

Study of the Results of Development Assistance under the current Swedish Strategy for Development Cooperation with Serbia January '09 – December '12

An Independent Evaluation Report
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Preface

This report was prepared by the independent evaluation team of Dragiša Mijačić and Jim Newkirk, who were engaged by Sida Serbia to conduct the assignment.

The evaluation team wish to thank the many individuals from many Departments, Agencies and organisations who agreed to be interviewed. The evaluation would not have been possible without their insights, advice, knowledge, contributions and support.

The evaluation was undertaken during September and October of 2011.

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Acronyms And Abbreviations

CRD	Civil Rights Defenders
CRR	Comprehensive Regulatory Review
CSI	Crime Scene Investigation
DACU	Donor Assistance Coordination Unit, Sector for Planning, Programming, Monitoring and Reporting on EU Funds and Development Assistance of the Ministry of Finance that was transferred into the Serbian European Integration Office (SEIO) in August 2010.
DCAF	A centre for security, development and the rule of law – a Swiss-based international foundation.
EBRD	European Bank for Reconstruction and Development
EU	European Union
FO	Framework Organisation
GEC	Gender Equality Council
GED	Gender Equality Directorate
GEM	Gender Equality Mechanism
Gender Focal Points	Persons within Ministries and other Agencies (eg SORS) assigned to focus on gender equality issues and to have direct, formal interactions with the GED.
GIZ (GTZ)	Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit GmbH
KtK	Kvinna till Kvinna
LCI/ CCI	Adult and child quality of life methodologies
LGBT	Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender
MERD	Ministry of Economy and Regional Development
MUP	Republic of Serbia, Ministry of the Interior
NAD	The Needs Assessment Document
NAP	National Action Plan (for gender Equality)
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
NPI	National Program for Integration – a document required of all EU Candidate Countries
NSDS	National Strategy for Sustainable Development
OPIC	The Olof Palme International Center

ORR	Office for Regulatory Reform
PBA	Programme-based Approach
PPI	Producer Price Index
PRS	Poverty Reduction Strategy
PUC	Public Utility Company
QMS	Quality Management System
RDA	Regional Development Agency
REC	Regional Environmental Centre – an international organisation established in 1990 by the United States, the European Commission and Hungary. REC covers the territory of Central and Eastern Europe, with a mission to assist in addressing environmental issues.
RIA	Regulation Impact Assessment
RRU	The Council for Regulatory Reform and its Secretariat, Government of Serbia
SALAR	Swedish Association of Local Authorities and Regions
SCTM	Standing Conference on Towns and Municipalities
SDU	Sustainable Development Unit – within the Deputy Prime Minister’s Office
SECO	Sector Civil Society Organisations
SEIO	Government of Serbia European Integration Office. Assistance to SEIO was formerly made directly to DACU (see above) which is now a part of SEIO.
SEPA	Serbian Environmental Protection Agency
Sida	Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency
SORS	Statistical Office Republic of Serbia
SWAp	Sector-wide Approaches - an approach to international development that brings together governments, donors and other stakeholders within any sector.
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
USAID	US Agency for International Development

Executive summary

This report is the result of a study into the results of the current Cooperation Strategy for Sida's Development Cooperation with Serbia. This current strategy covers the period January 2009 through December 2012. The study is intended to assist Sida in its preparations for the development of a new cooperation strategy, which will be valid beyond the end of 2012.

The study, which incorporated a desk-top review of documentation relevant to development cooperation in general and a wide range of specific project documentation on all projects relevant to the study. This documentation included proposals, assessment memos, project reports and evaluation reports. As well as the review of documentation, the evaluation team undertook a number of interviews with parties directly involved in project initiatives as well as interested representatives of partner agencies and other international donors.

The desk-top analysis and interviews provided the evaluation team with significant amounts of information, data and analysis on the approach and work of Sida in Serbia, and reflection of the strengths, weaknesses and indicated directions for future cooperation.

The objective of Sweden's current development cooperation with Serbia is to 'strengthen and promote sustainable development in a way that improves the prospects for membership in the European Union'. The support *encourages reforms* required for EU membership. With Serbia's recent acceptance as a Candidate Country for EU membership, the work done to date, and further reform processes, clearly demonstrate their importance. The current strategy also states that 'if Serbia attains candidate status, the strategy should be alignable with any new needs.' This has now happened, and the new strategy will also need to take into account the changing situation.

The current strategy draws on Government of Serbia priorities as described in its National Programme for Integration, and so focuses on the Government's three thematic priorities, each of which is in line with Sida's own priorities: democracy and human rights, gender equality and the environment. Within this framework, the current strategy 'limits and concentrates initiatives' while using Serbia's own structures 'as much as possible when planning, implementing and monitoring development initiatives'. These approaches have served to increase ownership of the development cooperation on the part of national partners, a point made clearly and often in interviews, and the further use and development of these approaches will continue to ensure this ownership with the upcoming cooperation strategy.

The current strategy acknowledges that development cooperation with Serbia was 'entering a new phase that will focus on capacity development and knowledge sharing'. This has indeed been the focus, and indeed the following cooperation strategy should increase this focus, looking for outcomes that deepen the strength of management and leadership within national and other partners.

The current strategy also acknowledges that 'the relationship with the EU will probably be made more intense and concrete during the strategy period by a Serbian application for EU membership' and that as a result 'flexibility and alignment will be needed'. This has indeed happened, and the response from Sida has been appropriate and strategic. It is anticipated that this same approach in the coming period will be of value to Serbia, and will add value to the assistance provided by both the EU and Sweden.

The current strategy has provided most of its support to Serbian administration at the national and local levels and to civil society development and work on human rights through cooperation with the Swedish Framework Organisations. Support has also been provided

through cooperation with the EBRD in the provision of development loans. These forms of cooperation will continue in the coming period.

The current strategy has focused on cooperation and dialogue with other donors, with a particular emphasis on harmonisation. This focus can and should continue, emphasising the added value that can come to Serbia, and Sweden's support, by close integration with EU programs.

As a result of its strategic implementation of Sida principles in Serbia, Sida continues to provide effective, well-focused development assistance; assistance which provides strong assistance to the Government of Serbia in its accession processes. Sida's cooperation in Serbia adheres closely with Sida policies and philosophies for development assistance, and is closely aligned with Government of Serbia and EU priorities, particularly in relation to EU accession processes.

There are three key contributors to the success of Sweden's current Cooperation Strategy:

- The adherence of Swedish assistance to the priorities of the Government of Serbia and the EU creates or contributes to momentum in the reform process.
- Sectors where the political will exists for change are the sectors where success is more likely, if not guaranteed. Within this, success breeds success.
- Personal capacity contributes to this success, and where personnel are able to understand the positive personal impacts that can come from their involvement in reform processes, they demonstrate a higher level of involvement in the processes.

The relative lack of strength of human resources, particularly in senior and middle management, detracts from the quality of outcomes. Focus must be placed on increasing the numbers, and the skills and knowledge, of management within government departments and agencies.

Summary Of Outcomes

The first regional landfill, Duboko, in Užice, is open. Duboko is a significant step in Serbia's development: *it demonstrates the national and local/ regional policy and strategy frameworks* that are critical to EU accession.

Duboko also *demonstrates the significant challenges to be addressed* in other locations. These challenges include finance; national commitment; regional agreements; local management; developing and implementing national, local and regional objectives for solid waste management.

REC is *contributing to a shift* in how NGOs involved in work on the environment and sustainable development work –from awareness raising and campaigning to advocating and lobbying, on concrete and measurable policy changes.

Swedish support enabled SCTM to develop into a *modern institution* with an increased legitimacy that is based to a large degree on its *strong lobbying and communication* capacity

There is clear evidence that systems, procedures and structures, to which people adhere or respond, are changing, and that these changes make it easier for citizens to interact with administrative structures, and that information is available, and is trustworthy.

Changes in the knowledge, skills and attitudes of the people working within target institutions - and that Ministries and Government agencies are developing human resources with the skills necessary to effectively manage the transition processes.

SEIO plays a central and valuable role in the coordination of the EU reform agenda, and its knowledge and understanding of aid is significantly improved.

A formal mechanism for consultation with civil society has been established. Seven Sector Civil Society Organisations (SECOs) have been established.

A comprehensive regulatory review undertook an inventory and analysis of laws and regulations which impact on economic activity in Serbia, with annual from implemented recommendations quantified at over 140 million Euros.

SORS has improved its methodologies and reporting to Eurostat in line with required systems. A number of reforms have been implemented in relation to collection and reporting of environment data and statistics and the use and reporting of this data, and SORS is carefully improving its cooperation with Government and agencies.

The civil society programme undertaken by the FOs maintains a strong focus on civil and political rights, coupled with the participation of minorities in the development of society.

Key outcomes include:

- A change in the level of dialogue on the rights of the LGBT community.
- An increases in the capacity and involvement of local human rights organisations in advocacy and monitoring activities.

Development of the National Action Plan on Gender Equality and its implementation strategy.

Development of local gender mechanisms and local action plans within the NAP framework.

Improvements in capacity and monitoring systems within the Gender Equality Directorate.

A focus on quality, particularly development of and adherence to systems and accreditation, within the Police Service.

A related focus is on structural change – there is a commitment within the MUP at all levels to take advantage of the opportunities presented by EU accession to assist the reform process.

Lessons Learned

It is the view of the EU Delegation in Serbia that donor funds from so-called ‘smaller donors’ can best be used in assisting Serbia to access funds – that the focus of assistance should be in areas where assistance brings direct or indirect access to EU funding.

- Relatively smaller donors should definitely not *draw administrative capacity from Ministries and Municipalities* where that administrative capacity can and should be directed at larger contributions.
- Relatively smaller donors can go one step further and assist Ministries and Municipalities in their pursuit of and in the management of EU funds. Of particular significance is funding projects which *assist in preparing for larger/ longer term initiatives and funding for projects with sustainability potential* within an accession framework.

Current Swedish assistance in Serbia is responsive to both of these priorities – future work on the Cooperation Strategy needs to develop this responsiveness, to ensure both of these priorities are met.

The focus of technical assistance has been effective and appropriate although there are indications now that greater emphasis could be placed with some partners on mentoring or coaching approaches (see Recommendations). This is of particular importance where, as is possible, assistance to Serbia will be phased out over the coming period. The type of change visible within the SCTM (and generated with Swedish assistance) is what is needed to be developed with other long-term partners going forward.

Reforms within the security sector are particularly relevant examples of how the current strategy assists Serbia’s EU accession processes. Two aspects of the Police Reform

Programme rate particular mention, relevant as they are to other sectors, and generally to Swedish development assistance:

- Middle-management ‘drivers’ within the Police Service understand the value to themselves, their careers and their organisation of the change process, and in buying-in to the process give it impetus.
- Where aspects of the change process are seen as directly relevant to larger numbers of the Police Service they gain traction, ie the reforms become personally relevant, beyond the requirements of the accession processes.

The on-going sectoral focus will enable Swedish assistance to have greater effect. In light of Serbia’s recent granting of Candidate Status, further development of sector-wide thinking, and a continuing focus on harmonisation in the coming Cooperation Strategy will benefit outcomes.

Support within the environment sector should be focused in the relatively small number of areas where strategic gains can be made - concentrating on the current assistance being provided in solid-waste management, with the EBRD, and in developing sustainable solid-waste management systems. A closer integration of this work with the work being undertaken with civil society will generate synergies.

Support provided within SEIO, the GED, SORS and to a certain extent the ORR and the NSDS has changed the systems and procedures of Government, added value to the work of these Agencies and in benefits for citizens, directly contributing to accession processes. It is now an opportune moment to put a particular emphasis on solidifying this change. Rather than look to other partners, a phase-out approach with these agencies is recommended, with a focus on strategies that will ensure the long-term sustainability of the changes: management capacity, procedures, systems.

While the on-going support to civil society through the Framework Organisations is appropriately focused, a closer correlation between the Country Strategy and the specific focus of FO programmes would be beneficial to outputs for both FOs and Sida.

