – and around a quarter of total Swedish aid ([Openaid.se](https://openaid.se)). In line with the international trend, Sweden’s new agenda for development cooperation, “Development assistance for a new era – freedom, empowerment and sustainable growth” adopted in December 2023, announces an increased focus on Swedish influence and priorities in multilateral organizations, along with a decreased share of core support (Regeringen, 2023a). The finance plan for 2023 points to the growth of multi-bi support not only via Sida, but also through the share

channelled via the Ministry for Foreign Affairs, MFA (Regeringen, 2023b). The growth of multi-bi aid, and the risks and opportunities associated with earmarking referred to above, highlight the need to explore multi-bi support through the lens of development effectiveness in order to increase the understanding of the implications of aid on pressing development challenges.

Aim, research questions and study design

This study explores how Sweden works with development effectiveness in its multi-bi support. It also sheds light on how Sweden's multilateral partners have worked with development effectiveness by exploring the findings and conclusions of previous reports, studies and evaluations. The findings and analysis are based on a document review coupled with empirical material collected through semi-structured interviews.

The interviews were conducted with staff members at eight Swedish development cooperation offices at embassies that work with multi-bi support in different countries and regions. These include Afghanistan, Ethiopia, Rwanda, Bangladesh, Mozambique, Kenya, Liberia and Latin America (regional, based on Colombia). The selection of countries is based on an ambition to include both fragile and more stable contexts spread across the globe. A couple of background interviews were also held with representatives from Sida's headquarter in Stockholm, the Swedish Ministry for Foreign Affairs and from UNDP's headquarter in New York in order to obtain information on available documentation and to understand current policies and processes. In total, 17 interviews were conducted for the study.

As the study is qualitative in nature and focuses on processes rather than specific outcomes, it does not dig too deep into the question of whether each and every indicator associated with the development effectiveness agenda has been fulfilled or not. Rather, it uses a more analytical approach to try to understand how Sida works with development effectiveness in relation to its multi-bi partners. An important part of the study is to identify obstacles and opportunities in the implementation of the development effectiveness principles to draw conclusions concerning potentials for improvements.

Background: Multi-bi aid and development effectiveness

The following sections provide a background on multilateral development cooperation and multi-bi aid in general, and on how current Swedish policy frameworks relate to multi-bi aid. This is followed by sections outlining how international debates and agendas on aid effectiveness have developed over time, and how Sweden has handled development effectiveness in relation to its multilateral partners.

Multilateral development cooperation and multi-bi assistance

Multilateral assistance constitutes core aid contributions from governments to multilateral aid organizations that are pooled with other contributions and disbursed at the institution's discretion (OECD, DAC 2024). This type of aid is channelled through a large number of organizations, the main ones being:

- UN agencies, including for instance the United Nations Development Program (UNDP), the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), the World Food Program (WFP), the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), UN Women, and the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA).
- Multilateral development banks such as the World Bank Group and the four regional development banks.
- The European Union (EU), which includes the Multiannual Financial Framework 2021–2027 that has established new instruments, including the Neighbourhood, Development and International Cooperation Instrument (NDICI) – Global Europe as well as development activities financed by the European Commission's own budget.

Multilateral assistance that is not pooled and disbursed at the multilateral institution's discretion is classified as bilateral assistance and referred to as multi-bi aid. Multi-bi assistance has become a major feature of the funding profile of some of the UN specialized agencies, funds and programs. This type of aid entails earmarked voluntary contributions from bilateral

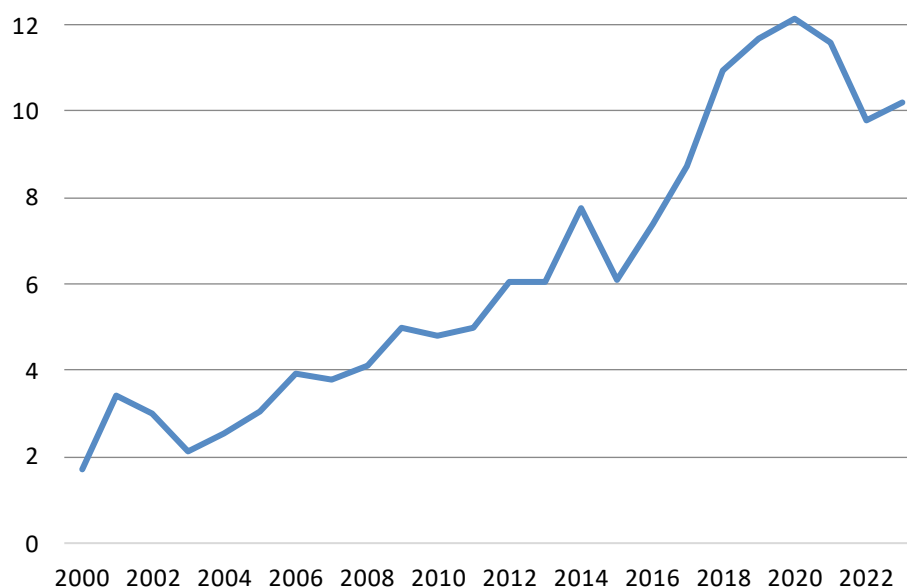
donors to a multilateral agency, supplementary to their core contributions. Agreements can vary significantly. In some cases, they involve detailed specifications requiring that the funds are used for a particular project. In other cases, there is more flexibility, allowing the funds to be used more freely, for a particular country, region or thematic area. Programs and projects are administered by a multilateral organization, which reports back to the bilateral donor on results.

A key feature of multi-bi support, although disputed in some studies, is that it is viewed as cost effective for the donor country since it saves administrative resources. Concerns have however been raised about the increasing volume of multi-bi aid in relation to the volume of core contributions since earmarked contributions can become a mechanism for donors to gain influence over multilateral organizations. This endangers the multilateral character of the organizations (Lundgren & Strindevall, 2023; Reinsberg, 2017). Moreover, funding becomes more unpredictable. This shift has led the boards of some UN organizations to experience diminished control over budgets, as donor priorities may overshadow multilateral mandates in guiding their actions. Amidst global challenges such as pandemics and climate change that demand strong international leadership, core financing for these efforts is dwindling. Consequently, the issue of multilateral finance has become a crucial topic for research and dialogue concerning the future of the multilateral system in recent years (Dag Hammarskjöld Foundation, 2023).

Sida's multi-bi support

During the last few years, Sweden's support (core and earmarked) to multilateral organizations has constituted around 60% of the total aid budget ([Openaid.se](https://openaid.se)). This underscores the importance of multilateral cooperation in Sweden's development strategy. The core support to the multilateral organizations is handled by the MFA, while Sida manages the majority of the multi-bi support. The multi-bi support has grown substantially over the last couple of decades, from around 17% (1,7 billion SEK) of Sida's disbursements in the year 2000 to over 40% (10,2 billion) in 2023 (see Figure 1).

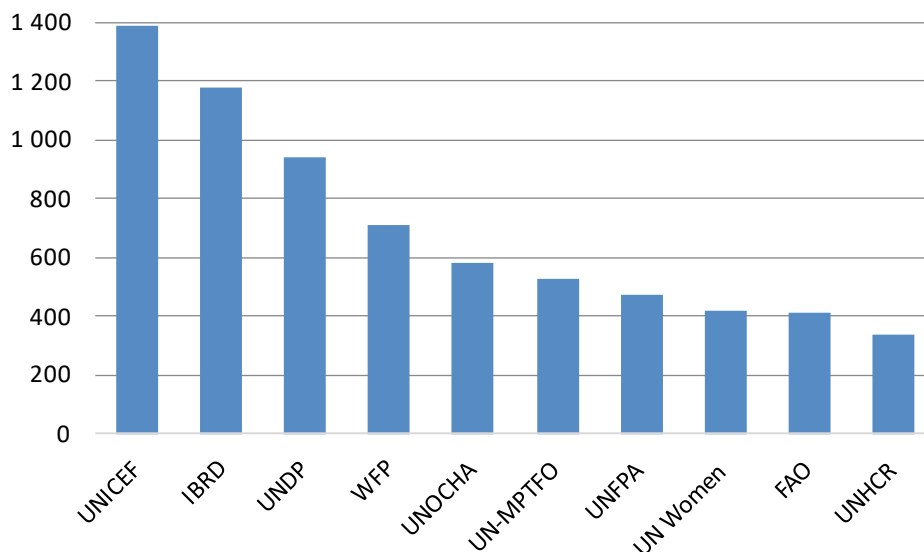
**Figure 1: Multi-bi disbursements through Sida, 2000–2023
(current billion SEK)**



Source: [Openaid.se](https://openaid.se)

According to Sida, its multi-bi aid is characterized by a strategic and substantial financial commitment to multilateral organizations, with an emphasis on achieving meaningful development outcomes, particularly in fragile and conflict-affected contexts. Sida emphasizes the importance of achieving tangible development results through its multi-bi support (Sida 2023). The UN is the primary recipient of Sida’s multi-bi support, with 82% of the funds channeled through its agencies (see Figure 2). Sida’s multi-bi portfolio also includes cooperation with the EU, the World Bank Group and other multilateral development banks. These partnerships are, according to Sida, crucial for leveraging resources and expertise in support of shared development objectives.

