



Sida's humanitarian aid and long-term development cooperation

– prerequisites for collaboration

In recent years, the need for humanitarian aid has grown worldwide, partly due to prolonged armed conflicts and climate-related disasters. Increased humanitarian needs have meant that collaboration between humanitarian aid and long-term development cooperation has been assigned growing importance, in international as well as in Swedish aid.

Sida implements two types of aid: humanitarian aid, intended to save lives and alleviate distress, and long-term development cooperation, which entails support to poverty reduction in other countries. The Swedish Parliament (Riksdag) and Government have stressed the importance of collaboration between the two types of aid to create synergies for a more effective Swedish development cooperation. This entails long-term development cooperation seeking to prevent humanitarian crises from arising, becoming prolonged or recurrent, for example by focusing more on conflict resolution and disaster prevention. At the same time, humanitarian aid should contribute to create sustainable solutions after disasters and emergencies. Thereby, collaboration between the two types of aid could improve individuals and communities' resilience, that is their ability to resist, recover from and adjust to emergencies and disasters. However, it is a challenge for many aid actors to determine when such collaboration is appropriate, because humanitarian aid must be based on the humanitarian principles of humanity, neutrality, independence and impartiality. These principles may be difficult to combine with long-term development cooperation, given that the latter is often politically sensitive. The overall purpose of the Swedish National Audit Office's performance audit was to examine whether the Government's governance and Sida's working methods have enabled collaboration between humanitarian aid and long-term development cooperation during the period 2015–2017. The audit sheds light on two questions. The first refers to whether the Government's governance has enabled collaboration between humanitarian aid and long-

term development cooperation. The second question regards whether Sida has designed humanitarian aid and long-term development cooperation in a way that enables collaboration between the two aid modalities.

Audit findings

The Swedish National Audit Office's overall assessment is that the Government and Sida, through their governance, have clarified that collaboration between humanitarian aid and long-term development cooperation is a priority in Sweden's international aid. However, the Swedish NAO finds that both the Government and Sida could do more to enable collaboration in practice. According to the Swedish NAO, there are some deficiencies in the Government's governance of Sida, as well as in Sida's internal control, organisation and working methods. Thus, there is room for improvement in terms of enabling collaboration. These conclusions are based on the following findings, presented in no order of preference.

The lack of common objectives at strategy level makes collaboration more difficult

The Government has not formulated any common objectives for the two aid modalities at strategy level. The absence of objectives contributes to maintaining the gap between humanitarian aid and long-term development cooperation. There are thematic points of contact between certain strategies, which open for collaboration. However, common objectives at strategy level can further improve the prospects for collaboration. The reason is that most of Sida's contributions are designed and financed in relation to the objectives of a specific strategy, since this is how the Agency's performance is to be reported to the Government.

Forms for cross-mandate collaboration could be defined more clearly

The Government's governance of Sida, as well as Sida's internal organisation, are characterised by a clear division of mandates and duties, not least for the purpose of safeguarding the humanitarian principles. The Swedish NAO finds that this is justified, but also considers that the forms of cross-mandate collaboration at Sida need to be more clearly defined in order to enable collaboration to take place in keeping with the Riksdag's intentions. Without such clear forms, collaboration may be more difficult. For example, humanitarian aid officers might not think of identifying points of contact with the long-term development cooperation when planning contributions, and vice versa.

Limited opportunities for co-financing and co-reporting

Sida's design of contributions is mainly governed by how the Government requires Sida to report outcomes, namely in relation to the respective strategy. This means that most contributions are designed, financed and reported in relation to the objectives of a specific strategy. Since the Government has not formulated common objectives for the two aid modalities at strategy level, the opportunities for co-financing and co-reporting is limited. Sida's contribution management system already offers technical solutions that allow co-financing and co-reporting of aid interventions. However, the Swedish NAO's audit shows that these solutions are not used in practice, because Sida's officers either do not know about them, or find them too administratively burdensome. The Swedish NAO considers that the opportunities for co-financing and co-reporting of contributions would improve if Sida's management clarifies that there are technical solutions to do so and explains how these solutions can be used in practice.