Summary of Recommendations

Recommendation 1 - Swedish support to Serbia should continue, and should continue with its current focus, on EU accession. Further, the current strategic approach of harmonisation with Government of Serbia and EU priorities should be maintained and enhanced, with a specific focus on assisting Ministries and Municipalities in accessing EU funds. This does not suggest any significant change in existing processes, rather a refinement and strengthening of the existing strategy. Finally, no change in a sectoral focus is recommended – accession processes will benefit from an approach that concentrates in the longer term on existing sectors.

Recommendation 2 – Coaching and Mentoring. This report indicates that current Swedish support in some areas has reached a level of outcome where a shift in focus is required. The indicated shift is not in terms of partner or sector, but in the way support is provided, ie to continue with current support, but to focus more strongly on specific priorities in organisational capacity. A coaching/ mentoring approach is indicated as a possible shift with SEIO and the GED, each of which will benefit from increasing both the number and the skillsets of middle and senior level management, with the aim of establishing a firm, sustainable leadership group. The report narrative further details this recommendation.

Recommendation 3 – The Security Sector. Discussions with the EU and other donors on development of a more structured approach to security sector reform is recommended. The key would be careful development, with the MUP and the EU, of the strategic framework for the reform process, and Swedish support to this development would be strategic and relevant.

Such an approach would put the MUP at the centre of strategic discussions, and , with the involvement of SEIO, would ensure that donor contributions were effectively coordinated. The development of the strategic framework could be conceived as *the initial approaches in development of a SWAp*, where Swedish support might initiate the change and assist in its inception, irrespective of its long-term involvement. The report narrative further details this recommendation.

Recommendation 4 – Gender Equality. Initiatives for gender equality continue to be an accession priority, in terms of change priorities for the Government of Serbia as well as at the Provincial and Municipal levels and with civil society. On-going support to the sector is recommended, but with a change of focus. While a PBA has been demonstrated to be ineffective as an approach to date, and is not recommended in the current environment, a closer correlation between the work and funding initiatives of the FOs (and their support to civil society organisations), Sida’s sector priorities, the GED, civil society and local actors is needed. The sector is at times divided and politicised, and Sida is in a unique position to play a key role in tightening the integration of approaches. The report narrative further details this recommendation.

Recommendation 5 – Environment and Sustainable Development. Given the current status of work in the sector, it is not considered sensible to consider a sector approach in the sense of that currently being applied within the Police sector or in relation to gender equality. However, it is considered worthwhile to consider initiating a closer integration of initiatives, partners, target groups and outcomes. Such an integration would increase the likelihood of synergies between civil society and local/ regional authorities. The report narrative further details this recommendation.

Recommendation 6 – Horizontal Communication. It is the view of the evaluators that Sida can strengthen outputs and outcomes by seeking synergy between different components, taking an integrated approach in programme implementation. It is recommended that Sida encourage beneficiaries to communicate horizontally, working to better integrate Sida interventions CSOs and institutions of the public sector.

1 Introduction

The Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida) in Serbia has commissioned a study that will assist them in understanding the *outcomes* of their current development Cooperation Strategy in Serbia and will assist them in developing their Cooperation Strategy for the coming period.

In order to assist Sida to understand the outcomes of its development cooperation, within the stated framework of contribution, sector and strategic goals, this study will look at the efficiency and effectiveness of different types of cooperation, the effectiveness of different channels of cooperation, weaknesses and strengths of the different types/ forms of assistance and the experience of other donors. The intent of this analysis is to draw on specific experiences in Serbia (whether gained directly by Sida, or its partners, or grant recipients, or other donor agencies) and to use this experience, and the framework of the *contributions* made by Sida, the *sectoral emphasis* of these contributions and the *strategic intent (goals)* of Sida's work, to draw conclusions about the current strategy and to make specific and detailed recommendations regarding the next strategy.

The outcome assessment consists of three parts, which form the three sections of this report:

- A general assessment and analysis of the overall outcomes and experiences of development cooperation in relation to the overarching goal of making it possible for poor people to improve their living conditions and the specific goal of the current Cooperation Strategy which is objective of Sweden's development cooperation with Serbia is to strengthen democracy and promote sustainable development in a way that improves the prospects for EU membership.
- An assessment and analysis of the most important areas of cooperation, based on programme and project documents, assessment memoranda, monitoring and follow-up, audit and evaluations.
- Summary of conclusions and recommendations from these two sections.

Within these sections, the report aims to address three specific tasks for Sida.

- To gain a detailed understanding and appreciation of Sida's experiences, lessons learned and outcomes from the current period of cooperation.
- To develop a clear picture of what has worked efficiently and effectively in this cooperation, as well as the views/ experience of other donors.
- To prepare set of recommendations for Sida, based on this material, for Sida's development cooperation in Serbia in the coming period.

2 General Assessment and Analysis

This section of the report analyses the progress made, with assistance from Sida, in the context of the 'absolute and dominant assessment criterion', i.e. 'support in relation to Serbia's EU integration'. The assessment addresses Sida priorities and support together with Serbia's policies and strategies. The underlying focus of Sida's assistance is on assisting poor people to improve their living conditions. The more direct focus is on processes of EU integration, with a strategic approach and understanding that ties these two priorities together, i.e. that a closer political and economic relationship between Serbia and Europe will improve the conditions of Serbia's poor. As is stated in *Sida At Work*, it 'is rarely Sida's role to work directly with poor women and men. Instead, Sweden contributes to poverty reduction by supporting the goals, plans and activities of its formal cooperation partners.'¹ This is the

¹ 2005, *Sida At Work*, Sida, SE-105 25 Stockholm Sweden.

approach taken in Serbia, where most focus of the Cooperation Strategy is on partnering with the Government, where the ‘process objectives for greater development assistance effectiveness are to *limit and concentrate initiatives*, as well as to use Serbia’s own structures as much as possible.’²

Sida in Serbia has worked to ensure that its interventions address the focus and priorities of both Sweden and of Sida’s cooperation partners in Serbia.

The strategic intent of this approach – the emphasis on European integration and partnering with Government - while maintaining a rights perspective and focus and an involvement with civil society, is strongly supported in the field, and, with some specific exceptions, is effective in its sectoral emphasis and in the manner in which contributions are made by Sida. To a certain large extent, as will be seen below, the Evaluators are of the view that only some fine-tuning is required or desirable in the formulation of the upcoming Cooperation Strategy. It is felt the balance of sectors is appropriate to the needs and expressed priorities of the Government of Serbia and civil society organisations in Serbia. It is also felt that the current emphasis on contributions to the public sector, with a particular focus on (but not exclusive commitment to) capacity building, is effective, appropriate and well supported. Contributions to civil society organisations, including a number to organisations and initiatives directly correlated with contributions to the public sector, are effective, pertinent to Serbia’s needs and directly in line with both Sida and Government of Serbia priorities.

Each of these components is discussed further below, including the particular perspectives of partners, as well as representatives of other bilateral donors (and the European Commission) in Serbia.

As well as its own priorities, Sida is focused on delivering within the framework of established international priorities on development cooperation. In this context, Sida aligns its priorities closely with the Paris Declaration on international aid. The following table is based on Sida’s document *Sida At Work* (the left side) and analysis of its local response to this framework (the right side).

² 2009, Strategy for development cooperation with Serbia January 2009-December 2012, Ministry for Foreign Affairs Sweden, 103 39 Stockholm.

Table 1: Assessment of the Sida's priorities in relation to the Paris Declaration

1. Sida funds should always be integrated with, and reflected in, the planning and budgeting process of the partner country.	This is a clear priority of Sida in Serbia, and is being successfully implemented. As well as comment and reflection in support of this process from Sida itself, the Evaluators heard extensive and numerous statements in support of both the policy and Sida's implementation of it from Government of Serbia partners and from other donors.
2. Sida should support the strengthening of partner countries' capacities for, and use of, results based management and as much as possible use partner country assessment frameworks for its own monitoring.	The Evaluators did not see strong evidence of the strengthening of the beneficiaries' capacity for, and use of, results based management, nor use of partner country assessment frameworks for monitoring, although this was the primary focus of the assessment.
3. Sida should increase the share of programme-based support (general budget support and sector programme support) whenever conditions allow.	A programme-based approach was used with the Police reform, and to a certain lesser extent with the initiatives of gender equality.
4. Sida should reduce the number of sectors and/or programmes/ projects that it supports in order to concentrate on areas where Sweden has comparative advantages in terms of knowledge and/or experience.	Sida in Serbia took a clear step in the direction of reducing the number of sectors and programmes/ projects it supports in the current Cooperation Strategy and has effectively leveraged its comparative advantage in the selected areas of support.
5. Sida should always promote harmonisation, not least in fragile states.	Sida in Serbia is effectively harmonising its development support, and its clear, strategic approach with partners and with other institutional donors (notably the EU and EBRD) is recognised and supported. Sida participates in a range of donor and sector coordination groups.
6. Sida should support capacity development in partner countries through coordinated programmes consistent with partners' national development strategies.	The current Cooperation Strategy, as it is being implemented, has significant focus on building the capacity of Serbian Government institutions in strategic sectors. With the current Cooperation Strategy Sida has partially changed the implementation modality, from engaging intermediate agencies to work more directly with beneficiaries.
7. As far as possible, Sida should use the public financial management systems of its partner countries for channelling its funds.	Sida does not use Serbia's PFM, with a few minor examples. Support is mainly financed and managed through external resources.
8. Sida should as far as possible use procurement systems in partner countries for procurement connected to Sida contributions.	Sida does not use national procurement systems.
9. Sida should not establish separate Project Implementation Units for its contributions.	PIUs have not been established by Sida in Serbia. Project staff are integrated into the existing structures of beneficiaries.
10. Sida should share its analytical work with partner countries and other partners.	The assessment did not address this question.
11. Sida's planning processes should be long-term and transparent.	Sida's planning processes are long-term and transparent.
12. Sida should reduce the number of missions to partner countries that include a request to meet with officials from the country. Sida should instead be part of joint missions with other donors.	The assessment did not address this question.
13. Sida should push for further harmonisation efforts on cross cutting issues such as sustainable use of natural resources and protection of the environment, gender equality and other thematic issues, such as the remaining central elements for poverty reduction. ³	Sida is leading efforts in harmonising donor support in Serbia in all fields, including issues of sustainable use of natural resources and protection of the environment, gender equality, poverty reduction and others.

³ 2005, *Sida At Work*, Sida, SE-105 25 Stockholm Sweden.

2.1 The programme is permeated by the perspectives of the poor

The current Cooperation Strategy is formulated against an EU integration perspective, in how it is written and in how it is implemented. This is a perspective that colours all of Sida Serbia's interactions with its partners (notably representatives of the institutions of the Serbian government with whom it is partnering) and beneficiaries. Described formally as intending to 'strengthen democracy and promote sustainable development in a way that improves the prospects for EU membership'.⁴ A poverty-alleviation perspective is incorporated directly into this approach, although the analysis undertaken and the strategic decisions that were made were to attack the status of the poor in a structural way, in assisting in the change necessary within the public sector that would ensure appropriate change in the policy and programmatic activities of the Serbian government.

*Given that poverty is dynamic, multidimensional and context specific a holistic analytical approach is advocated.*⁵

The analysis of cooperation priorities undertaken in developing the current strategy links the formal and informal association of Serbian society and Serbian institutions to the EU and its people as a process that will, both directly and indirectly, impact on the status of poor people in Serbia. This association will bring economic ties that will tend, all things being equal, to generate demand for the resources present in Serbia, including human resources. The association will also impact on the political and social structures and beliefs of both parties, as interchange will influence and educate the population and widen perspectives across all groups.