Figure 2: Top 10 recipients of Swedish multi-bi aid in 2023 (million SEK)



Source: [Openaid.se](https://openaid.se)

A significant portion of the multi-bi aid is directed towards critical development areas such as poverty eradication, climate change, human rights, democracy, gender equality and humanitarian assistance. These priorities align with the overarching goals of Swedish development cooperation, as well as with the 2030 Agenda for sustainable development and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The relatively flexible and soft earmarking of Sida’s multi-bi support, in comparison with that of other donors, is meant to enable Sida’s multilateral partners to swiftly adapt their operations in response to emerging global challenges, as in the case of the Covid-19 pandemic. At the same time, Sida’s multi-bi support is strategically tailored, entailing both financial contributions and engagement in governance and policy dialogues. This dual approach aims to facilitate funding as well as Swedish influence on the operational strategies and overall effectiveness of multilateral organizations.

Development effectiveness

The Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness (OECD, 2005), commonly known as the Paris Agenda, was established in 2005 and has significantly shaped the methodology of development assistance. The agenda set out to improve the quality of aid and to strengthen its impact on development cooperation. To accomplish this, it outlined a roadmap including five principles for aid effectiveness: ownership, harmonization, alignment,

managing for result and mutual accountability. Its principles have since then been the benchmark for assessing the effectiveness of development cooperation, but they have also been subject to revisions. Currently, the global agenda on development effectiveness is consolidated in four key principles, agreed upon in 2011 at the Busan High-Level Forum on Aid Effectiveness. These four principles are used for assessing development effectiveness in this study (see Box 1).

Box 1: The four effectiveness principles agreed upon in Busan in 2011 and later adopted by the Global Partnership for Effective Development Cooperation (GPEDC)

Country Ownership: Countries set their own national development priorities and development partners align their support accordingly while using country systems.

Focus on results: Development cooperation seeks to achieve measurable results by using country led results frameworks and monitoring and evaluation systems.

Inclusive partnerships: Development partnerships are inclusive recognizing the different and complimentary roles of all actors.

Transparency and Mutual accountability: Countries and their development partners are accountable to each other and to their respective constituencies. They are jointly responsible for ensuring development cooperation information is publicly available.

Source: GPEDC, 2024.

A historical overview

For many decades, multilateral organizations have engaged in policy dialogue with bilateral donors, civil society organizations (CSOs) and recipient countries on key process dimensions of development cooperation. In the 1960s and 1970s, this included a focus on promoting popular participation in development cooperation. In the 1980s and 1990s, there was a strong focus on limiting the use of conditionality and untying aid (Wohlgemuth and Ewald, 2020). In their engagement in the governance of development cooperation, multilateral organizations placed considerable emphasis on the importance of ownership by developing country actors and citizens, not only governments, i.e. on democratic ownership.

Toward the end of the 1990s, the issue of more effective development cooperation was accelerated within the Development Assistance Committee (DAC) of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD). This first led to the Rome Declaration on Harmonization and Alignment in 2003, and then culminated in the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness in 2005. A key element of the Paris Declaration was the decision to tie each of the five principles to a set of indicators in order to allow for the measurement of progress over time.

A third high-level meeting, to follow up the implementation of the Paris Declaration, was held in Accra, Ghana in 2008. The commitments of the declaration were confirmed and further elaborated on some points, such as alignment, increased transparency in the work of donors, and the predictability of aid flows. The participation of CSOs in their own right was also acknowledged, and additional emphasis was put on the need for broad-based and democratic ownership of development, beyond central governments. Additional, ambitious, and time-bound commitments were made, but in many cases not adhered to due to the start of the global financial and economic crisis shortly after the conclusion of the meeting in Accra (Wohlgemuth and Ewald, 2020).

A fourth high-level meeting in Busan, South Korea, took place in late 2011. As part of the preparations for this meeting, an international evaluation of achievements was published (Wood et al., 2008). The evaluation concluded that some progress had been made, but that the donors were far from achieving the commitments made in 2005. In general, recipient countries' progress was more significant than that of donors. The recommendations of the evaluation suggested continued high-level political commitment, an improvement in mutual accountability, that recipients take full responsibility for their own development, and that donors take full responsibility for living up to their commitments.

At the Busan meeting, traditional and new development stakeholders, including China, agreed to restructure development cooperation around four basic principles, as presented in Box 1 (OECD, 2012). The “new”, emerging actors were only willing to adhere to commitments on an explicitly voluntary basis, and it was clear that not all Southern actors would be willing to move at the same speed. The Busan forum also created a new venue through which to carry the aid effectiveness discussion forward, called the Global Partnership for Effective Development Cooperation (GPEDC). The governance of the partnership was to be the responsibility of a steering committee. (OECD, 2012).

GPEDC is today a multi-stakeholder platform to advance the effectiveness of development efforts by all actors in delivering results that are long-lasting and that contribute to the achievement of the SDGs. Its major instrument is its biannual monitoring exercise, which since 2013 has tracked progress towards the effectiveness principles and is the recognized source of data and evidence on compliance with its commitments.

The monitoring exercise has two fundamental objectives. The first is to assess how effectively recipient governments have established a conducive environment to lead national development efforts, enable the full participation of the whole of society and maximize the impact of joint efforts. The second is to assess if development partners have delivered their support in a way that focuses on country-owned development priorities and that draws on existing country systems and capacities to reduce the burden on governments and ensure sustainability of results (OECD/UNDP, 2019).

The latest GPEDC summit was held in Geneva in 2022. At that meeting, Sweden, the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Indonesia were appointed co-chairs for the partnership for the coming three years. The Swedish government appointed Sida to handle the co-chairmanship. The Geneva Summit Declaration and its commitments to advance development effectiveness led to The Global Partnership Advocacy and Outreach Plan, unpacking the ‘Advocacy and Outreach’ core activity of the 2023–2026 GPEDC work program. The objective of the plan is to foster political awareness to promote behavioral effectiveness.

During the period between 2005 and today, a weakening of interest in some of the development effectiveness principles can be noticed. Therefore, much still remains for the development effectiveness agenda to be implemented as originally proposed (Keijser et al., 2017; GPEDC, 2019).

With its mandate within the UN system to act both as a coordinator and as the integrator agency in policy issues, UNDP led and promoted the development effectiveness agenda within the UN system for many years. With the UN reform in 2019, some of UNDP’s duties, in particular the coordination role within the UN system, were however moved to the newly created Development Coordination Office (DCO), placed in the Secretariat (UN, 2019). This weakened UNDP’s role at the same time as the DCO failed to take on the coordinating role. However, some duties remained with UNDP, which is still acting as the integrating agency within

the UN system and chairs the GPEDC's monitoring work. UNDP is therefore still the agency within the UN system with the mandate to supervise the implementation of development effectiveness.

The multilateral organizations and development effectiveness

Although almost all multilateral organizations endorse the development effectiveness agenda, there is currently no central instruction on how it should be implemented. It is instead up to each agency to determine how, and to what extent, it should work to fulfil the agenda's objectives.

To deal with the weakening interest for development effectiveness both within the OECD community and in the UN, UNDP has recently been working actively to find new avenues to strengthen recipient country leadership in development. One strategy has been to develop nationally owned Integrated National Financing Frameworks (INFFs) for each recipient country (see Box 2). Country frameworks and country programs are other instruments within which questions related to the methodology of development cooperation, such as development effectiveness, are being raised by UNDP.

Box 2: Integrated National Financing Framework

An Integrated National Financing Framework (INFF) is a tool to implement some of the international financial agreements on the country level. It helps countries strengthen planning processes and overcome existing impediments to financing sustainable development and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). It lays out the full range of financing sources – domestic and international sources of both public and private finance – and allows countries to develop a strategy to increase investment, manage risks and achieve sustainable development priorities, as identified in a country's national sustainable development strategy.

Source: inff.org

Swedish policies on development effectiveness

Sweden was one of the early supporters of the initiative that in 2005 led to the Paris Declaration and took a very active part in the work. For instance, Sweden operated as chair of the committee within DAC that acted as a hub in the preparation of the declaration, as well as in the monitoring of its implementation. The Swedish positions were developed in the government offices following consultations in a working group including representatives from Sida and a number of CSOs. Sweden's engagement subsequently led it to become appointed co-chair for GPEDC for the period 2023–2026. To make this work possible, strategies for working with development effectiveness were developed by the government.

The government policy currently guiding Sweden's multilateral development cooperation is "Development assistance for a new era – freedom, empowerment and sustainable growth" (Ministry for Foreign Affairs, 2023) adopted in December 2023. However, since this study and the interviews conducted for it concern Sweden's work with development effectiveness in its multi-bi support during the last few years, it is also relevant to relate to the previous policy framework guiding this work, i.e. the strategy for multilateral development policy from 2017 (MFA, 2017).

In this strategy, the Swedish government stated that the effectiveness of development cooperation is based on strategic governance, a focus on priority areas, and coherence between different Swedish actors. The policy emphasized the importance of utilizing a broad spectrum of influence and governance tools to maximize results. It moreover stressed the need to ensure that the multilateral support complements Sweden's bilateral efforts and that it is aimed at reducing poverty and oppression, also in middle-income countries. According to the policy, effectiveness in multilateral cooperation includes several dimensions, including resource and cost efficiency, cost-effectiveness, results orientation, transparency and accountability, coordination and collaboration, adaptation to changed conditions, and flexibility and innovation (MFA, 2017).