Analysis, planning and formulation of objectives can, to a greater extent, be carried out jointly

Collaboration between humanitarian aid and long-term development cooperation is not always appropriate. In order to determine when collaboration is suitable, professional judgment is required. Such judgment should therefore be systematically integrated into Sida's work, for example by means of humanitarian aid officers and long-term development cooperation officers working together on analysis, planning and formulation of objectives. The Swedish NAO's audit shows that there is scope for improvement in this respect. Analyses are made jointly to some extent, but there is also duplication of work. For example, similar analyses are conducted separately, resulting in different documents, such as humanitarian crisis analyses and strategy plans, instead of a joint analysis that can be used in different documents.

As regards joint planning of interventions, the Swedish NAO has only identified a few cases where there has been such collaboration between the two types of aid. The Swedish NAO finds that joint planning is largely dependent on the possibility of co-financing interventions, which currently does not take place to the extent that it could. Joint formulation of objectives would also facilitate joint planning, in cases where this is appropriate with reference to the humanitarian principles. The Swedish NAO has, however, only found a few Sida contributions with common objectives. One reason that common objectives are not formulated to a greater extent on intervention level is, according to the Swedish NAO, the aforementioned lack of common objectives at strategy level for the two aid modalities.

Documents with unclear status make Sida's internal governance unclear

The Swedish NAO notes that during the period audited (2015-2017), Sida's Plans of Operation were the only governing documents that mentioned collaboration between the two aid modalities. These Plans clarify that such collaboration is a priority area and that there must be effective forms for collaboration and a holistic perspective in the analysis phase. The Plans do not, however, go into detail in terms of how this should be done, and thus they do not function as a tool in day-to-day work. Apart from the plans of operation, the Swedish NAO has identified several documents concerning collaboration at Sida's headquarters, but it was not clear whether or not they were governing documents. None of the Sida employees at Sweden's missions abroad mentioned these documents in the interviews conducted during the audit. The Swedish NAO finds that it is of particular importance that it is clear which documents are governing documents, since Sida's officers have a large number of priority perspectives apart from collaboration to take into account (for example gender equality and the environment).

The humanitarian focal points were not given adequate conditions for collaboration

The humanitarian focal points are officers at Sweden's missions abroad. Their duties concern both long-term development cooperation and humanitarian aid. The Swedish NAO considers that these humanitarian focal points play a key role in the collaboration between the two types of aid. One of the reasons for this is that a significant part of the communication between the humanitarian unit in Stockholm and Sweden's missions abroad is expected to go through these focal points. However, the Swedish NAO finds that these officers were not given adequate conditions for shouldering this key role during the period audited. The time that the focal points had to their disposal for humanitarian coordination was in many cases not sufficient, and the work was made more difficult by the fact that they rarely had any previous experience of working on humanitarian affairs.

Recommendations

The Swedish NAO's audit shows that the Government and Sida, through their governance, have clarified that collaboration between humanitarian aid and long-term development cooperation is a matter of priority in Swedish aid. However, the Swedish NAO finds that the Government and Sida can improve the conditions to ensure that this priority has a greater impact in the implementation of Swedish aid. The Swedish NAO therefore makes the following recommendations to the Government and Sida.

To the Government:

- To establish common objectives at strategy level for humanitarian aid and long-term development cooperation. Common strategy objectives could improve Sida's prospects for conducting joint analysis, planning and formulation of objectives, as well as for co-financing and co-reporting aid interventions.

To Sida:

- To ensure that there are governing documents that specify how collaboration should be implemented in the day-to-day work.
- To further develop working methods that facilitate collaboration in analysis, planning and formulation of objectives in aid interventions.
- To ensure that the existing technical facilities for co-financing and co-reporting contributions can be used in the day-to-day work where appropriate.

To ensure that the humanitarian focal points have the necessary competence and are allotted enough working time for collaboration.