*The role of Sida is to assist in creating optimal conditions that help poor people and countries in their struggle to reduce poverty.*⁶

2.2 The programme is permeated by a rights perspective

In its formulation against the EU integration perspective, the current strategy maintains a strong and significant focus on democratic governance and human rights. This focus, as with the poverty focus discussed above, is at a structural level, addressing key areas of critical public service reform. This is not to say the strategy works only at the level of the state, as it does not, and indeed it finances significant initiatives with civil society in the areas of human rights, gender equality, and the rule of law, as well as in initiatives in the field of environmental sustainability. Work on human rights, with civil society, encompasses important initiatives with Roma and the LGBT community, as well as interventions related to gender equality. It is important to note that these are not just Sida priorities. Serbia has defined its own thematic priorities in its National Plan for Integration (NPI) as democracy and human rights and promotion of gender equality. There is a very close correlation between Sida's stated priorities and thematic areas of focus and the work being done with cooperation partners in Serbia.

2.3 In what way are central component elements reflected in cooperation?

Swedish legislation describes in detail the Swedish approach to development cooperation - *Shared Responsibility: Sweden's Policy for Global Development*. This bill of the Swedish Parliament describes the eight central component elements of the policy (the so-called 'central elements for poverty reduction'): respect for human rights; democracy and good

⁴ 2009, Strategy for development cooperation with Serbia January 2009-December 2012, Ministry for Foreign Affairs Sweden, 103 39 Stockholm.

⁵ October 2002, *Perspectives on Poverty*, Sida, SE-105 25 Stockholm Sweden.

⁶ Ibid

governance; gender equality; sustainable use of natural resources and protection of the environment; economic growth; social development and social security; conflict management and human security; global public goods.⁷

The following discusses the where four of the eight central components are addressed by the Cooperation Strategy as it is currently formulated. It is noted here that these four were a strategic choice, as was the decision to concentrate only on these four.

2.3.1 Respect for human rights

Support and respect for human rights is one of the key areas of engagement in Serbia per the Cooperation Strategy. Aside from work on gender equality (see below) funding is also provided to support initiatives with the Roma community, with judicial reform, in the media and with anti-corruption activities. Specific support has also been provided to the LGBT community. These initiatives are coordinated through Sida's three Framework Organisations (FOs), Swedish NGOs with Serbian offices who are responsible for developing and funding a civil society development programme in Serbia.

The Evaluators are of the view that Sweden's cooperation in human rights is appropriately focused (particularly and notably through the work of the Framework Organisations, and CRD in particular) and is delivering outputs and outcomes that are relevant to Serbia's accession processes. The strong advocacy approach, coupled with organisational strengthening, is enabling difficult policy discussions to be progressed, and is engaging the Serbian public in important dialogue on human rights.

2.3.2 Democracy and good governance

The real focus of the Cooperation Strategy is on democracy and good governance, particularly in the form of support to structural change within the public service. A wide range of programmes and projects are being supported, the vast majority of which have a strong structural and capacity-building component designed to change the way an agency, unit or department functions. Significant contributions are currently being provided to the General Secretariat, the Council for Regulatory Reform (RRU), Police Reform Programme, the Republic Statistical Office (SORS), the Serbian European Integration Office (SEIO), the Gender Equality Directorate (GED), among others. Each of these initiatives is longer term, and has included either a series of projects or concurrent project formed into a clear programmatic approach, or both.

The Evaluators are of the view that the support being provided by Sida in this area is, and will remain, the most significant contribution Sida makes to Serbia's integration processes. However, the nature of necessary changes in capacity, coupled with related change in systems and procedures, indicate that the reform process will gain significantly from further support, and that further refining of Sida's approach may benefit outputs and outcomes.

2.3.3 Gender equality

Initiatives funded from Swedish contributions include work with NGOs, funded through the FOs, as well as work dedicated to structural change on gender equality within the public sector in Serbia, at a national, provincial and local level. Initiatives include work on the legal and strategic framework for gender equality in Serbia, together with organisational development work with the Gender Equality Directorate, as well as work with gender equality mechanisms across the country and support to civil society organisations who focus on or

⁷ May 15, 2003; Government Bill 2002/03:122 *Shared Responsibility: Sweden's Policy for Global Development*.

have activities in the field of gender equality. On the one hand, a wide range of important legal, policy and procedural frameworks have been change (some directly attributable to Swedish assistance, some as a by-product or as a result of the on-going change process).

On the other hand, Government support to and acceptance of the GED as the key agency for change in policy on gender equality is weak, and the effectiveness of the GED remains limited. Political issues within the sector, i.e. difficulties in the relationship between the GED and a number of women's organisations, do not strengthen advocacy and lobbying approaches to government. There is insufficient linkage between the work of the FOs (specifically Kvinna till Kvinna) and other initiatives in the sector, and particularly little linkage between their work and government agencies such as the GED. Of all the sectors in which Sida is engaged in Serbia, gender equality would benefit most from a programme-based approach, making it all the more unfortunate that the priorities and approaches of the Government of Serbia, the EU and other donors could not be brought together on this initiative.

2.3.4 Sustainable use of natural resources and protection of the environment

In the environment sector, emphasis has been placed on development of a sustainable development strategy and development of advocacy skills with civil society, and support to the development of more effective solid-waste management with Municipal and Government of Serbia partners. Of particular significance has been the assistance provided in support of an EBRD loan facility at the Duboko waste site and development of a regional waste management plan and work with the Government of Serbia in development and implementation of its National Strategy on Sustainable Development (NSDS). Fundamental structural change is required, across Serbia, in how solid-waste is managed. The Duboko initiative is the first, and currently only, development of a plan and structure for the management of solid-waste disposal in Serbia's districts, towns and Municipalities.

The second area of priority of Sida's contributions to sustainable use strategies with natural resources is funding being provided to civil society in the region. This programme is intended to strengthen the capacities and role of environmental NGOs in their work with the public, Municipalities and the Government of Serbia.

Sida's approach, in support of the EBRD, Government of Serbia strategies and plans, and with a focus on Municipal solid-waste treatment priorities is making significant contributions to the necessary change. Given that the needs in the environment/ sustainable development sector are vast, and the costs are high, the question which needs to be addressed is whether there would be greater value to Serbia in Sida tightening the focus of its work in the sector to look solely at solid-waste management – working with the Government of Serbia, the EBRD, EU and Municipalities to take both the successes and the lessons learned from the Duboko initiative and extend it across the country.

2.4 Is this relevant in relation to Serbia's Poverty Reduction Strategy?

The choices of sectors and approaches made by Sida were done in close dialogue with the Government of Serbia and other donors. This dialogue included developing a deep understanding of Serbia's Poverty Reduction Strategy (PRS), together with the stated development priorities. This approach also incorporated discussions on harmonisation, and of setting/ using priorities in such a way that good balance (and, subsequently, cooperation) could be found between Swedish and Serbian priorities.

Sida's position concerning a PRS will be reflected in the selection of areas for cooperation and dialogue as well as in the selection of aid modalities. In the long run, budget support is the preferred form of cooperation, since it is channelled through the country's own financial

*management system. However, Sector Wide Approaches (SWAPs) and other Sida contributions should also be seen as part of the PRS framework.*⁸

It is worth noting here also that designated priorities of Sida support are clearly within the framework of Serbia's PRS and national priorities and the focus areas of the Cooperation Strategy. In its document *Perspectives on Poverty*, Sida indicates a number of its areas of support, according to its own analysis of poverty in the world and the international policies and strategies available for confronting poverty. There is a direct correlation between a number of these areas and Serbian national priorities and the Cooperation Strategy⁹

2.5 What is the situation with regard to effectiveness, feasibility and sustainability?

The Evaluators were impressed with the response of partners and other donors to the approach Sida takes to its work – developing its strategic constraints, ensuring compliance with the fundamentals and ethos of the Paris Accord, ensuring harmonisation with other donors (particularly the EU and its own integration steps and focus) and the close correlation of Sida priorities with Serbian priorities and focus. There are many areas within this framework where a balancing of agendas and activities can become difficult, but the current Cooperation Strategy, and how it is being implemented, are good examples of maintaining a focus on a variety of priorities while designing and delivering a program of development cooperation.

One area of specific importance in terms of effectiveness and sustainability of outcomes is that the Sida approach assists Serbia in absorbing funds. There are two priorities in this area: projects with a potential for sustainability and projects which prepare for and contribute to larger initiatives. The current Sida approach assists in both these areas. For example, the work being done within the MUP has clear potential for sustainability, and the developing capacity within the Ministry is both focused on other available funds and has, and is further developing, the skills to access and make use of these funds. Another example is Sida's participation in the partnership which is working on developing the Duboko waste site – Sida participation assisted the Government of Serbia and the nine partner Municipalities to access the EBRD funding.

2.5.1 Describe ownership on the part of the Serbian Government

A key principle of Sida's poverty reduction work is that 'National ownership is primordial and national capacity-building is prioritised.'¹⁰ The partners must own the efforts and have the resources, capacity and opportunity to pursue the objectives. One of Sida's main tasks is to strengthen capacities for partner countries to exercise ownership.¹¹ With a number of relevant exceptions, ownership of the strategic direction and activities of the current Cooperation Strategy by Sida's partners in Serbia is generally of a very high level. Each of the three levels described in *Sida At Work*¹² are looked at in detail below.

The Policy Level – The Serbian Government, its agencies and Ministries drive development processes in Serbia. Some of this is directly related to and/ or attributable to Swedish assistance, some demonstrates a general ownership. Of particular importance as examples of policy ownership are the PRS, the National Plan for Integration with the EU (NPI), the National Sustainable Development Strategy (Sida supported), the Law on Gender Equality, the National Action Plan on Gender Equality (Sida supported), the National Strategy for

⁸ 2005, *Sida At Work*, Sida, SE-105 25 Stockholm Sweden.

⁹ October 2002, *Perspectives on Poverty*, Sida, SE-105 25 Stockholm Sweden.

¹⁰ October 2002, *Perspectives on Poverty*, Sida, SE-105 25 Stockholm Sweden.

¹¹ Ibid

¹² 2005, *Sida At Work*, Page 18, Sida, SE-105 25 Stockholm Sweden.

Improving the Position of Women. The Regional Waste Management Plan in Duboko (Sida supported) is in place and operational – it will be important now to see if it functions well, *and* to see it used as an example for and impetus to other regional Municipal grouping in their own development. SEIO (Sida supported) is playing a key role in drawing out inputs and directions from Ministries, coordinating Serbia's integration processes and coordinating international donor agencies. SEIO's book *Needs of the Rep of Serbia for International Assistance*¹³, changes the policy framework of donor coordination – putting the Government of Serbia in control of priorities. The Office of Regulatory Reform (ORR) has revised the format for laws, in their draft and final versions, including a 3-4 page of ex-ante assessment in the draft format of laws. ORR has also developed a book of procedures for the development of laws for use by Government in developing legislation. The Statistical Office Republic of Serbia (SORS) to concentrate energy on statistics at the regional level.

The Implementation Level – The quality and dedication of personnel and their application to implementing necessary changes is indicative of ownership of the Police Reform Strategy programme (notably in CSI). It exemplifies the commitment of middle management to the reform process. More widely in the Ministry of the Interior (MUP), the Action Planning Working Group (for Reform Strategy implementation) is in place but have yet to reach necessary levels of planning and management skills, although indications are that the commitment for change exists. SEIO provides an implementation level example as well, committed as it is internally to change and development of its own processes as well as assisting the implementation of integration processes across Ministries. It is also worth noting that gender equality mechanisms at the provincial and local levels demonstrate a strong uptake of both the principles and processes of gender equality (laws, by-laws, budgeting) within governance structures. Although not a government Department/ agency, the Standing Conference on Towns and Municipalities (SCTM) is a fundamentally different organisation to that which existed at the beginning of Sida support, when the organisation was weak, internally and in terms of results, and is now the key institution in south-eastern Europe in terms of local self governance.

The Impact Level – It is possible to begin to measure 'impact' from Sweden's contributions to Serbia in many of fields of its intervention. Specifically, in terms of benefits to the public, Swedish assistance has begun, or is contributing to, a shift in policy frameworks that will create greater balance between genders in public expenditure and will provide greater opportunities for women to participate effectively decision-making. While the major focus has been nationally, there is notable change at the provincial and local levels. At all levels, impact is most noticeable in changes in laws, by-laws, policies and strategies, including the Law on Gender Equality, the National Action Plan for Gender Equality, work with GEM on gender-sensitive budgeting. It is worth noting that while the experience of the LGBT community in Serbia is still difficult, proper dialogue is taking place with, and within Serbian government, agencies and the general public. This public dialogue, stressful and emotional, is a critical need and the fact it is taking place is a clear demonstration that Swedish assistance is changing perspectives in terms of the human rights. While significant work remains, even this public discourse would not have been possible only a few years ago.