When it comes to development effectiveness, the strategy from 2017 and the current policy agenda, the so called "reform agenda", have much in common. The reform agenda stresses that Swedish aid should be focused on efficiency, long-term planning, and results and transparency. It highlights

Sweden's role in addressing global challenges and in strengthening the effectiveness of development cooperation. According to the government, the reform agenda aims to optimize the use of aid to achieve greater impact and added value, while maintaining a strong emphasis on the principles of responsibility and anti-corruption. The importance of ensuring the effectiveness of Swedish aid is underscored through several strategies and measures to ensure that aid is results-oriented, cost-effective, and contributes to sustainable development and poverty reduction.

In its appropriation letter for 2024, the Swedish government also instructs Sida, in order to achieve an effective, results-oriented and catalytic aid, to report:

1. How the agency, within the framework of Sweden's co-chairmanship in the Global Partnership for Effective Development Cooperation (GPEDC), has worked for efficiency with a focus on results, transparency, anti-corruption and evaluation issues. Sida should report the work in the agency's annual report until the year 2026.
2. How the agency has changed working methods so that administrative costs and transaction costs as well as transaction channels can decrease in Swedish aid operations (Regeringen, 2023b).

The operational strategy for Sida 2024–2026 furthermore states that an extended dialogue with the public representatives of partner countries is a prerequisite for ownership and sustainable efforts. Interaction, complementarity and transparency should, the strategy states, be sought in dialogue with other donors active in the same area, and Sida should take advantage of synergies between humanitarian, development and peace efforts. Such cooperation should prevent conflict, strengthen societies' resilience to crises, and reduce humanitarian needs. Sida should also consider the four international principles for effective development cooperation: national ownership, a focus on results, inclusive partnerships, and transparency and joint accountability (Sida, 2024).

Apparent in the above government and Sida policy statements is a shift in the definition of development effectiveness away from ownership and towards results and transparency, mirroring the international trend observed in the past few years.

Tools and instructions for ensuring development effectiveness in the multi-bi support

Historically, the majority of Sweden’s multilateral support has been channeled as core support. Sweden has, for this purpose, developed a system for monitoring the extent to which the multilateral organizations that receive support follow the rules and priorities that have been agreed upon. This system also applies to the multi-bi support. It includes active Swedish presence in the boards of the multilateral organizations as well as annual high-level meetings between the parties. Extensive cooperation between the MFA and Sida has also been developed, where Sida through field visits collects experiences and learnings to bring into the MFA’s dialogue with the multilateral organizations. Sweden is also a member of MOPAN, a network of donor country member states established in 2013 as an informal entity that aims to improve the performance of the multilateral system through collaborative monitoring and information exchange. MOPAN assesses the performance of the multilateral organizations with the aim of improving their efficiency, also seen from the perspective of the development effectiveness principles (MOPAN, 2024).

The policies addressed above guide Sida’s work with development effectiveness – also in relation to the multi-bi support. Sida should, both in the preparation, implementation, monitoring and follow-up on projects, programs and support, follow the principles stated in these policies. These were earlier manifested in various policy documents, such as “Sida’s Policy for Capacity development” from 2000 and “How to Start Working with a Program Based Approach” from 2017. Today they are documented in instructions in the Tracks system. Tracks is a collection of detailed instructions that guides Sida’s planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of interventions. Aid effectiveness is, as stated in Tracks, grounded in the principles outlined at the Busan Partnership for Effective Development Co-operation in 2011, i.e. country ownership, a focus on results, inclusive partnerships, transparency and accountability (Sida, 2023).

Tracks outlines several difficulties in attaining effective development aid, emphasizing the importance of adhering to the principles of development effectiveness when dealing with government actors, multilateral organizations, international and local non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and private companies.

Tracks moreover emphasizes the need to assess the extent to which multilateral partners adhere to the effectiveness principles, in particular whether ownership is respected in relation to national and local partners and, ultimately, the beneficiaries. The analysis of multi-bi contributions in Tracks should cover how priorities are set, how funds are allocated and managed, and whether there is an effort to develop local capacity that allows for a gradual handover to national actors.

Multi-bi contributions should, according to the Tracks instructions, align with the organization's corporate mandate and strategies, forming part of the multilateral organization's own country/regional program or country partnership framework. For UN Agencies, interventions need to align with the UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (UNSDCF, previously known as UNDAF), in cases where such frameworks exist.

Moreover, the guiding documents of the multilateral organization should align with the host country's development plan or strategy. In appraising support to global or regional initiatives, considerations include how and where decisions are made and whether the intervention is effective. There is a focus on subsidiarity in decision-making to enhance development effectiveness and to facilitate alignment and adaptation to the local context. Sida aims to avoid contributing to uncoordinated, headquarter-driven, standalone, and highly earmarked projects. This approach seeks to enhance aid effectiveness, both in relation to the multilateral organizations, demonstrating how to be a good multilateral donor, and in relation to host countries, fulfilling commitments to development effectiveness (Sida, 2023).

Findings

This chapter presents the study's main findings in relation to the overarching question of how Sweden deals with the implementation of the development effectiveness agenda in its multi-bi support in its day-to-day operations.

Increased importance of multi-bi support

Multi-bi support has over time become a prominent feature of Swedish development cooperation. Historically, a significant part of bilateral assistance has flowed directly to the recipient country's government. This led to a close collaboration between Sweden, through Sida, and the recipient country's authorities and institutions, built on a foundation of mutual trust. However, due to the rapid increase in the volume of Swedish aid, starting in 1968 with the introduction of the target to provide one percent of Sweden's gross national income (GNI) in aid, Sida has needed to seek new partners to serve as channels for aid distribution. Simultaneously, trust between donors and recipient governments over time decreased for a number of reasons, such as democratic backsliding, shrinking space for civil society, and corruption scandals. As a result, the major share of bilateral aid is today channeled through various non-governmental partners, including multilateral organizations. The importance of multi-bi support today is well illustrated in the table below, which displays how bilateral aid to the countries in focus in this study was disbursed across different types of partners in 2023.

Table 1: Sida aid budgets and shares going via different partners, 2023

Country/region	Total budget (MSEK)	Multi-lateral orgs. (%)	NGO/CSOs (%)	Public sector (%)	Academic institution (%)	Other* (%)
Afghanistan	894	44	53	0.8	1.8	0,5
Bangladesh	395	64	29	0.9	5.5	0.3
Ethiopia	803	53	35	5	6	0.3
Kenya	474	29	54	6.9	4	6
Latin America	27	0	100	0	0	0
Liberia	334	44	39	9.4	4	3.6
Mozambique	800	31	41	22	4	2.9
Rwanda	293	3	46	30	19	1.3

*This category includes private sector, public-private partnerships and other donors.

Source: [Openaid.se](https://openaid.se) (budgets include humanitarian aid).

Multi-bi support has thus within this millennium transformed from making up a small part of Swedish aid to constituting a major channel for development assistance. The interviewees described this way of working, given current circumstances, as efficient for both administrative and strategic reasons. This is illustrated in the following statement by a Sida representative in Ethiopia.

Half of the disbursements go through multilateral organizations, with the three largest being UNICEF, the International Organization for Migration (IOM) and the World Bank. The significant proportion of multilateral partners is due, among other factors, to their greater capacity to absorb substantial resources, which is crucial when focusing on the portfolio and the number of interventions. They are also important partners in the strategic dialogue with the Ethiopian government, especially since the current strategy limits direct Swedish support to the Ethiopian state. (Sida representative, Ethiopia)

The Sida representatives in Bangladesh and Kenya similarly described how they are restricted from having direct contacts with the government, and why it therefore is more efficient to work through the multilateral organizations.

We do not work directly with the state in Bangladesh. We work with and through multilateral organizations which do work with the state. (Sida representative, Bangladesh)

In Kenya we mostly avoid working through the government. This is due to difficulties in the past with regard to election problems and corruption, but mainly for administrative reasons. It is much easier and less administratively burdensome to work via the World Bank or a UN agency. In this way, we avoid getting involved in the many complicated administrative problems in working directly with the government. (Sida representative, Kenya)

Also in Latin America, there is little direct contact between Sida and the different national governments, and aid is largely channeled through the multilateral organizations. The reasons for this are however different from those referred to in the above examples, as illustrated below.

Regional cooperation in Latin America focuses on transboundary and common issues that need regional solutions. We do not work through individual states, but we do in some instances support regional processes led by various states in the region. One such example is the Quito process, coordinating a joint response to the Venezuelan migration crisis. Inter-governmental regional bodies in the region are generally quite weak. For this and other reasons, most of the support is channeled via multilateral organizations which overall represent a third of the portfolio. (Regional Unit Latin America)

The cooperation between Sida and its multilateral partners looks very different in the different countries. It ranges from what can almost be seen as core support, i.e. a soft form of earmarking, to more specified support. Most common is that Sida supports a specific project or a slightly broader program where detailed plans and activities have been worked out together with the multilateral partner in the country. Two examples of such projects are the World Bank-supported project for energy development in Mozambique and the UNIDO-supported project for inclusive economic growth in Liberia.

The softer form of earmarking is less common. But in some countries, like Bangladesh, Liberia and Ethiopia, there is a trend towards funding resembling core support to multilateral organizations for their general activities and programs. Also in Kenya, Sida contributes with a form of assistance resembling core support to the development of the coordination between UN agencies through the Resident Coordinator's Office. There are also examples of funding channeled via special funds administered by UN organizations, such as the two funds for Afghanistan – one administered by the World Bank and the other by the Resident Coordinator's Office.

Rwanda constitutes a special case. The lack of trust in multilateral organizations as a consequence of how the handling of the genocide in 1994 was perceived by the current government gives multilateral organizations very limited space to work in the country, as illustrated here:

In Rwanda, there are presently no restrictions to work with the government. For historical reasons and also because of the emphasis within the program for the support to democratic development and human rights, a major part of the funds is channeled via NGOs and civil society. Moreover, for the case of social protection, Sweden has delegated its funds to British aid (FCDO) which in turn works directly with the Rwandan government in the area. Only a very small part of the funds is channeled via multi-bi, in fact only one project which supports “UN as one” via a fund to support cooperation within the UN family in the form of Joint Programs. (Sida representative, Rwanda)

All these different ways of handling support via multilateral organizations fall under the heading of multi-bi support. Hence, multi-bi support can be managed very differently in different countries and contexts. One reason for this is the level of trust between Sweden (Sida) and the respective multilateral organization.

A shift in the definition of development effectiveness

Today we see signs of relaxation of the development effectiveness principles at a global level that can partly be attributed to the impatience of the donor community. Immediate results are expected from interventions, while sustainable development results typically take time to achieve. The many technical flaws in implementing the principles and political problems in both recipient and donor countries decrease the legitimacy of the development effectiveness system even further (ECDPM, 2011).

There is presently concern within UNDP, the UN agency with the mandate to supervise the implementation of development effectiveness, regarding the status of the development effectiveness agenda both within the international community and the UN itself. Of particular worry is the lack of ownership of development agendas by recipient countries (Interview with UNDP representative).

The movement away from the development effectiveness principles is confirmed by every person interviewed for this study. There is very little support for the principles in the present rhetoric of donors. The focus on the principles of ownership and harmonization is waning, while the principles of results and transparency are seen as increasingly important, as illustrated in the following statements by Sida staff in Bangladesh and Mozambique:

When I compare how we worked with regard to development effectiveness and in particular ownership in the beginning of this millennium, I can see a tremendous change not only in Sida but within the whole aid community. One problem is that the Paris agenda was pushed too far in terms of coordination and harmonization. Lots of groups and subgroups and sub-sub-groups were created... Terms of Reference (ToR) for each group would be negotiated in endless meetings... Real-world problems got less and less time. (Sida representative, Bangladesh)

I can see a slowdown in attention and adherence to the principles of the Paris Agenda. It is no longer high on the agenda and the principles are not prioritized in how aid and development cooperation are carried out. This view is reflected in the concrete experience from Mozambique where there was a strong implementation of the principles of the Paris Agenda up to a certain point, but after a crisis in the country a decline was experienced. (Sida representative, Mozambique)

This shift has occurred in parallel with a decrease in government-to-government support. In Mozambique, most of the dialogue between donors and the government occurred as part of the implementation of the General Budget Support (GBS) up until 2015. Budget support was supposed to open up for improved ownership by the government of the partner country, reducing transaction costs and making the budget process more transparent to the donors, providing a potential for them to influence it at an early stage. Today, Sweden does not provide budget support, and few donors do. The dialogue between the donors and the government therefore needs to find new channels, such as via multilateral organizations. In the interview, the Sida staff in Mozambique reflected on the implications of this shift for the dialogue with the government:

The basis for the Paris Agenda was that there was trust between donors and recipients in development cooperation. Through the great corruption scandal discovered in 2016 in Mozambique, this trust disappeared and therefore also many of the building blocks of the Paris Agenda. Budget support was an important such building block and included a large number of methods for how to conduct a good and effective dialogue between the parties. This was completely coming to an end and since then, efforts have been concentrated on how to develop an alternative strategy for aid interventions in Mozambique. (Sida representative, Mozambique)

Based on interviews with high-ranking officials in EU member states, a recent report concludes that EU aid is currently undergoing significant transformation (ECDPM, 2024). It is shifting from a focus on poverty alleviation, human rights, ownership and the attainment of the SDGs to a focus on promoting European interests, such as trade and access to raw materials (ECDPM, 2024). This is a change that has direct effects on development effectiveness from a principles perspective.

Also in Sweden, development cooperation is more and more seen as a foreign policy tool to advance national interests, particularly in areas like trade. In Sweden's reform agenda, this emphasis on trade and investment is prominent and explicitly linked to development effectiveness and connected to economic development. This is also reflected in the below statement by a Sida representative in Kenya:

I want to emphasize how the aid effectiveness agenda and the connection to trade are brought up in connection with Kenya's context, and how aid and trade are often strongly linked to the private sector in the recipient country, which reflects a strategy where trade becomes part of the aid strategy. This illustrates how aid is not only seen as a tool for direct support, but also as a driver for sustainable economic development through trade-related efforts. (Sida representative, Kenya)

The Swedish Chamber of Commerce (Kommerskollegium) is the government authority responsible for a large part of this policy on trade and investment. Within the framework of their work, Business Sweden –

an organization jointly owned by the state and the business sector, that supports and promotes Swedish exports and investments in Sweden – has been given an important role in linking business and aid. The project management role that Business Sweden has is to be strengthened through increased presence in strategic partner countries. A report from 2023 by diplomat Harald Sandberg proposes a focus on identifying the need for technical cooperation, government-to-government cooperation, capacity-building measures, feasibility studies, and on financing solutions at an early stage to make projects commercially viable (Sandberg 2023).

The Sida representative in Bangladesh elaborates on making stronger connections between development cooperation and business in the country:

There is a lot of pressure on us here in Bangladesh to increase cooperation with the Swedish Business community. We are presently working on how to use Business Sweden in our collaboration and how business can be involved more in some areas. This works out quite well in some areas, but is more difficult in others. It all points to a new focus in aid for the coming years...

We are currently working with women in the industrial areas with the aim of strengthening female small entrepreneurship (in this area we work both with UNDP and UNCDF). Market system development is very central but often disregarded and something we have highlighted, but the main focus is on facilitating a just green transition of the Readymade Garment (RMG) industry, where we both work with the enabling environment as well as more direct support to the private sector. But it proves difficult to scale up projects with regard to women in Bangladesh. In most cases, we do operate as competitors with other donors in this field rather than as collaborators. (Sida representative, Bangladesh)

From a development effectiveness perspective, there are limitations on how to coordinate efforts with other donors in the field of trade as it is characterized by competition. The principles of country ownership and transparency are also more difficult to ensure for these reasons. Moreover,

when working with multi-bi support, the multilateral organizations have rules on open international competition, which does not go well with prioritizing business from one single state.

However, despite the above accounts and the shift in focus from ownership and harmonization to results and transparency, the development effectiveness principles (Box 1), remain surprisingly important in the actual implementation of Swedish development cooperation. Interviewees argue that ownership, for instance, is a necessity to ensure sustainability of results and that the target groups benefit from the interventions:

Long-term results in development cooperation requires long-term perspectives in donor behavior. (Sida representative, Kenya)

At the same time, the question of ownership is today difficult to apply in some contexts, such as Afghanistan:

We have to face the fact that the Paris Agenda's focus on ownership is difficult to apply in certain situations, such as in Afghanistan after the Taliban takeover, where direct support to the government is not possible and where work must instead focus on basic human needs outside the traditional system-enhancing activities. (Sida representative, Afghanistan)

In all interviews, examples of ways to harmonize support with government plans and efforts when possible were provided. Harmonization was included as a development effectiveness principle in the Paris Agenda but was removed in the Busan update. Instead, it was incorporated into the new principle of inclusive partnership. Nevertheless, it is evidently still part of the implementation of Swedish development cooperation. In some interviews, the question of harmonization and coordination between donors was highlighted as an increasingly important objective to avoid collisions and overlaps in the implementation of similar programs. This is seen as especially important in countries where many donors are present, such as in Mozambique and Kenya.

Varying opportunities for dialogue on development effectiveness

As established, multi-bi support constitutes a growing share of Swedish aid. The support is strategically tailored to, among other things, facilitate Swedish influence on the operational strategies of multilateral organizations.

Sweden's new agenda for development cooperation highlights Sweden's role in strengthening the effectiveness of development cooperation. Although almost all multilateral organizations endorse the development effectiveness agenda, there is currently no central instruction on how it should be implemented. It is instead up to each organization to determine how, and to what extent, it should work to uphold the agenda's principles. This allows Sweden, through Sida, to contribute to shaping the agenda and working to improve the effectiveness of multilateral development efforts.

Even though the possibility to exert influence on the multilateral organizations is one of the motivations behind the increased share of multi-bi support, the actual possibilities to influence vary from area to area and agency to agency. This is due to many reasons, such as multiple donors with different priorities, and challenging local contexts.