2.5.2 Describe the implementing capacity of Serbian authorities

On one level, within the framework of partners of the current Cooperation Strategy, Serbia's implementation capacity is strong. Leadership and senior management of many partner agencies demonstrate the requisite levels of skill and training to drive the change process.

¹³ 2011, Republic of Serbia Government, European Integration Office.

This strength is noted from the quality of implementation, from reports, from external reports and evaluations and from the Evaluators own observations during the assessment process. However, the quality of personnel and level of skills is not equal across all partners and is not of a consistently high level, which is indicative of priorities for focus in the upcoming Cooperation Strategy. It can be argued that the breadth and depth of skills and experience are not sufficient within public sector partners – and that a focus and priority should be building a greater core of personnel capable of responding to the change requirements.

2.5.3 Describe the channels of cooperation that have functioned best (National Gov, regional bodies, Municipalities, NGOs, etc)

Government of Serbia support has a significant role to play in the EU integration process, and as such is an important component of Swedish assistance. To a large extent this funding has been effective to date in delivering outputs and outcomes of importance to Serbia's quest for membership of the EU. NGO contributions have also been of importance as a vibrant and involved civil society is an important ingredient in accession processes. As reported in the *Evaluation of Support to the Civil Society in the Western Balkans*¹⁴, the work of NGOs supported by Sida has empowered NGO partners, improved the quality of their services, increased their professionalism and their relationships with the community and authorities, improved their ability to think and act strategically and increased their influence. Given that the focus of these NGOs is in gender equality, human rights and democratic governance, the effects and impact of these improvements is of significance to Sida and its work in Serbia.

The coherence and harmonisation which comes from direct contributions to the support of other donors cannot be understated. Responses from the EBRD, as well as Government of Serbia representatives on the importance of Sida contributions to the development of solid-waste management approaches in Serbia were strong in their support for the contributions, not from a financial perspective but given the importance placed on Sida providing support to the initiatives of partners.

2.5.4 Suitable forms of cooperation/ support (programme support/ project support/ etc).

The type of assistance being provided through EBRD, to the Ministry for the Environment and the Municipalities and towns, as part of the Duboko project, is appropriate to the initiative, and is an effective way of participating in addressing environmental issues in Serbia without driving the process.

The programme focus on Police sector reform is working well, with initiatives in one area providing impetus to other areas, engendering change across a wider part of the Police service. Not of least importance is that change momentum can be maintained even where there are blockages in a particular project – the reform process did not stop when there were some difficulties in staffing from Sweden on the Strategy Project, as impetus was being provided through the CSI project. Now that both are on track, they assist the Intelligent Policing project to gain traction.

As well, the MUP has seen the value of this change process, and representatives comment on how they see things differently now: Police Forensics has a goal of being a European leader in one designated area of criminal forensics, and the human resources department is excited by developing a career management framework, the development of which has very wide support within the Police Service as staff begin to understand how an effective advancement system can have personal benefits for each member of the Service.

¹⁴ 2010, *Evaluation of Support to the Civil Society in the Western Balkans*, Nilsson et al, Sida, SE-105 25 Stockholm Sweden.

The focus on specific areas of the public service, and capacity within those sectors, is a strategy that is delivering change, although to variable degrees at this stage. The long term support to SEIO has raised their effectiveness as an organisation and their ownership of change processes. SORS is improving its internal systems according to European standards, although the timeliness and effectiveness of their outputs is not yet to an acceptable standard.

The programme-based approach¹⁵ (PBA) within the gender equality sector has not worked effectively. According to the final report on Sida's project in support of the GED, discussions were held and work was done with a large number of donor agencies but donors demonstrated a 'reluctance to provide funding through a PBA, as most donors in Serbia are interested in donor coordination work with specific projects. Some donors were interested to support GED and the NAP, but except Sida, this potential support was very limited in both funds and duration.'¹⁶

There will be further encouragement from the EU for approaches that address the needs of whole sectors while harmonising donor approaches. Having said this, Sida experience in attempting to initiate a PBA in Serbia would indicate that the Government and the donor community are not yet ready for a SWAp. Something less rigid than 'a single policy and expenditure programme under government leadership' might work, but this would effectively be no more than the further strengthening of Sida's current focus on harmonization.

2.5.5 The experience of other donors.

The Evaluators undertook to understand the perspective of other donors (World Bank, Government of Norway and the EU, as well as that of the EBRD) on their own priorities and work in Serbia and on Sida's approach and priorities. There was widespread support for the diligence with which Sida fulfils its obligations under the Paris Accord, and strong encouragement for a continuation of this approach as it is deemed to be appropriate and effective. The EU in particular encouraged Sida in its forward planning to be more focused on a) EU priorities and programmes in Serbia and b) on how Sida's support can assist the Serbian Government and Municipalities to have better access to and make better use of this assistance. In other words, to focus on assisting government to absorb these larger donations. Maintenance of close dialogue and coordination with the EU, SEIO and the leadership of specific, targeted Ministries will be critical in the coming period to ensure a most effective correlation and harmonisation of development assistance.

2.6 How are the outcomes related to the goals established in the Cooperation Strategy?

The objective of the current Cooperation Strategy is 'to strengthen democracy and promote sustainable development in a way that improves the prospects for EU membership.' *Outcomes of Swedish support* are demonstrably contributing to improvement in prospects for EU membership as structural change is taking place in the specific areas of focus. This structural change is summarised below:

Human Rights and Gender Equality – The Strategy called for a strengthening of *interaction among actors* and support to an active civil society that enables *citizen influence on the development of society*. The civil society programme undertaken by the FOs maintains a

¹⁵ OECD/DAC defines Programme-Based Approaches as a "way of engaging in development cooperation based on the principle of coordinated support for a locally owned programme of development, such as a national poverty reduction strategy, a sector programme, a thematic programme or a programme of a specific organization". Source: *Guidance on Programme-Based Approaches*, Sida, 2008, p. 20.

¹⁶ July 2011, *Final Narrative Report-Sida Support to the Gender Equality Directorate of Serbia During the 'Inception Programme'*, Sida.

strong focus on civil and political rights, coupled with the participation of minorities in the development of society. Key changes include a change in the level of dialogue on the rights of the LGBT community, increases in the capacity of, and involvement by, local human rights organisations in advocacy and monitoring activities and development of a number of laws, by-laws, strategies and policies related to gender equality at the national, provincial and local levels: the Law on Gender Equality and the National Strategy for Improving the Position of Women (not specifically part of this Strategy) and the National Action Plan (NAP) on Gender Equality, the implementation strategy for the NAP and the development of local gender mechanisms and local action plans within the NAP framework.

Security Sector Reform – It is not possible to assess at this point the outcomes of the current Strategy in building ‘further on current police cooperation’ and ‘focussing particularly on police effectiveness, support anti-corruption initiatives and gender equality and promote increased access to equity by civil society’. However, the Sida-funded initiatives in the sector which include critical projects focused on the reform strategy for the Police and on intelligent policing (with its related contribution to the fight against organised crime and anti-corruption) respond to the goals established in the Cooperation Strategy. While not sufficiently well advanced to make a judgement on results, indications are good, and the current programme should be strongly supported in the coming period.

Democratic governance – Swedish assistance to democratic governance, focused on ‘administrative reforms, development assistance coordination, decentralisation and statistics’ is demonstrably contributing to the goals of the Strategy, is achieving Swedish objectives and is doing so clearly as a result of Swedish assistance. The most notable examples, each of which is discussed in more detail below, include the coordination and leadership of development assistance provided by SEIO, the structural reform within SORS (‘significant improvements have been achieved in SORS’s work and its standing as the leading statistical institution in Serbia’¹⁷), notably the systematic and standardized approach to quality and the greater, and specific focus on regional statistics and on gender-related data. The police reform programme also responds to the goals of the strategy, in developing a effective and democratic national administration that serves the citizens of Serbia.

Sustainable development and the environment – The first regional solid-waste management strategy has been developed and, together with the physical construction of a regional solid-waste facility, both of which are key components of the Strategy, which focuses on ‘sustainable development through environmental infrastructure’ and ‘particularly on alignment with EU legislation’. The Duboko project aims to ‘facilitate the introduction of environmental methodologies that comply with EU standards with the aim of promoting the use of sustainable waste management practices. The project is also aimed to serve as a model for other regions in Serbia.’ The structural aims have been achieved, and sustainable development is being promoted – it remains to be seen if the project serves as a model, although the Evaluators are of the view that this should be a key focus of the coming period.

2.7 What effects and trends can be seen and what effects and trends cannot be seen?

The reform process continues to be slowed by the political situation in Serbia, exemplified in a stable but weak government. Having been formed from a large number of parties from disparate backgrounds and priorities, the size of the government and the need for a political consensus on almost all issues undermines the decision-making process. Further, the upcoming elections constrain decision-making as parties shy away from making long-term or

¹⁷ July 2011, Light Peer Review of the Implementation of the European Statistics Code of Practice in Serbia, Guñter Kopsch Hana Šlégrová.

difficult decisions. In this context, politically weak counterparts/ partners/ beneficiaries struggle to bring sustained success to cooperation initiatives.

Further, with administrative capacity within public institutions (particularly Ministries) relatively weak (see 2.5.2 above), particularly in middle-management, and while some, but not all, Ministries demonstrate a capable and willing leadership, there is a lack of management resources capable of delivering outputs and outcomes. This exacerbates difficulties in the reform process, with no administrative leadership able to provide strength of delivery while the political leadership is also weak.

Finally, project initiatives are affected by the lack of depth in the skill levels and expertise within the bureaucracy. Human capacity in beneficiary institutions, affected by poor salaries and low staffing numbers of appropriately qualified personnel, impacts negatively on results.

This is neither a criticism of Serbia nor of Sida's Cooperation Strategy, but a picture of the current situation; in other words, the starting point, not the ending point. Indicatively, Sida's cooperation is best where it strategically intends to assist Serbia in addressing these issues – this issue of human capacity, and this is a key component of the current Strategy.

2.8 Is Swedish support achieving its goals in Serbia?

Swedish support is appropriately targeted in terms of sectors, contributions and strategic intent and is contributing effectively to its aim of strengthening democracy and promoting sustainable development in a way that improves the prospects for EU membership. Some aspects of Swedish assistance are clearly demonstrable as Swedish support that has delivered structural change, and some assistance is clearly Swedish support contributing to the reform agenda in areas being lead by others. Both approaches are appropriate.

Further work is necessary, as are refinements to certain components of the Cooperation Strategy, but in general the current Strategy is an effective framework for assistance, closely linked with priorities of the Government of Serbia. Details of the results and outcomes of the assistance is found below.

3 Assessment And Analysis Of The Most Important Areas Of Cooperation

3.1 Sustainable Development And The Environment

3.1.1 Basic Facts.

Many of Serbia's environmental problems are strongly related to its historic legacy of a centrally planned economy. A focus on heavy industrialization in combination with price controls and subsidies created inefficient and wasteful natural resources use. Key causes include low prices on energy and other natural resources and environmental services (waste management). Due to the economic collapse in the 1990s, necessary environmental investments to prevent pollution and build infrastructure for water, sanitation and solid waste, etc were not undertaken. Despite ongoing reform efforts, Serbia still faces with serious environmental problems.

A poor standard of waste management has been identified as one of the pressing environmental issues in Serbia, resulting mainly from an inadequate political treatment of this issue so far. High cost, uneconomical organisation, poor quality of services and inadequate care for environment are the result of a devastatingly poor organisation of waste management.