A central feature of the cooperation between Sida and its multilateral partners in specific country settings is the dialogue held between the parties. Being an important aspect of the multi-bi interaction, the dialogue provides possibilities for Sida to influence its multilateral partners with regard to development effectiveness. The dialogue can be seen as comprising three different components: one focusing on structural issues, one on normative and one on operative issues. When analyzing Sida's work with development effectiveness in its multi-bi support, and the prospects for influencing the multilateral partners with regard to the effectiveness principles, we depart from these three dialogue components rather than specific indicators associated with the development effectiveness agenda.

a) The structural dialogue

The structural dialogue can be said to deal with the foundations of development cooperation: how poverty alleviation is obtained; how to reach the beneficiaries of the various interventions; how to anchor the interventions in the society where they are implemented; how to ensure

sustainability; how to collaborate with other donors; and how to measure results. In other words, it relates to the principles of country ownership, focus on results, inclusive partnership and transparency and mutual accountability – the pillars of the effectiveness agenda (See Box 1).

These issues are difficult to handle in countries with governance and corruption problems where cooperation with the government is challenging, such as Ethiopia and Bangladesh, and to some extent also Kenya and Mozambique. It becomes even more difficult in countries with authoritarian rule, such as Afghanistan.

Being in the special position of acting in every country, the multilateral organizations are better positioned and more inclined to maintain closer relations with governments in different countries. Working through multilateral channels therefore ensures some degree of coordination with government agendas, policy plans and actions. The importance of an intervention being in line with, or at least not outright at odds with, the efforts of the national government is something that all interviewees agree upon as a condition for ensuring long term-results and sustainability. This is, however, dealt with in different ways in the different countries. Afghanistan is an extreme case in this regard, as illustrated in the below quote from the interview with the Sida representative in the country:

Afghanistan has faced unique challenges in the realm of aid effectiveness. The focus on ownership and partnership, which is central to the aid effectiveness agenda, does not directly apply to Afghanistan. Sweden has formulated the principle that the Taliban regime should not be legitimized or provided with resources. This stance is also a shared agreement with other like-minded donor countries. The Afghanistan Coordination Group, established after the Taliban takeover, serves as Sweden's primary forum for development cooperation partnerships, alongside the EU group. Sida actively participates in these forums, advocating for Swedish priorities, particularly human rights issues. Sida also closely coordinates with other donors and multilateral actors within individual interventions, contributing to the aid effectiveness agenda. (Sida representative, Afghanistan)

Sida's dialogue with the multilateral partners on structural issues is guided by the detailed instructions in Tracks stating that it should be built on mutual trust. According to the interviewees, the results of interventions, with regard to the effects for the ultimate beneficiaries, are prioritized in these instructions – not always an easy task when striving for quick results.

As far as the structural dialogue is concerned, we can take our cooperation with the World Bank as an example. Here we cooperate in the energy sector with the aim of access to energy for all by 2030, and with social protection. In both these cases, we maintain a good dialogue with the World Bank and the government in which our main aim is to try to ensure that the end users' interest is maintained. (Sida representative, Mozambique)

Many of the interviewees describe how repeated visits are made to the project sites to monitor the implementation of multi-bi interventions, with development effectiveness in mind.¹ Discussions are then held with the multilateral partners regarding outcomes and potential changes needed to improve the work. Several of the interviewees underlined that the UN is behind when it comes to reporting on results, and that Sida tries to push the agencies in that direction:

The problem with most UN agencies is that they mostly report and follow outputs and activities while we want to see more of outcomes. What effects have there been on the people out in the field? This is something that we push for very hard, and have arranged workshops with in particular UNDP with which our relationship is very good at the moment. (Sida representative, Bangladesh)

Most interviewees also pointed to a shift in the definition of ownership to a focus on ownership by the end users instead of the government. This is also important when an intervention is under discussion with the multi-bi partners. In Mozambique, for example, when it comes to the World Bank-implemented program for rural electrification, the dialogue and reporting focus on questions such as local ownership. But the Sida staff in Mozambique also pointed at a troublesome consequence of only working efficiently with local actors, as opposed to government, and of multiple donors doing the same:

¹ In Afghanistan, and to some extent also in Ethiopia, visits to project sites are however not possible for security reasons, which complicates the monitoring.

Mozambique is extremely donor-crowded and also UN-crowded. For example, there are some 25 different UN bodies working in the country. The question of donor harmonization is therefore imminent. This means that donor coordination is a must, in particular since the government is no longer allowed to take the lead... Donor coordination is however extremely complicated. For Sweden, it means that we are never alone and that we are quite small in relation to others. This is very different from in the past when we were much more of a leading actor. Given the challenges with coordination at the national level, we do much of our efforts at the local level. And at this level, we and many other donors make very good and effective interventions with great impact. But unless this is done in a coordinated manner, which is complementary to other interventions and based on a similar approach, it risks being ineffective at the broader level, even though the effectiveness on the intervention level might be good. (Sida representative, Mozambique)

However, as the focus of international aid shifts from poverty eradication and human rights towards emphasizing the strategic interests of donor country governments, harmonization becomes less important, as illustrated in the following quote:

The perception of donor coordination is not the same as it was before. Firstly, aid today is a very small part of the development budget of the country. But more importantly, the interest in coordination is drastically reduced. However, we try to, together with the UN Resident Coordinator's Office, address the issue of donor coordination. But when it takes place, it is mostly about information about what is going on with each donor and less about actual coordination of efforts. Coordination is also becoming more difficult when it comes to the new type of aid that is developing with an emphasis on collaboration in the field of business between countries. (Sida representative, Bangladesh)

The lack of coordination easily leads to disorder, with donors acting in an uncoordinated way. The effect of this has led to renewed calls for harmonization. This is most evident in countries with many donors, such as Mozambique (as in the case of substantial donor cooperation in a rural energy project run by the World Bank) and Rwanda (as in the case of social protection interventions led by the United Kingdom).

The interviewees described different strategies employed to meet this reemergent demand for harmonization and collaboration between the different actors working in the respective countries. The UN agencies have driven their own process under the label “UN as one” – an effort to coordinate UN bodies in a country. Multilateral organizations also play an important role in taking leadership for coordination between all donors in a country. This work is mostly led by the UN Resident Coordinator’s Office, UNDP or the World Bank, depending on the circumstances in the country. By acting jointly with these organizations, Sida has in some countries been successful in pursuing important objectives for Swedish aid, especially in relation to the normative dialogue (see next section). The Sida staff in Afghanistan elaborated on the challenges associated with coordination and harmonization given the political situation in the country:

There is room for closer coordination of monitoring, evaluation, and dialogue with other donors across various interventions. This would enhance more effective aid delivery and sustainable outcomes. Unfortunately, the current context in Afghanistan presents significant challenges due to the Taliban’s policies, which create substantial obstacles to achieving comprehensive societal results. (Sida representative, Afghanistan)

In Liberia, the relatively prominent role of Sweden has had implications for its role in coordination:

Sweden often takes lead in making serious efforts for donor coordination and tries very hard to ensure national ownership and avoid the “chaos of good intentions”. We expect and encourage both the UN Resident Coordinator’s Office and the World Bank to take the lead when it comes to donor coordination with the Government. (Sida representative, Liberia)

In conclusion, the structural dialogue between Sida and the multi-bi partners, which deals with the foundations of development cooperation, functions quite well. Interviewees have experienced few problems in agreeing on the fundamentals when it comes to implementing the development effectiveness principles in practice. Changes when it comes to which principles are emphasized have occurred successively without major differences in opinions or perspectives. The problems with regard to lack of national ownership have partly been overcome with the help of the multilateral organizations' maintained relationships with the governments in most countries. Nevertheless, as illustrated above, lack of harmonization of donor initiatives and interventions is a challenge, in particular in donor-crowded contexts.

b) The normative dialogue

What we have chosen to call the normative dialogue focuses on a core set of values, principles, and perspectives, including democracy, civil and political rights, anti-corruption efforts, gender equality, sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR), and LGBTQI+ rights, among others. These values are enshrined in various international agreements and conventions, forming a central part of Swedish aid. Furthermore, they are intricately linked to the principles of development effectiveness. For an intervention to be effective, relevant, and sustainable, it must be inclusive and equitable. When the development effectiveness principles were to be implemented in practice, these values and perspectives were agreed upon between the parties to constitute the underlying principles for all actors and for all interventions. They thus formed the basis for the development effectiveness principles and must be adhered to for these to be adequately implemented. In other words, both the normative dialogue and the development effectiveness principles are fundamental to development cooperation.