The only method of managing waste that is currently practiced in Serbia is disposal in landfills, which mostly fails to meet the most basic requirements of hygiene, technical and

technology standards. Some of the landfills are already filled to their full capacity. According to the reports of the Serbian Agency for Environmental Protection (SEPA)¹⁸, there are 164 official waste disposal landfills in Serbia and more than 4,400 illegal disposal landfills that are waiting for remediation.

Sida currently supports work on development of solid-waste management facilities and strategies, in support of EBRD financing to nine Municipalities. Sida also supports the work of the Regional Environment Centre, and its initiatives with local NGOs in developing capacity in sustainable development. Direct assistance is provided to the Sustainable Development Unit, within the Deputy Prime Minister's office, in support of the National Strategy on Sustainable Development.

3.1.2 Relevance And Effectiveness

As regards *waste management*, Serbia has aligned its legislation with the key EU policies on waste and hazardous waste management, introducing the principles of waste prevention, reuse, recycling and recovery. Implementation has started. Legislation providing for waste separation is likewise in place. However, law enforcement is hampered by low waste collection rates in rural communities, thousands of illegal dumpsites and the absence of treatment facilities for hazardous waste.¹⁹

Duboko. In this context, the current assistance provided in working with the Government and partner Municipalities on development of the solid-waste management strategy and treatment facility at Duboko is an example of both the size and difficulty of the task and the importance of Sida's involvement in the work. There is still a significant amount of work required in relation to solid-waste management in Serbia, where only 8% of total waste is recycled. More inroads are needed if Serbia is to effectively address solid waste disposal across the country – this single initiative is not sufficient.

The Swedish contribution to the sector has been important to improvements in Serbia's environmental sustainability strategies and practices, and in line with Sida policy, EU and Government of Serbia priorities and plans. The Evaluators are supportive of both the Sida contribution to development of the Regional Waste Management Plan and its ability to contribute directly and quickly when difficulties arose at the waste site itself. While one approach is more strategic and long-term, the other was appropriate in providing immediate assistance, as required, within a framework of environmental sustainability.

NSDS. The relevance of the National Sustainable Development Strategy (NSDS) to sustainable development per se, and to Serbia's accession processes is clear, given the NSDS defines national priorities as European Union (EU) membership, developing competitive market economy and balanced economic growth, developing human resources and the rise in employment rate, developing infrastructure and equitable regional development and protecting and improving the environment and a rational utilisation of natural resources.²⁰

¹⁸ Serbia's Environmental Protection Agency (SEPA) is responsible under MEP for tasks related to the development, regulation, harmonization and management of the national information system for environmental protection. More information on SEPA is available (in Serbian) at the official website <http://www.sepa.gov.rs/>, last accessed 30 October 2011.

¹⁹ October 2011, *Commission Opinion on Serbia's application for membership of the European Union - Analytical Report*, (http://www.europa.rs/en/srbija/Eu/kljucni_dokumenti/CommissionsOpinionofSerbia%27sMembershipApplication.html).

²⁰ Accessed at <http://www.odrzivi-razvoj.gov.rs/eng/o-projektu/> - The Government of Serbia's website on the NSDS.

However, effectiveness of actual implementation of the NSDS, the NSDS Action Plan and the current *Support To Implementation Of The National Sustainable Development Strategy Of The Republic Of Serbia* project is difficult to assess. The project, whose long-term objective 'is to contribute to making development in the Republic of Serbia more sustainable through implementation of the NSDS AP – to build the capacity necessary for the NSDS AP to be implemented by concerned line ministries, other public institutions, civil society stakeholders and the business sector', has been delayed across a number of activities and has suffered from staffing issues including the recent replacement of the team leader. Actual project reporting does not indicate a technical assistance process that is being carried forward with requisite levels of intent and capacity.

As well, according to the project's Annual Report 'some barriers in NSDS AP implementation become clear in recent period. The NSDS document and the Action Plan include a wide variety of objectives and measures for implementation with a lack of focus in the implementation process. Namely, no strategic priorities have been identified for orientation and for creating a focus. The high number of objectives and measures makes the NSDS and the Action Plan unwieldy and virtually impossible to implement. Moreover, added value of AP implementation was in question without a clear prioritization and "business-as-usual" approach of main stakeholders. (Evaluator emphasis.) Given that, next period will be used to make a revision of AP, aimed to define strategic priorities for NSDS implementation and clear mechanisms for communication and follow-up, and to develop thematic priorities out of the long-list of objectives included in the NSDS.'²¹

The Annual Report also states: 'Coordinators at the national level understand the process and the topic in total but they lack in understanding the importance of the overall NSDS. This deficiency is expected to be compensated by their supervisors.'²² It is not visible that these compensatory roles are actually performed.

The Sustainable Development Unit, in stark contrast to SEIO, for example, does not demonstrate appropriate levels of seniority, management capacity or, as indicated above in the Annual Report, an 'understanding of the importance of the overall NSDS'. Ownership by the Government of Serbia, both at a policy and an implementation level, does not appear as strong as in other areas of Swedish assistance.

REC. The REC approach is at the other end of the scale, with NGOs (local, regional, national) involved in programmes directly aimed at their capacity and in the design and delivery of small project through a grant programme. These later initiatives included projects in the areas of: waste management, water management, renewable energy sources, energy efficiency, renewable energy sources and economic development, sustainable consumption, sustainable transport, urban planning, energy efficiency, participation in decision making, climate change and environmental education, local initiatives.

The capacity-building component focused on the NGOs themselves, and included skilling-up in legal recourse/ advocacy, lobbying, the role and function of the watchdog, public participation and effective communication and public outreach. The capacity-building component included on part undertaken in Sweden, with local authorities there, that provided insight into how environmental protection and sustainable development are addressed in Sweden, and how this is organized at both national and local levels.

²¹ April 2011, Annual Report - *Support To Implementation Of The National Sustainable Development Strategy Of The Republic Of Serbia* Project.

²² April 2011, Annual Report - *Support To Implementation Of The National Sustainable Development Strategy Of The Republic Of Serbia* Project.

The REC approach is a balanced and appropriate – including as it does specific actions directed at decision-makers and complementary capacity-development focused specifically at the necessary changes in knowledge, skills and attitudes that will increase the effectiveness of target NGOs. NGOs and their staff:

- Have a clearer picture of how they can influence and impact on policy at the local level.
- Have specific experience, and improved skill levels, in advocacy with decision-makers and in the media.
- Have experience with, and higher levels of confidence in dealing with authorities.

Authorities have also gained confidence in the work of NGOs, with the project's focus on actions with a long-term impact. The following direct outputs from the project are indicative of this change:

- Nisavski District has incorporated plans for biomass usage in its strategy documents, and City of Nis started planning construction of a biogas plant.
- The National Council of Education (NCE) has adopted proposals for defining standards for environmental education.
- Paracin Municipality will now separately collect hazardous household waste, the first municipality with this policy in Serbia.
- Three Municipalities adopted Local Waste Management Plans. NGO members are part of the teams monitoring implementation of the plans.
- Energy efficiency and water protection were identified as priorities in two strategic documents.

Impact could be much more significant if a project/ programme was more widely implemented, and/ or with a longer timeframe. The key question to address is how the important changes (policy at the local level; influence of civil society) can be engendered on a wider level. The 'window of opportunity' provided by EU priorities and Swedish policy frameworks can work effectively in support of local reforms. Although it remains to be seen if national support will be forthcoming in a strategic and effective manner, a local and regional.

3.1.3 Assessment Of Outputs And Outcomes

The first regional landfill, Duboko, in Užice, is open. The landfill was constructed in accordance with the waste management strategy developed with Swedish assistance for the two towns and seven municipalities of the Zlatibor and Morava Okrugs (Districts), in line with the EU directives and standards. It covers 15 ha and has a capacity of 250 tons of waste per day, and also has a Waste Separation Line with a capacity of 90,000 tons per year. The works on the landfill started in 2008 and were co-financed by the 9 towns and municipalities, the Regional Environmental Protection Fund, an EBRD loan, NIP funds and grants from Sida, the French Government and the EU. Associated with the landfill, the Regional Waste Management Plan is complete, as is the Dump Closure Master Plan and a related public awareness campaign.

Duboko is a significant step in Serbia's development: it demonstrates the national and local/ regional policy and strategy frameworks that are critical to EU accession. More importantly it demonstrates the real change needed in solid waste management, and that this change is possible to occasion. The ground has been prepared for extending the development of regional landfills across Serbia. However, Duboko also demonstrates that there will be significant challenges to be addressed in other locations. These challenges include:

- Finance – national/ international loan/ grant support and agreements on and provision of local contributions.

- National commitment – the policy and procedural frameworks as well as assistance with finance and management issues.
- Regional agreements – formation of regional public utility companies, reaching agreement on how sites will be managed and on sharing the costs of the sites.
- Local management – developing, i.e. improving the actual capacity of management within the designated public utility companies.
- Developing and implementing national, local and regional objectives for solid future waste management, particularly in assisting citizens and decision-makers to re-rank priorities, with the first priority being waste avoidance and a lessening of waste going to landfill. Recycling is a critical subsidiary topic in this area.

The work undertaken by REC is *contributing to a shift* in how NGOs involved in work on the environment and sustainable development work – moving them from awareness raising and campaigning to advocating and lobbying, and to focusing this lobbying/ advocating on concrete and measurable policy changes. This work is delivering outputs, and contributing to outcomes:

- Nine of 11 funded projects focused on policy development; 5 were objectively successful.
- NGOs managing projects improved their capacities in
 - how to dialogue with decision-makers,
 - the focus points of the dialogue.
- NGOs used these processes and changes to better position themselves to advocate with decision-makers – participating in working groups and teams with other local actors.
- Discussion with decision-makers increased, with civil society actors demonstrating their improved capacities for lobbying and advocacy. This shift is visible locally and, to a certain extent nationally.
- There has been a demonstrable increase in networking and ‘coalitioning’ among the environmental NGOs that are working with REC. These coalitions are engaged in joint lobbying/ advocacy activities with decision-makers.
- There has been an increase in media involvement of environmental NGOs, where they both educate and advocate.

3.1.4 Assessment Of Goal Fulfilment, Effects And Sustainability

On-going assistance to the Ministry and Municipalities, in conjunction with the EU and assistance from EBRD, is an area where Swedish assistance adds long-term value in addressing critical environmental priorities in Serbia. Sweden’s contributions at Duboko and with REC’s initiatives are effective contributors to achievement of Sweden’s goals. In terms of effect and sustainability it would be inappropriate, from a strategic perspective, to look at the Duboko initiative in isolation, particularly where there is significant scope for long-term impact by focusing on systems (within Municipalities and public utility companies) and on capacity development (within Municipalities, public utility companies, NGOs and, possibly, Ministries).

While Sida’s involvement in Duboko has been vital, the keys in terms of sustainability come from the longer-term issues that come seen in implementation of the initiative, issues which fall into three categories:

- The physical development of appropriate solid-waste management *strategies, systems and facilities* across Serbia. The current five-year plan of the Government of Serbia, supported by EBRD, is the next stage in a program that includes establishment of a total of 29 regional landfills by 2019.
- Capacity development at the State and Municipal levels (including within specifically targeted public utility companies) in the skills necessary to develop and

manage solid-waste treatment facilities. Such capacity-development does not take place in a short period, or with intermittent training inputs.

- *Systems and policies for funding* of solid-waste management systems that include local and national resources at a significant level. According to the EBRD, partner Municipalities and Towns that comprise the Duboko PUC (public utility company) did not contribute financially to the project at the levels which were agreed, an indicator that local ownership was not at the desired level. Further, concerns have been expressed that ‘cooperation between the various members of PUC Duboko is not considered enough and would result in problems when actual operation of the Duboko landfill starts.’²³ Resolving issues of this type are critical not just for the Duboko landfill but for on-going management of all regional landfills as they are developed.

The future focus²⁴ must be on systems and structures, and these systems and structures must involve local, national and international players. Sustainability of development, sustainability of change in systems and procedures of waste management in Serbia, will depend on a long-term and strategic commitment to improving skills, knowledge and practice (laws, by-laws and procedures) at the local level. Sida involvement in support of these changes will be an important contribution to Serbia’s accession processes.

Given the level of need, and the current status of work in the sector, it is not considered sensible to consider a sector approach in the sense of that currently being applied within the Police sector or in relation to gender equality. However, it is considered worthwhile to consider initiating a closer integration of initiatives, partners, target groups and outcomes. Such an integration would increase the likelihood of synergies between civil society and local/ regional authorities. Questions to address include:

- Is there scope within the Cooperation Strategy to link some of the work with environmental NGOs, i.e. within the REC initiative, with work on regional landfills? The clearest links can be seen in public awareness campaigns and in specific activities in support of the lessening of waste going to landfills.
- Is there scope within the Strategy to encourage development of the next regional landfills within Municipalities or regions where specific aspects of the REC initiative are on-going and have demonstrable levels of commitment from authorities?

3.2 Democratic Governance

3.2.1 Basic Facts

Sida’s assistance to the Standing Conference on Towns and Municipalities (SCTM) started in 2003 with the first phase (2003-2005), which focused on developing internal capacities, management systems and human resources as well increasing capacity for providing policy advices in the areas of local public administration and finances, local economic development and environmental protection. The second phase (2006-2009) took a holistic approach by enhancing capacities not only within SCTM but also among member municipalities and other

²³ April 2011, *Development of Regional Waste Management Plan and Dumpsite Closure Master Plan for the Duboko Region Project* - 6th Progress Report.

²⁴ See Serbia Environmental and Climate Impact Analysis, School of Economics and Commercial Law GÖTEBORG UNIVERSITY

(<http://www.sida.se/Global/Countries%20and%20regions/Europe%20incl.%20Central%20Asia/Serbia/Environmental%20policy%20brief%20Serbia.pdf>) for further discussion.

central and/or local level institutions and supporting the wider process of decentralization in Serbia. The focus was on further institutionalization and functional strengthening of SCTM and on implementation of the National Public Administration Strategy, decentralization processes and Serbia's EU integration. These first two phases were implemented by UNDP. The third phase was prepared in cooperation with the Swedish Association of Local Authorities and Regions (SALAR) and focuses on EU integration, environment, a business enabling environment, gender equality and the strengthening of civil society.

Funding and support to the Government of Serbia's Office of Regulatory Reform (ORR) is provided by Sida and the World Bank through The Regulatory Reform and Regulation Impact Assessment (RIA) Project for Serbia. (See the RIA website: www.ria.merr.gov.rs). The project assists in promotion of the process of regulatory reform – systematic undertaking of regulatory impact analysis of new laws and regulations. The Government of Serbia has introduced a mandatory RIA for each new law, and other regulatory instruments such as decrees and orders, and the Council for Regulatory Reform of Serbia, established by the Government in 2003, is empowered to perform the function of coordination and quality control of the RIAs prepared by the relevant Ministries.

Sida provides on-going support to the Serbian European Integration Office (SEIO), which was established in 2004 and has since developed its capacities and demonstrated the ability to coordinate government activity in relation to the EU reform and accession agenda. SEIO comprises a high-level coordination body supported by an expert group and 35 expert sub-groups covering all components of the acquis. The government adopted a National Programme for EU Integration (NPI) in 2008 and revised it in 2009. It is a comprehensive planning document that encompasses the legislative and administrative reforms that are considered necessary in order to prepare for EU membership. In December 2010, the government adopted an Action Plan to address the challenges identified in the 2010 Commission Progress report. SEIO monitors the implementation of commitments identified in the NPI and the Action Plan, and reports on these on a quarterly basis.

3.2.2 Relevance And Effectiveness

SCTM. Swedish support has enabled SCTM to develop into a modern institution with an increased legitimacy that is based to a large degree on its strong lobbying and communication capacity that has led to proactive engagement with the Government on a range of legal and regulatory changes. The SCTM has become internationally recognised, as a modern, competent and reliable advocate of the interests of local self-governments in Serbia. From only a handful of staff in 2001, SCTM now employs more than 50 people and implements a variety of projects, in numerous areas of importance, worth millions of Euros.

ORR. In order to implement a comprehensive reform of the legislation, Government passed a decision to establish the Office of Regulatory Reform (ORR) to implement the Comprehensive Regulatory Reform programme. In October and November of 2009, ORR collected and compiled a total of 340 recommendations for change of inefficient regulations and send them to regulatory bodies for their opinion. After receiving feedback from the regulatory bodies, a list of 216 recommendations was submitted to the government. The government has adopted these recommendations. 69 recommendations have been implemented and 146 are in the process of implementation. According to the estimates made by ORR, Comprehensive Regulatory Reform has so far contributed to the saving (by business, individuals and Municipalities) of 142.4 million euro per year.

SEIO. SEIO, into which DACU has now been integrated, plays a central and valuable role in the coordination of the EU reform agenda. Coordinating as it does the Government's Aid

Effectiveness Strategy, it is a vital component of the Government of Serbia's EU-focused administration. As well as the *importance* of its role, SEIO is an effective operation that functions well as the 'pivot-point' of Serbia's EU accession strategy and programme development and implementation. The focus of the current Strategy with SEIO was four-fold: (i) implementation of SWAp and the related improvements in effectiveness of programming and result-based management; (ii) improvements in ISDACON; (iii) improvements in internal knowledge and understanding of aid-related issues, systems, procedures and effects within national and local government and civil society; and (iv) establishment of consultation mechanisms with civil society to encourage and improve its participation in programming of EU assistance. Within this framework, the intent of the assistance was an increase in aid effectiveness.

SORS. SORS has benefited from a series of projects funded by Sweden. Work with SORS is geared toward development of a sustainable statistical system in Serbia that assists decision-makers with reliable and relevant statistical information. A particular focus of support during the current Strategy was 'development work in economic and environmental statistics, continue educating staff in statistical methodology, introduce concept of quality of life indicators through relevant surveys as well as initiate work in social statistics'²⁵. This third phase of support was to focus on environmental statistics, economic statistics, social and gender statistics, statistical methodology and general management and quality in statistics.

Of singular relevance was the expectation that the project will contribute to the increased use of statistics as the foundation for planning and monitoring political policy and business decisions. On the one hand, the work of SORS is at 'an advanced level. Progress has been made in most areas and the range of statistics is increasing'²⁶. Critical outputs and outcomes are detailed below. On the other hand, 'additional human and financial resources will also need to be made available'.²⁷ Sida-supported work has not, yet, developed an effective operation within the SORS. As stated in the *Light Peer Review*, there are a number of Improvement Actions that are needed. Of significance, although not specifically relevant to Sida, is that 'Compared with other statistical offices in the region and in the European Union, SORS appears understaffed and underfinanced. Staff resources of SORS decreased instead by approximately 10% in 2010 compared to 2009, which may lead to difficulties for SORS to launch and implement the necessary development work towards full compliance with the European acquis in statistics'.²⁸ Directly related to this is an indicated need in change to the staffing structure at SORS: 'An increase of the efficiency of SORS is also needed, in particular by a further improvement of the staff structure in the mid-term. The share of approximately 2/3 of the staff with a university degree should be further increased. Moreover, a change in the organizational structure of SORS and the staff reallocation involved, as well as the assignment of new tasks to the regional branch offices, and the development and implementation of a well structured training programme for all the staff will be useful.'²⁹

²⁵ May 2009, Assessment Memo – Partnership in Statistics, Sida Belgrade.

²⁶ October 2011, *Commission Opinion on Serbia's application for membership of the European Union - Analytical Report*,

(http://www.europa.rs/en/srbija/Eu/kljucni_dokumenti/CommissionsOpinionofSerbia%27sMembershipApplication.html).

²⁷ Ibid

²⁸ July 2011, *Light Peer Review of the Implementation of the European Statistics Code of Practice in Serbia*, Gu'nter Kopsch Hana Šlégrová.

²⁹ Ibid

3.2.3 Assessment Of Outputs And Outcomes

The assistance provided by Sida in the democratic governance sector has been, and continues to be effective in delivering outputs that contribute directly to Serbia's EU accession. The impact has been on two levels: one, specific outputs that have changed the systems, procedures and structures to which people adhere or respond, changes that have improved those systems for users either by facilitating more straightforward processes or by removing out-dated or unnecessary processes that required time or money to complete. There is clear evidence that systems and procedures are changing, and that these changes make it easier for citizens to interact with administrative structures, that information is available, and is trustworthy. Two, changes in the knowledge, skills and attitudes of the people working within target institutions, changes which improved the organisation by changing the approaches or attitudes of employees, and that Ministries and Government agencies are developing the human resources with the skills necessary to effectively manage the transition processes.

Both are significant, and where they are visible they demonstrate the effective change needed for Serbia to be successful in its accession processes.

While success within the SEIO's four designated components is variable, overall there continues to be a growth in the capacity (and success) of the Government of Serbia in the effective use of external aid. SEIO's own knowledge and understanding of aid, and indeed the level of knowledge and understanding of aid systems across Government (and local self governance) is much improved. There is a heightened level of pro-active work within Ministries – the Police are the best example – where the impact of donor assistance has become understood and Agencies are taking lead roles in seeking out assistance.

SEIO has prepared a proposal for SWAp introduction that encompasses two key components: Strategic direction and leadership and Sector selection and horizontal linkages. The *Needs Assessment Document*³⁰, referred to as 'the NAD' within a sectoral framework, and based on the principles of PBA and SWAp was developed within this component. The NAD 'stands as a platform around which all relevant international assistance programming stakeholders discuss and coordinate their activities'³¹. SWAp, however, has not been implemented.

A formal mechanism for consultation with civil society has been established, in cooperation with the Government's Office of Cooperation with NGOs. As well as the consultation mechanism, training has been provided to NGOs in programs of international assistance, including IPA. According to SEIO, with 'the aim of achieving the goals mentioned above, the Programme of Cooperation with Civil Society Organisations in the area of Development Assistance Planning, in particular Programming and Monitoring of the Instrument of Pre-Accession Assistance was prepared. The Programme foresees the establishment of a consultation mechanism with CSOs, where the main actors are Sector Civil Society Organisations (SECOs). SECO in the framework of the Programme is a consortium of CSOs of maximum three partners where one is clearly defined as a lead partner in the application.'³² It is too early to assess the effectiveness of the consultation process and the SECOs. Seven SECOs have been established, but have only just begun their operations.

³⁰ February 2011, *Needs of the Republic of Serbia for International Assistance 2011-2013*, Republic of Serbia Government, European Integration Office.

³¹ Sept 2011, Annual Report for the *Support to the Sector for Planning, Programming, Monitoring and Reporting on EU Funds and Development Assistance of the Serbian European Integration Office for effective partnerships for improved aid effectiveness* Project, Government of Serbia, European Integration Office.

³² Sept 2011, Annual Report for the *Support to the Sector for Planning, Programming, Monitoring and Reporting on EU Funds and Development Assistance of the Serbian European Integration Office for effective partnerships for improved aid effectiveness* Project, Government of Serbia, European Integration Office.

The Regulatory Reform and Regulatory Impact Assessment project supported the comprehensive regulatory review (CRR). The CRR undertook an inventory and analysis of laws and regulations which impact on economic activity in Serbia and, as a result of this analysis, a centralised inventory was prepared of regulator authorities (there are 100), 6000 regulations, of which 2024 impact on business, were inventoried and these 2024 laws and regulations were analysed, including inputs from the relevant agency and, via public consultation, the business community and other stakeholders. More than 500 responses were provided by business. 192 regulations are being abolished (196 were recommended) and 304 regulations are to be amended (from 340 recommendations). Annual savings to business, as a result of the reforms, has been quantified at 160 million Euros.

SORS has improved its methodologies and reporting to Eurostat in line with required systems.

- Agricultural Price Statistics (indices and price levels) have been developed and published in line with EU standards.
- The European Statistical System in the field of price statistics was adopted.
- Continuous process of improving survey methodologies in line with EU standards.
- Output Producer Price Index was published according to the EU methodology.

A number of reforms have been implemented in relation to collection and reporting of environment data and statistics and the use and reporting of this data.