In theory, it should thus not be a problem for UN agencies to endorse the norms and rules that they are responsible for upholding. It also makes the normative field the one with best potential for dialogue on development effectiveness between Sida and the multilateral bodies – simply due to the fact that many multilateral organizations have as their primary mandate to oversee the implementation of international agreements (including protecting fundamental rights and ensuring sustainable results) which the development effectiveness agenda revolves around. However, navigating the normative dialogue can be challenging as the values are controversial

in many recipient countries. Moreover, the UN is both supposed and expected to work in every country and should not confront the country leadership in a way that could lead to conflicts. From the interviews, it is clear that this often leads to caution and controversies as the multilaterals do not always push the normative dialogue strongly enough. This was brought up by the Sida staff in Mozambique:

We have worked a lot with different normative issues within the framework of the normative dialogue in Mozambique. Our work has had an emphasis on women's empowerment and special situation, but also on abortion and LGBTQI+ rights. Broadly speaking, Mozambique is a progressive country when it comes to these issues legally, and it is therefore not directly "against the winds" to work with value questions of this kind. (...) Lately however, we have observed a certain resistance to working in these areas, in particular with LGBTQI+ rights and abortion. While some other donors are vocal to defend the progress made in this area, others, including UN agencies, do not oppose when the rights are threatened. It is therefore increasingly difficult to pursue these issues. What is causing this changed orientation seems to be the international trends. For us, it makes life much more difficult in our dialogue with our partners in Mozambique. (Sida representative, Mozambique)

This dilemma has led to the adoption of different strategies for Sweden's normative dialogue with the multilateral organizations in different countries. Some of the interviewees reported joint action and harmonized efforts of a number of like-minded donors, supporting and sometimes pushing the specific multilateral organization to pursue a matter further. This is common, for example, when it comes to pursuing gender equality. In many countries, Sweden provides what resembles core support to UN Women for this work, which in some contexts is carried out under very challenging circumstances. In other contexts, Sida works by pushing the relevant multilateral organization to more actively promote, for example, women's rights. One example is in Kenya where Sida experienced that the issues of SRHR and LGBTQI+ rights were not sufficiently pursued by UN agencies. Sida therefore called in higher UN officials to discuss how to jointly work on the issues more actively.

We (also) give direct close to core support to the UN Resident Coordinator's Office in Nairobi, supporting the coordination efforts within the UN country program. And for this we have set aside funds for a multi-donor trust fund with the aim of promoting coordination between various UN agencies in Kenya. We believe that the UN Resident Coordinator's Office can be very important in the normative dialogue in Kenya if they are strong enough. (Sida representative, Kenya)

The overall experiences reported by the interviewees point at a rather positive view when it comes to the normative dialogue, as illustrated by these statements by Sida staff in Liberia and Kenya:

In a country with few donors, the importance of UN bodies is greater than perhaps in other countries. For example, we work very closely with UN Women and UNFPA on important normative issues in the form of support to their country programs on issues such as gender equality and SRHR. We act together to influence the government in its work on normative issues. Supporting the government's development efforts through the UN though has some limitations as the efficiency of the UN depends a lot on individuals and not all UN agency representatives deliver as expected. This is not least true when it comes to the dialogue on normative issues. (Sida representative, Liberia)

Here, the normative dialogue is highlighted with a focus on gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls. The Kenyan context poses unique challenges, yet the emphasis remains on upholding these essential values through ongoing aid efforts. (Sida representative, Kenya)

In countries where the opportunities to work with normative issues are limited, Sida has chosen to end the support. In others, such as Rwanda and Afghanistan, the struggle is ongoing:

A lot of work has been pursued by Sweden as well as many other like-minded donors to get the UN to lead the work in normative areas, such as equality (or inclusion), human rights and gender equality. Among other things, Sweden is supporting a so-called One UN Fund with the

purpose to fund UN Joint Programs in Rwanda, which includes work with normative issues. This is not easy in Rwanda given the government's hesitation towards the UN due to the UN's role during the genocide. This makes it difficult for the UN to engage with the government in sensitive issues. Sida has in particular tried to engage UN Women in work on pursuing the situation for women and girls, but with very little results. This is something that is work in progress and more and more of the donors are engaged in the effort to pushing the UN on these questions. (Sida representative, Rwanda)

The situation in Afghanistan is today extremely complex, due to the Taliban's takeover and, therefore, traditional mechanisms of support and development effectiveness need to be rethought. The normative dialogue, particularly regarding value-based discussions on gender equality and human rights, remains challenging in this context. The dialogue now is about how Sweden can continue to uphold its principles in a significantly altered landscape of international cooperation. (Sida representative, Afghanistan)

In conclusion, the best potential for dialogue on development effectiveness between Sida and the multilateral bodies lies within this normative field. This is due to the fact that many multilateral organizations have as their primary mandate to oversee the implementation of international agreements aimed to further sustainable development and protect fundamental rights, which is also central to the development effectiveness agenda. However, this study points to a mixed picture where, in some cases, the multilateral organization leads the way when it comes to the normative dialogue in the recipient countries. In other cases, especially in countries where these issues are seen as controversial, like-minded donor countries take lead and have to push UN bodies to act. Results of interventions are therefore dependent on the willingness and ability of the multilateral organization to take necessary actions.

c) The operative dialogue

While the normative and structural dialogues regarding the content of the multi-bi efforts and how they should be implemented function quite well, there are many hurdles at the operational level. The operational dialogue addresses all practical matters necessary for the multilateral organizations and Sida to collaborate, as regulated in agreements. Sweden (through the Ministry for Foreign Affairs, MFA) and the multilateral organizations have established general agreements that govern the use of Swedish *core support*. The purpose of core support is for the multilateral organization itself to allocate funds where they are most needed, based on identified needs and priorities. The integrity of the organization is a key factor in these agreements, meaning that transparency and opportunities for influence are limited.

Although these agreements are constructed for core support, they are also indirectly guiding *multi-bi support*. They are however supported by specific project agreements for each multi-bi project, since the idea of multi-bi support from a donor's perspective is that it allows for influence, transparency, and setting conditions regarding the project's objectives and reporting. The templates of these complementary project agreements have been developed between Sida and the multi-lateral organizations over time with the aim to fit the multi-bi purpose.

It is Sida's responsibility to ensure that multi-bi support is utilized as intended. Nevertheless, this responsibility is perceived by the interviewees as being restricted by the idea of the multilateral organization's integrity as formulated in the general agreements. The general agreements cannot be questioned by Sida when a specific intervention is planned. This also means that Sida faces challenges in ensuring adherence to the development effectiveness principles.

All interviewees brought up the issue of the limits set by the general agreements with the multilateral organizations as a problem in the implementation of multi-bi interventions. Most of the interviewees described difficulties in accessing financial and audit reports from UN agencies. These are very often presented with great delays and after many reminders. This, in turn, makes it difficult for the embassies to report back on results to the Sida headquarters and the Swedish government. This is problematic, not the least when it comes to results and transparency. Some of these challenges are illustrated in the following quote by Sida staff in Mozambique:

The dialogue that our staff spends most time with when it comes to the cooperation with the multilaterals is the operational dialogue. Overall, planning, work plans and practical follow-up function quite well. Economic reporting, however, complies with regulations that apply to general agreements between Sweden and the respective agency. This leads to a situation where we at the embassy have the responsibility of handling the money, but we do not have the full control over how it is dealt with and accounted for by the assigned implementing agency. This is something that is not solved, and which requires further serious discussions. (Sida representative, Mozambique)

The staff in Kenya also elaborated on difficulties associated with the operational dialogue:

When it comes to the operational dialogue, we are very much dependent on the agreements that govern the cooperation between Sweden and the respective multilateral organization. They do not allow for certain interventions and control mechanisms, such as spot checks, adjusted to the country context to be used in a way we would like to with regard all assistance. This includes also all kinds of information, economic reporting and audit reports... In most cases, this can be solved directly with the offices in Nairobi, but it depends to a high degree on personal relationships. NGOs are much simpler to work with as regards the operative issues. But they are not always an alternative channel. They often work with a different development perspective, other thematic areas and do not have the same capacity as the UN family to combine government dialogue with other strategic partnerships in the country and at a global level. (Sida representative, Kenya)

A Sida staff in Ethiopia described difficulties in receiving work plans from UN Women for the period that the support was intended to cover:

The global agreement between Sida and UN Women, which is also used for bilateral agreements, does not explicitly require UN Women to share work plans and budgets. Additionally, there are challenges related to monitoring financial allocations according to the Strategic Note Bi-annual Work Plan, especially when these plans haven't been provided from the outset. It's essential to address these issues at a global level between Sida and UN Women, potentially through adjustments to the global agreement. These insights and recommendations have been communicated to Sida's focal point for UN Women, with the hope of addressing them during the next negotiation of the global agreement with UN Women. (Sida representative, Ethiopia)

The experiences differ very much from country to country and also between the different multilateral organizations as well as over time. Although the general agreements do provide little room for flexibility, informal contacts at the local level can according to the interviewees solve many of these problems. Therefore, an important factor is who is representing the respective organ at a specific time. This may appear effective but cannot be a permanent solution to the underlying problem. It also differs depending on if a question can be dealt with at the local level or if the headquarters must be involved. Most organizations make the preparations for a specific intervention or project with the help of head office personnel or external consultants. Local staff is only marginally involved. However, at a later stage, when final agreements are discussed and the implementation of them is initiated, the local staff is responsible. This also influences the possibilities for closer collaboration between the multilateral organization and Sida.

Two other problems brought up by interviewees, which directly limit development effectiveness through the ineffective use of development funding, relate to the general behavior of UN agencies in the field. The first problem is the high wage levels of UN locally employed staff in countries where salaries are low, making it difficult for national governments to implement a balanced income policy. In Mozambique, the government and the donor community are engaged in finding ways to tackle this problem but find it difficult due to this particular behavior of

the UN. The second problem, particularly brought up by Sida staff in Kenya, is the practice of retaining local staff with high wages, irrespective of merits and performance in relation to the project that they initially were hired for, when new projects are initiated. As UN wage policies are not up for discussion in the operative dialogue between Sida and the multilateral organizations, this is not something that Sida can influence. This problem is discussed in the following quotes by interviewees with the Sida staff in Mozambique and Kenya:

An issue that has been raised and discussed quite a bit here in Mozambique is the issue of the salary level of UN employees, above all for local employees. This is something that according to the agreements we do not have the right to discuss at all and which can cause major problem in the country. In Mozambique, the wage issue is a very important issue and the unequal situation as far as wages are concerned is something that we work a lot with. (Sida representative, Mozambique)

There are many other administrative issues relating to the work of UN and its agencies in Nairobi that disturb us. One of them is their practices, for example, when it comes to recruitment policies and lack of transparency thereof. Instead of recruiting personnel including local staff for every new project, they have a tendency to extend the time of especially locally employed staff from project to project without enough consideration of documented merits and assessments in relation to the prior project. (Sida representative, Kenya)

Another issue that is not part of the dialogue between Sida and the UN, but that infringes on development effectiveness, is the practice of arranging expensive conferences and seminars at luxury hotels with daily allowances for the participants. The problem of misuse of per diem, by donors as well as recipients, was discussed in a previous EBA report from 2018 (Tostensen, 2018). According to Sida staff in Kenya, this affects the relationship and trust between donors and recipients:

To be fair, this is not a habit only of the UN, but is widespread also amongst civil society organizations and others. (Sida representative, Kenya)

In conclusion, the interviews clearly illustrate that the limits set for the operational dialogue by the general agreements between Sweden and the multilateral organization obstructs the implementation of development effectiveness. This particularly makes it difficult to uphold the principles of focusing on results and transparency. It limits the prospects for Sida to exert influence and can be seen as an obstacle in the implementation on the development effectiveness principles in the multi-bi collaboration.

Conclusions and reflections

Over time, a growing share of Sweden's bilateral aid has been channeled through multilateral organizations, making multi-bi support an increasingly prominent feature of Sweden's development cooperation. This shift has occurred rapidly, prompting the need to reflect on its implications for development effectiveness and operational conduct.

In exploring Sida's work with development effectiveness in its multi-bi support and the cooperation with multilateral organizations in partner countries, the focus of this study has been on the four principles adopted in Busan in 2011: country ownership, focus on results, inclusive partnerships, and transparency and mutual accountability. It is clear from the interviews that these principles are still of great importance for Sida in its practical implementation of development cooperation to meet the need for results and long-term sustainability of its interventions. Nevertheless, the increased questioning, and the shift in focus, of the principles at the international level has made them more challenging to promote in relation to multi-bi partners.

The international process on defining and redefining development effectiveness over the years has been complex, with misunderstandings and conflicts in the interpretation, implementation, and prioritization of the principles. It is noted in the interviews that at the national level, not all UN agency representatives deliver as expected when it comes to efforts to promote development effectiveness. This is particularly observed in countries where the recipient government holds views that strongly contradict those that the multilateral organizations are mandated to uphold. The question of the relationship with government actors in countries where the donor community has no or little trust in the government is difficult to handle for all actors involved. It is particularly challenging for the multilateral organizations that are required to cooperate with the state in most recipient countries.

Thus, while multi-bi support in theory provides donors with an opportunity to exert influence on the project objectives and reporting, it is evident from this study that ensuring development effectiveness principles is difficult in some contexts and under some circumstances.

While the structural and normative dialogues regarding the content of the interventions and how they should be implemented function relatively well, there are many hurdles at the operational level. The limits set by the general agreements between Sweden and the multilateral organizations

were by interviewees seen as a major problem in the implementation of the collaboration. This requires serious attention if the effectiveness principles are to be adhered to in practice, in particular with regard to transparency and a focus on results.

Interviews indicate that working through multilateral organizations has been effective in some respects, especially with regard to impact and coordination. However, ensuring sustainability and effectiveness can be difficult when control is partially delegated to multilateral partners.

Examples of both challenges and opportunities for Sida's work with promoting development effectiveness in its multi-bi support that we have found through this study include:

1. **Country Ownership**

- **Challenges:** Achieving country ownership in fragile and conflict-affected contexts, such as Afghanistan and Ethiopia, is particularly challenging. In such contexts, alternative approaches are needed to ensure that local needs are met without legitimizing authoritarian regimes.
- **Opportunities:** In stable environments, aligning support with national development plans and engaging local authorities can foster ownership and promote sustainable development.

2. **Focus on Results**

- **Challenges:** Ensuring that multilateral organizations report on outcomes rather than just outputs is challenging. Effectiveness is sometimes hampered by administrative issues like delayed financial reporting and insufficient local involvement in planning.
- **Opportunities:** Sweden can enhance the results focus by pushing for detailed, outcome-oriented reporting and regular evaluations to ensure that intended impacts are achieved.

3. **Inclusive Partnerships**

- **Challenges:** The complexity of donor coordination and divergent priorities can hinder inclusive partnerships, especially in donor-crowded contexts like Mozambique.
- **Opportunities:** Sweden can leverage its strategic and financial commitments to multilateral organizations to foster inclusive partnerships by facilitating coordination efforts and promoting joint programming, especially in areas like gender equality and human rights.

4. Transparency and Mutual Accountability

- **Challenges:** Lack of timely financial reports and audits from UN agencies create transparency challenges. Varying capabilities and engagement of multilateral organizations affect accountability.
- **Opportunities:** Sweden can improve transparency and accountability by advocating for stringent reporting requirements and by engaging in open dialogues about performance and financial management.

Addressing these challenges and leveraging opportunities can enhance the development effectiveness of Sweden's multi-bi support. We also see a need to:

Further analyze the “multilateralization” of bilateral development assistance

Over time, an increasing share of Sweden's bilateral aid has been channeled via multilateral intermediaries to development projects and programs, while direct bilateral support now constitutes a considerably smaller share. According to interviewees, multi-bi support has in many cases proven to be effective, with a high impact and good coordination between donors. At the same time, the interviews also point at difficulties when it comes to ensuring sustainability and effectiveness in some areas when control is delegated to a multilateral partner. The decreasing number of direct bilateral relations also limits the prospects for building mutual trust between Sweden/Sida and the partner governments. This development has gone fast, and it is important to review it from a development effectiveness perspective. Such an analysis could facilitate the identification of a proper balance between multi-bi and more direct channels of support to ensure that development effectiveness principles are met.

Review the principles of development effectiveness

It is probably safe to say that all actors engaged in development cooperation aim for effective interventions with sustainable results. As shown in this study, however, development actors currently lack a common understanding of what constitutes development effectiveness. This is partly due to new power dynamics, aid landscapes and growing challenges, but also to varying goals and assumptions. This highlights the need for a careful review of the development effectiveness principles at the global level. The aim of such a review should be to update the principles and arrive at a well thought-through approach for the future. It is important,

as highlighted in interviews, not to lose sight of the essential aspects of aid effectiveness that promote sustainable development. A common understanding and shared goals are central to this effort.

It is therefore important that Sida, also when working through multilateral organizations and especially in difficult environments, ensures that the ultimate beneficiaries of development interventions are highest on the agenda. There is a need to find ways of interacting with partners at all levels to create an atmosphere of collaboration in challenging contexts. This is difficult to implement in practice but must always be taken into serious consideration.

The question of how innovations can be used to better reach the target groups, and to what extent donors like Sida could push for that when channeling its support via other actors, was only indirectly raised in the interviews. The underlying question of finding new innovative ways to reach people living in poverty and marginalization and to increase the ownership of their own development was however discussed extensively. This question needs to be further developed and emphasized as a basis for continued collaboration with multi-bi actors.

Improve multi-bi donor coordination and inclusive partnerships

Interactions with partners at all levels are necessary in order to create a collaborative atmosphere, especially in challenging environments. Multilateral organizations could play a more prominent role in enhancing donor coordination, and Sida should push for this more strongly. This is important not least within the normative field, where Sweden should continue to advocate strongly for the inclusion of issues like gender equality and human rights in multilateral agendas. This may require innovative approaches and alliances with like-minded donors.

Clarify expectations regarding development effectiveness and its follow-up

Expectations regarding development effectiveness need to be clearly specified in agreements and work plans between Sida and multilateral partners. Information and experiences from embassies with multi-bi arrangements can inform new agreements, addressing issues like beneficiary reach, sustainability, transparency, and coordination responsibilities. Tackling operational challenges, such as financial reporting delays and local staff policies, can further improve the efficiency and effectiveness of multi-bi support. Sida could for instance negotiate amendments to global agreements with UN agencies to ensure timely and detailed financial

reporting. It could further establish a dedicated task force to address recurring operational issues and streamline processes for quicker resolution of administrative hurdles.

Implementing robust monitoring and evaluation systems pertaining to multi-bi support, including frequent field visits and beneficiary feedback mechanisms, can ensure that interventions align with both Swedish priorities and local needs. Third-party evaluations can validate effectiveness and integrate lessons learned into future programming.

Strengthen the focus on institutional and capacity development in partner countries

Development is a long-term venture that aims to change structures, attitudes, and values to allow for private and public actors to develop in a sustainable manner. An important prerequisite for the promotion of the development effectiveness principles, in particular country ownership, is the development of institutional capacity in recipient countries. This, for example, includes rule of law, social infrastructure, local administration and public service reforms. This has been an important feature of Swedish development cooperation in the past and must remain a priority in the future. Clear instructions on how this is supposed to work are more important when an increasing share of bilateral aid is channeled via multilateral intermediaries.