- Improved cooperation in environmental statistics within the official statistical system.
- Adoption of a memorandum of understanding about responsibilities of stakeholders.
- Creation of a working group for cooperation in environmental issues.
- Development and use of a joint environmental database (SORS, SEPA, Ministries of Environment, Agriculture, Energy and the Republic Hydrometeorological Service of Serbia).
- Initial publication of environmental accounts.

SORS has worked carefully to improve its cooperation with Government and public agencies. Of particular note:

- A regional statistics development working group with members from SORS, MERD and other relevant agencies was established. The group's work includes:
 - Selection of the set of statistical indicators and a methodology for their collection and dissemination.
 - Publishing selected municipal and regional development indicators.
 - Making new indicators and enhanced methodologies available for assistance in preparation of policies for regional economic development.
 - Improved coordination with the Government's team poverty reduction.
- Creation of a working group whose work is on the analysis of progress in society, making use of the quality of life survey.

Both the child and adult quality of life methodologies (LCI/ CCI) were prepared and adopted, including production of a manual, conduction of the survey, publishing of survey results. The survey incorporates improvements in disaggregation of data by gender (focuses on measuring the participation of men and women in society) and by urban/ rural criteria.

SORS identified methods of collecting and matching occupational information and occupational descriptions and published the National System of Classification of Occupations.

With improvements in quality approaches and outputs, Government and the public have gained confidence in the system of official statistics, much of which comes from a number of structural changes within SORS:

- Prepared and produced guidelines and checklists for survey quality control.
- Developed survey methodologies in accordance with modern trends – applied the methodology in statistical surveys with a view to extracting the highest quality statistical data.
- Focused on quality preparation and training of new staff and the training of all staff in statistical quality.
- Following current development in statistical software.
- Introduced the concept of results-based management with staff and management.

3.2.4 Assessment Of Goal Fulfilment, Effects And Sustainability

Sida's contributions in the sector are directly assisting Serbia's move towards accession. The recent recommendation that Serbia become a Candidate country indicates that the structural change necessary to fulfil EU accession requirements is being met.

The change is neither as extensive, i.e. across a range of organisations nor as intensive, i.e. within partner organisations, as is required. As discussed elsewhere, a number of fundamentals are weak (political will *in some areas*, administrative leadership, middle-management). Much work remains to ensure the gains that have been made are confirmed, and lasting. Specifically, within the organisations supported to date by Sida, some require further support (not necessarily financial) to cement the changes that have been initiated to date, thereby making institutional sustainability more likely. SEIO, for example has not yet fully embedded and systemised its tools, nor established a system for the implementation of SWAp, notwithstanding the continuing improvements in the integration of external resources. As detailed above, SORS lacks the necessary human capacity to complete its necessary reforms, and even with required levels of personnel, developing the capacity of staff to achieve necessary levels of quality and timeliness in outputs will require time and financing.

3.3 Human Rights And Gender Equality

3.3.1 Basic Facts

Sida provides significant support to the human rights sector through the work of the Framework Organisations CRD and Kvinna till Kvinna. This programme was evaluated in 2010³³ and is not looked at in detail here. Sida has also provided on-going support and capacity development assistance to strengthen the capacity of the GED and assist in its recognition as an authority responsible for the implementation of the NAP.

3.3.2 Relevance And Effectiveness

Support to the Framework Organisations, through the civil society programme, is a relevant and effective approach to work on human rights and gender equality with civil society. The Framework Organisations provide Sida with committed local resources supported by strong, international NGOs. These organisations, in their focus on supporting the development, and the external priorities, of local activist organisations, add a quality to outcomes that would be difficult to achieve through other modalities of support. This report will not go over the detail of Sida's support to civil society, as this is covered in detail in the review report *Evaluation of*

³³ 2010, *Evaluation of Support to the Civil Society in the Western Balkans*, Nilsson et al, Sida, SE-105 25 Stockholm Sweden.

Support to the Civil Society in the Western Balkans, which is available on the Sida website. The report concludes that ‘the framework arrangement, using the three FOs, is a rational and practical model compared to other alternatives. The modality adds value in a number of areas, which derive from the quality of relationships established with partners. The FOs, in particular KtK and CRD, have contributed to many tangible and sustainable effects beneficial to the various target groups.’³⁴

A range of significant, structural change has occurred in Serbia in terms of law, strategy, policy and public opinion in recent years. Some, though not all of this change is attributable to Swedish assistance, and Swedish support has had, and continues to have an impact across the sector as a result of the direct and indirect nature of Sida’s implementation of the Cooperation Strategy. The reform process includes the Law on Gender Equality (2009) – the draft Law sat in abeyance for some time before NGO pressure re-energised the process which lead to its acceptance; the National Strategy for Improving the Position of Women, development and acceptance of which was driven by the Gender Equality Directorate and women’s NGOs; the National Action Plan on Gender Equality (directly attributable to Swedish assistance through the GED; establishment of the Ombudsman’s office in the Autonomous Province of Vojvodina; specific focus on and surveys related to gender issues by SORS (directly attributable to Swedish support); development of local/ provincial laws, by-laws, regulations, policies, strategies, including adoption by a number of Municipalities (with support and assistance from the SCTM) of the Charter on Gender Equality at the Local Level – defined by the EU.

It is of particular relevance to look at the development and implementation of the National Action Plan on Gender Equality (NAP), as the process was driven by the GED with technical and financial support through Sida. The development of the NAP included a range of consultative processes with stakeholder groups (notably women’s NGOs), Government and Agency representatives. A key component of the consultation process were a number of forums with local self-governments, the public and CSOs, where feedback was gathered on the outputs/ recommendations of the working groups. Working groups, of which there were six (participation of women in decision-making; improvement of the economic status of women; equal participation of women in education; improvement in the health of women; fight against sexual and gender-related violence; women in media) were comprised of activists, experts in the field and representatives of local committees for gender equality. The process was driven by the GED.

Making use of thematic working groups, the GED then coordinated development of the methodology for implementation of the NAP, including definition of results and indicators, and related activities. Ministries and Government working bodies were present in the working groups.

Notwithstanding the resources being provided to the GED, the importance of its work and the accepted nature of its role in terms of gender equality in Serbia, the structural change necessary for the GED to be a serious force within the Serbian bureaucracy and with civil society has not happened. As a result of a lack of priority within Government, and possibly the inability of GED leadership to force a change in the structural and policy framework in which it works, the GED remains on the outside, looking in on political change in Serbia – it does not play an effective role in dialogue on gender equality, neither within Government nor with civil society. As one external observer stated, ‘for things to happen you must have an effective national driver – the GED, as a national driver, is not up to the task.’ The fact that

³⁴ Ibid

the PBA in the gender sector did not gain traction is a possible indicator of this ineffectiveness. Ownership by the Government of Serbia is also lacking in this area, and as a result, the GED does not get either the recognition nor the support needed to be an effective agency.

3.3.3 Assessment Of Outputs And Outcomes

Outcomes and outputs in the field of human rights, through the work of the FOs and the civil society organisations they support, are strong, and appropriate to the priorities of Sida. The Evaluation of the Support to the Civil Society in the Balkans³⁵ the work is described as relevant, effective and, to a certain extent, sustainable. The civil society programme undertaken by the FOs maintains a strong focus on civil and political rights, coupled with the participation of minorities in the development of society. Outcomes include a change in the level of dialogue on the rights of the LGBT community, increases in the capacity of, and involvement by, local human rights organisations in advocacy and monitoring activities and development of a number of laws, by-laws, strategies and policies related to gender equality at the national, provincial and local levels: the Law on Gender Equality and the National Strategy for Improving the Position of Women (not specifically part of this Strategy) and the NAP, the implementation strategy for the NAP and the development of local gender mechanisms and local action plans within the NAP framework.

As well as the NAP itself, a key outcome has been the establishment of local gender equality mechanisms (GEM) and the development of local action plans. These local GEMs are intended as pillars for the implementation of the NAP at the local level. In this sense, the local action plans are defined within the framework of the NAP. A significant number of local GEMs have been established, and are developing, but the strength of their structure, locally, is neither consistent nor generally strong. The local action plans (by law to be operational by 2010) are not in place and the deadline has been extended. GED provides support to the process, but they are extremely under-resourced in this area. Further, gender focal points (specifically nominated personnel within Ministries and Agencies) have been trained, and are working as required by the implementation strategy for the NAP.

Sida-funded initiatives in gender equality are also considered relevant and effective, excepting the expressed concerns about work with the GED, coupled with some (related) ‘softness’ in the ownership of gender equality reform by Government (at both the policy and implementation levels). GED itself has benefited from Sida assistance in improvements in its capacity, and systems for monitoring, and certain components of the NAP are progressing, as indicated above. It is not as clear that this capacity has transferred to effectiveness in function within Government or in relationships with civil society partners and Gender Equality Mechanisms (GEM). The role the GED plays is critical to establishment of gender-equality policies and approaches in Government, and in the coordination of the relationship between all stakeholders in the sector, and in this sense, it is of concern that there are on-going concerns about progress in these areas.

3.3.4 Assessment Of Goal Fulfilment, Effects And Sustainability

There could be a closer correlation between the work of the FOs (and their support to civil society organisations) and the specific strategic priorities of Sida in Serbia. There is a link, and the FO programme contributes to Sida outcomes, but these outcomes would be improved by a closer integration of the funding initiatives of the FOs with Sida’s Country Strategy. Specifically, with the singular focus placed by Kvinna till Kvinna on gender equality, outputs

³⁵ Ibid

and outcomes in the gender equality sector would benefit from closer coordination between KtK and its initiatives and the other specific initiatives funded by Sida in the sector. The sector, at times divided and politicised, would benefit from a greater correlation of strategy and effort across national, local and civil society actors.

Further consideration needs to be given to the role and function of the GED, and to the best assistance Sida can provide to ensure, as much as possible, that it is able to effectively function in its key role.

3.4 Security Sector Reform

The below discussion on Security Sector Reform refers directly and solely to the Police Reform programme which comprises the Police Reform Strategy, Crime Scene Investigation Project and the Intelligent Policing Project.

3.4.1 Basic Facts

‘In the fight against organised crime, the legal framework developed by Serbia is generally adequate and capacity has improved, including on international cooperation. This has led to significant results, such as the dismantling of a major international drug-trafficking ring. Money laundering and drug smuggling are key areas of concern and the track record of investigations and convictions needs to be built up further. Capacity for proactive and better coordinated investigations and enhanced cooperation at regional and international levels also remain to be further developed. Technical capacity to carry out special investigative measures should be developed within the law enforcement bodies, under the direct control of the judiciary.’³⁶

Sida support in the sector includes a series of projects with the Forensics Centre, since 2004, an initiative with Intelligence-lead Policing and the Strategy Project. Current support is referred to as the Police Reform Programme, and is known as such within the MUP. The forensics projects are changing the fundamentals in which Police find, secure and present physical evidence. The Intelligence-lead Policing project will bring policing of organised crime in line with EU standards and will contribute, both directly and indirectly to EU priorities on addressing organised crime. The strategic planning project changes MUP strategic processes, in line with EU priorities. The projects are currently scheduled to end in 2012, although given their capacity-building nature, each would benefit significantly from an extension and/ or follow-up.

3.4.2 Relevance And Effectiveness

The Police Reform Programme is of critical relevance to the accession processes of Serbia. There are two aspects of this: the formal accession processes and the acceptance of Serbia as a place to work and to do business. The Programme provides critical activities and outputs in both these senses. The Reform Strategy project is exactly in line with EU priorities, and the priorities of the Serbian Government as it establishes a strategic thinking approach within the Police Service (a conscious change in name away from the concept of a Police *Force*) – moving beyond a focus on operational thinking only. The project shifts the thinking processes of Police management, placing a significance on thinking beyond operations. The Criminal Intelligence project is also of particular relevance to accession processes as it fits within and

³⁶ 2011 October 2011, *Commission Opinion on Serbia's application for membership of the European Union - Analytical Report*, (http://www.europa.rs/en/srbijaIEu/kljucni_dokumenti/CommissionsOpinionofSerbia%27sMembershipApplication.html).

provides inputs to European priorities related to organised crime. There was a history within the Police, even recently, of arguing that ‘everything is alright within the Ministry’, but this has changed *significantly* as a result of the move of Serbia to candidacy for membership in the EU. There is strong support from the Minister down, but particularly at middle-management level, for reform. And, within middle-management, one aspect of their support is they see that the Programme is about the *quality* of police work.