Strengthen Swedish competence to engage in international affairs including to deliver international development cooperation

Finally, effective and sustainable development cooperation requires enhanced capacity and expertise at both international and national levels. The trend toward a larger share, and thus a growing significance, of multi-bi support underscores the need for Sweden to strengthen its capacity to manage and monitor these interventions. High ambitions in aid policy necessitate a comprehensive program for developing long-term capacity and competence to address international issues, ensuring effective development cooperation. Engaging young people in global development issues is a prerequisite for this.

References

Consortium BKP Development (2020) Effective Development Cooperation – Does the EU deliver? Detailed Analysis of EU Performance.

https://international-partnerships.ec.europa.eu/document/download/d92174c7-23e0-4124-ad86-1fe1e51dfd4e_en?filename=eu-development-effectiveness-monitoring-report-2020_en.pdf&prefLang=hr

Dag Hammarskjöld Foundation (2021) The Way Forward: Fulfilling the Potential of the Funding Compact at the Country Level.

<https://www.daghammarskjold.se/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/dhf-funding-compact-2021-web.pdf>

Dag Hammarskjöld Foundation (2023) Choices in uncertain times. Financing the UN Development System. Edition 9. Uppsala.

<https://www.daghammarskjold.se/wp-content/uploads/2023/11/dhf-financialreport-2023-final.pdf>

GPEDC (2019) Strategic priorities for the Global Partnership’s work programme 2020–2022. The Co-chairs’ proposal.

<https://www.effectivecooperation.org/system/files/2020-05/Co-chair-proposal-for-strategic-priorities-1.pdf>

GPEDC (2023) 2023–2026 GPEDC Advocacy & Outreach Plan.

[https://www.effectivecooperation.org/system/files/2023-05/ENG_GPEDC%20Advocacy%20&%20Outreach%20Plan%202023-2026_Updated%20May%202023%20\(1\).pdf](https://www.effectivecooperation.org/system/files/2023-05/ENG_GPEDC%20Advocacy%20&%20Outreach%20Plan%202023-2026_Updated%20May%202023%20(1).pdf)

GPEDC (2024) Global Partnership Monitoring.

<https://www.effectivecooperation.org/4thMonitoringRound>

GPEDC (2024). [The Effectiveness Principles | Global Partnership for Effective Development Co-operation \(effectivecooperation.org\)](https://www.effectivecooperation.org/)

Heinzel, M., Cormier, B., & Reinsberg, B. (2023). Earmarked funding and the control-performance trade-off in international development organizations.

International Organization, 77(2), 475–495.

Honig, D. (2018) *Navigation by Judgement. Why and When Top-Down Management of Foreign Aid Doesn’t Work*. Oxford University Press.

MOPAN (2024) MOPAN Assessments. <https://www.mopanonline.org/>

OECD DAC (2024) DAC Glossary of Key Terms and Concepts. <https://web-archive.oecd.org/temp/2024-02-22/66749-dac-glossary.htm>

OECD DAC (1992) *DAC Principles for Effective Aid*. OECD, Paris.

<https://www.oecd.org/dac/evaluation/dcdndep/35019650.pdf>

OECD DAC (1996) Shaping the 21st Century: The Contribution of Development Co-Operation. OECD, Paris. <https://www.oecd.org/dac/2508761.pdf>

OECD DAC (2005) Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness. OECD, Paris. <https://www.oecd.org/dac/effectiveness/45827300.pdf>

OECD, 2112. The Busan Partnership for Effective Development Cooperation.

Lundgren, M. and Strindvall, I., Influence in Multilateral Aid Organizations: A Literature Review, Working Paper July 2023, The Expert Group for Aid Studies (EBA), Sweden.

Rachman, G. (2024) A ‘multipolar’ world defies the ‘rules-based’ order. Special Report: The World 2024. Financial Times 17 Jan 2024.

Regeringen (2017) Strategi för multilateral utvecklingspolitik 2017. https://www.regeringen.se/contentassets/7db2bfd285f24079add25b5a30e87316/ud2017-21055-fn_strategi-for-multilateral-utvecklingspolitik.pdf

Regeringen (2023a). Bistånd för en ny era: Frihet, egenmakt och hållbar tillväxt. <https://www.regeringen.se/contentassets/e96449ad5b04400cae0a62817a98f3a5/bistand-for-en-ny-era---frihet-egenmakt-och-hallbar-tillvaxt-broschyr.pdf>

Regeringen (2023b) Regeringsbeslut II:12: Regleringsbrev för budgetåret 2024 avseende Styrelsen för internationellt utvecklingssamarbete (Sida).

Reinsberg, B. (2017). Trust funds as a lever of influence at international development organizations. *Global Policy*, 8, 85–95.

Reinsberg, B. & Siauwijaya, C. (2023) Does earmarked funding affect the performance of international organisations? *Global Policy*, 00, 1–17.

Salomonsson, C. & Vähämäki, J. (2008) How to Start Working with a Programme-Based Approach. Sida, Department for methodologies and effectiveness.

Sandberg, H. (2023) Att göra det vi är bra på: en fördjupad samordning mellan utvecklings- och handelspolitiken. Regeringskansliet, Stockholm 2023.

Sherriff, A. & Veron, P. (2024) What is driving change in Europe’s international cooperation agenda? Part 1. ECDPM. <https://ecdpm.org/application/files/2917/0591/4071/What-Is-driving-Change-Europe-International-Cooperation-Agenda-Part-1-ECDPM-Briefing-Note-175-2024.pdf>

Sida (2000) Sida’s Policy for Capacity Development as a Strategic Question in Development Cooperation, Sida Stockholm. <https://cdn.sida.se/publications/files/sida1688en-sidas-policy-for-capacity-development.pdf>

Sida (2023) Sida's Multi-bi Support. https://cdn.sida.se/app/uploads/2023/06/27/125318/10207048_Portfolio_Multi-bi_Support_2023_web.pdf

Silke, W., Baumann, M-O., Lundsgaarde, E. & Wolff, P. (2020) Earmarking in the Multilateral Development System. Many Shades of Grey. IDOS Studies, German Institute of Development and Sustainability (IDOS), volume 101, number 101. Bonn 2020.

Tostensen, A. (2018), In Pursuit of Per Diem: Donor and Recipient Practices of Per Diem Payment, EBA Working Paper, October, 2018, Expert Group for Aid Studies, Sweden.

UN/DESA (2024) The World Economic Situation and Prospects 2024. UN/DESA, New York. https://www.un.org/development/desa/dpad/wp-content/uploads/sites/45/WESP_2024_Web.pdf

UN/General Assembly (2018) A/RES/72/279: Repositioning of the United Nations development system in the context of the quadrennial comprehensive policy review of operational activities for development of the United Nations system. <https://ddei5-0-ctp.trendmicro.com:443/wis/clicktime/v1/query?url=https%3a%2f%2fdocuments.un.org%2fdoc%2fundoc%2fgen%2fn18%2f167%2f23%2fpdf%2fn1816723.pdf&umid=787194A2-24BB-B206-8542-C3A9580E7838&auth=aa2a6666dad3109e072cd23e72dcb4db4081a53-5990d7056c7b158002f25245feda9f9331af80ad>

UN/General Assembly Economic and Social Council (2019) Unlocking the UN development system's full potential: A funding compact to deliver better results on the ground, The Funding Compact.

IISD Knowledge hub (2019, May 21) UN Deputy Secretary-General Reports on Resident Coordinator System Reform, <https://sdg.iisd.org/news/un-deputy-secretary-general-reports-on-resident-coordinator-system-reform/>

Wohlgemuth, L. & Odén, B. (2011) Where is the Paris Agenda heading? Changing relations in Tanzania, Zambia and Mozambique. Maastricht: ECDPM.

Wohlgemuth, L. & Odén, B. (2019) Swedish Development Cooperation Policy: Trends, Lessons Learned and Directors for the Future. Global Utmaning.

Wohlgemuth, L. & Ewald, J. (2020) Effective partnerships: A study on development effectiveness and Swedish civil society organisations. Stockholm, ForumCiv 2020.

Wood, B; Kabell, D; Sagasti, F; Muwanga, N. Synthesis Report on the First Phase of the Evaluation of the Implementation of the Paris Declaration, Copenhagen, July 2008.

Zhang, F. (ed). (2023) Pluralism and World Order Theoretical Perspectives and Policy Challenges. Palgrave.

Appendix

List of interviews

a) Structured interviews

Staff representative Swedish Embassy, Afghanistan

Staff representative Swedish Embassy Bangladesh

Staff representative Swedish Embassy Ethiopia

Staff representative Swedish Embassy, Kenya

Staff representative Swedish Embassy, Latin America, Colombia

Staff representative Swedish Embassy, Mozambique

Staff representative Swedish Embassy Rwanda

Staff representative Swedish Embassy Liberia

b) Information interviews

Anders Rönquist, former responsible for multilateral assistance, Sida, Stockholm

Per Knutson, Dag Hammarskjöld Foundation, former responsible for multilateral assistance, Sida, Stockholm

6 Sida Staff, Stockholm working with development effectiveness and multilateral cooperation

1 senior staff member from the Ministry for Foreign Affairs, Stockholm

One senior staff member from UNDP