The whole of the Police Reform Programme, and each of its components, is an excellent example of the type of work Sida intends to support and that gives the kinds of outcomes Sida intends to see from its development cooperation. It has not yet achieved the strength and breadth of output and outcome that is desired or intended, as the size of the task is significant. Strong inroads are being made, and further support will strengthen outputs and outcomes. It is important that the progress being made is further supported, and that the management and change agents within the Ministry are supported, to both solidify current change and to widen the scope of intervention.

3.4.3 Assessment Of Outputs And Outcomes

At the current stage, work on changes in forensics processes are most advanced against plans and programmes. The initial cooperation began in 2004 and focused on finding, securing and presenting physical evidence. At the end of this project a further initiative, built on the work of the first, was developed. This second, a forensic training programme, focuses on EU best practice in forensic policing: QMS, a training curriculum, standard operating procedures and equipment.

The Police Strategy project needs time. The work of this project is vital to the reform process but has simply not had the time, necessary within the existing system, to reach the necessary levels of strategic planning or strategic management. The Ministry has strong reform ambitions in these areas, and a middle-management committed to change – this project simply requires more time and resources, and should also be expanded to include assistance with introduction of modern human resource systems and career management. Strong consideration should also be given to support for initiatives in community policing,

The Intelligence-lead Policing project has been burdened by history – a distrust in Serbia of Intelligence Services, as well as the difficulty of making the necessary cultural changes. The project suffered too from problems on the side of Swedish expertise. The project will simply not achieve necessary outputs and outcomes within the current timeframe. The necessary work on professional frameworks, training, guidebook development and organisational change will require follow-up work beyond the current project. This follow-up should be supported by Sida, subject to a positive assessment of the confidence from Swedish Police partners and the Ministry that will and resources exist on both sides to complete the task. It is noted that successful outputs from the project will contribute significantly to the Police reform process and Serbia’s accession.

3.4.4 Assessment Of Goal Fulfilment, Effects And Sustainability

The quality focus is seen as most important – systems and accreditation. The Forensics Centre has aspirations to contribute to Europe-wide CSI standards development, and to be recognised as a European leader in a specific (but as yet undesignated) area of CSI. The reform process would benefit from the flow-on effects of this leadership, and pursuit of this goal should be supported.

Related to this is education and training – a focus on structural change. The Police Forensics Centre has agreed with the Criminal Police Academy to build a Forensics Centre in the

Academy and run it jointly. The curriculum produced in the project will be incorporated in the MUP training policy and used in the Centre. Attention needs to turn to judicial staff in forensics matters – to criminal procedure code reform – and the project could provide further support in this reform with additional time and funding.

Further time and financing will also be required to ensure the intended output and outcomes of the Strategy and Intelligent Policing projects. Both of these projects are of particular significance to the reform process, within the Ministry and for Serbia as a whole. They cannot be completed to the necessary extent, nor have the desired outputs and outcomes, by the end of the current cooperation period. While this is to a certain extent the result of slowness in project start-up and, in the case of the Intelligent Policing project some resistance to support for the intelligence services, the real reason more time and resources are required is the size and complexity of the task. The evaluators are strongly supportive of Sida involvement, with the EU, the MUP and other donors in the provision long-term assistance to ensuring the reforms to the security sector.

4 Conclusions And Recommendations

4.1 What Have Been The Key Outcomes Of The Current Cooperation Strategy?

Sida's cooperation in Serbia adheres closely with Sida policies and philosophies for development assistance, and is closely aligned with Government of Serbia and EU priorities, particularly in relation to EU accession processes. Sida's approach can be said to be somewhere between donors who have their own program and priorities and pay little regard to the requirements of local actors and donors who have no criteria and provide funding in a non-focused, non-strategic way.

The first regional landfill, Duboko, in Užice, is open. Duboko is a significant step in Serbia's development: it *demonstrates the national and local/ regional policy and strategy frameworks* that are critical to EU accession.

Duboko also *demonstrates the significant challenges to be addressed* in other locations. These challenges include finance; national commitment; regional agreements; local management; developing and implementing national, local and regional objectives for solid waste management.

REC is *contributing to a shift* in how NGOs involved in work on the environment and sustainable development work –from awareness raising and campaigning to advocating and lobbying, on concrete and measurable policy changes.

Swedish support enabled SCTM to develop into a *modern institution* with an increased legitimacy that is based to a large degree on its *strong lobbying and communication* capacity

The assistance provided by Sida in the democratic governance sector has impacted on two levels:

- There is clear evidence that systems, procedures and structures, to which people adhere or respond, are changing, and that these changes make it easier for citizens to interact with administrative structures, and that information is available, and is trustworthy.
- Changes in the knowledge, skills and attitudes of the people working within target institutions - and that Ministries and Government agencies are developing human resources with the skills necessary to effectively manage the transition processes.

SEIO plays a central and valuable role in the coordination of the EU reform agenda. SEIO's own knowledge and understanding of aid is much improved. SEIO has prepared a proposal for SWAp introduction that encompasses two key components:

- Strategic direction and leadership.
- Sector selection and horizontal linkages. The *Needs Assessment Document*, based on the principles of SWAp was developed within this component.

A formal mechanism for consultation with civil society has been established, in cooperation with the Government's Office of Cooperation with NGOs. Seven Sector Civil Society Organisations (SECOs) have been established.

A comprehensive regulatory review undertook an inventory and analysis of laws and regulations which impact on economic activity in Serbia, with annual from implemented recommendations quantified at over 140 million Euros.

SORS has improved its methodologies and reporting to Eurostat in line with required systems. A number of reforms have been implemented in relation to collection and reporting of environment data and statistics and the use and reporting of this data, and SORS is carefully improving its cooperation with Government and agencies.

The civil society programme undertaken by the FOs maintains a strong focus on civil and political rights, coupled with the participation of minorities in the development of society. Key outcomes include:

- A change in the level of dialogue on the rights of the LGBT community.
- An increases in the capacity and involvement of local human rights organisations in advocacy and monitoring activities.

Development of a number of laws, by-laws, strategies and policies related to gender equality at the national, provincial and local levels including the Law on Gender Equality and the National Strategy for Improving the Position of Women (not directly aspects of Swedish assistance) and the NAP and its implementation strategy and the development of local gender mechanisms and local action plans within the NAP framework.

GED itself has benefited from Sida assistance in improvements in its capacity, and systems for monitoring.

Within the Police Service, a quality focus is seen as most important – development of and adherence to systems and accreditation. The Forensics Centre has aspirations to contribute to Europe-wide CSI standards development, and to be recognised as a European leader in a specific (but as yet undesignated) area of CSI.

A related focus is on structural change – there is a commitment within the MUP at all levels to taking advantage now of the opportunities presented by EU accession to assist the reform process.

4.2 What Key Lessons Have Been Learnt As A Result Of The Current Cooperation Strategy

As a result of its strategic implementation of Sida principles in Serbia, Sida locally has, and continues to, provide effective, well-focused development assistance; assistance which provides strong assistance to the Government of Serbia in its accession processes. It is the view of the EU Delegation in Serbia that donor funds from so-called 'smaller donors' can best be used in assisting Serbia to access funds – that the focus of assistance should be in areas where assistance brings direct or indirect access to EU funding. What does this mean?

- Relatively smaller donors should definitely not draw administrative capacity from Ministries and Municipalities where that administrative capacity can and should be directed at larger contributions.
- Relatively smaller donors can go one step further and assist Ministries and Municipalities in their pursuit of and in the management of EU funds. Of particular significance is funding projects which assist in preparing for larger/ longer term initiatives and funding for projects with sustainability potential within an accession framework.

The current Sida programme in Serbia is responsive to both of these priorities – future work on the Cooperation Strategy needs to develop this responsiveness, to ensure both of these priorities are met.

The focus on technical assistance has been effective and appropriate although there are indications now that greater emphasis could be placed on mentoring or coaching approaches. One donor representative said ‘Structural change, i.e. fundamental change in systems and procedures, is what is required in Serbia. There can be no box-ticking. This means a greater focus on coaching and mentoring which, which requires a modified approach in the provision of capacity-building processes.’ This is of particular importance where, as is possible, assistance to Serbia will be phased out over the coming period. The type of change visible within the SCTM is what is needed to be developed with other, particularly long-term, partners going forward. This coaching/ mentoring process is further discussed below.

Reforms within the security sector are particularly relevant examples of how the current strategy assists Serbia’s EU accession processes. Two aspects of the Police Reform Programme rate particular mention, relevant as they are to other sectors. One, middle-management ‘drivers’ within the Police Service understand the value to themselves, their careers and their organisation of the change process, and in buying-in to the process give it impetus. Two, where aspects of the change process are seen as directly relevant to larger numbers of the Police Service they gain traction, ie the reforms become personally relevant, beyond the requirements of the accession processes.

A continuing focus on sectoral focuses will assist Swedish assistance to have greater effect. The current Cooperation Strategy includes SWAp indirectly, with its focus on harmonisation and the strategic narrowing of sectors of focus. Cooperation would benefit, particularly in light of Serbia’s recent granting of Candidate Status, from further development of sector-wide thinking in the coming Cooperation Strategy. Such an approach is particularly relevant in the environment and gender equality sectors.

Given the size of the task, support within the environment sector should be focused in the relatively small number of areas where strategic gains can be made. It may be worthwhile to concentrate on the current assistance being provided to systems of solid-waste management, and to continue to work with the EBRD, the Government of Serbia and Municipalities in developing sustainable solid-waste management systems across the country, as well as the work being undertaken with civil society, and to consider a closer integration of the two. While a PBA/ SWAp is not proposed, some further linkages in current Swedish-funded initiatives would benefit synergy in the sector.

Support provided within SEIO, the GED, SORS and to a certain extent the ORR and the NSDS has changed the systems and procedures of Government, added value to the work of these Agencies and in benefits for citizens, directly contributing to accession processes. It is now an opportune moment to put a particular emphasis on solidifying this change. Rather than look to other partners, a phase-out approach with these agencies is recommended, with a

focus on strategies that will ensure the long-term sustainability of the changes: management capacity, procedures, systems.

While the on-going support to civil society through the Framework Organisations is appropriately focused, a closer correlation between the Country Strategy and the specific focus of FO programmes would be beneficial to outputs for both FOs and Sida.

4.2.1 What have been the success factors?

There are three main contributors to the success of Sweden's current Cooperation Strategy in Serbia. Firstly, the adherence of Sida assistance to the priorities of the Government of Serbia and the EU creates or contributes to momentum in the reform process – the assistance adds to the commitment in the decision-making processes, it does not move against it. Secondly, sectors where the political will exists for change are the sectors where success is more likely, if not guaranteed. Within this, success breeds success. Finally, personal capacity contributes to this success, and where personnel are able to understand the positive personal impacts that can come from their involvement in reform processes, they demonstrate a higher level of involvement in the processes.

4.2.2 What have been the most significant difficulties?

The relative lack of strength of human resources, particularly in senior and middle management, detracts from the quality of outcomes. Focus must be placed on increasing the numbers, and the skills and knowledge, of management within Government Departments and agencies.

The size of the task is immense, in the context of Swedish cooperation, and requires a focused response, notably in relation to sustainable development and the environment.

The political situation (external factors, weak government) means a related lack of political will in a number of key areas, although it is noted that this is not always the case, with strong support in many areas.

4.2.3 And How Do They Inform The Future?

As is discussed in detail throughout this report, these success factors and areas of difficulty are each indicative of the types of cooperation and sectors of support for Sida. Focus should continue to be provided to assist the structural change necessary in key areas, including the security sector and democratic governance, where Sida's contributions have traction, and will have impact with time. Focus should continue on the development of the skills and knowledge of existing middle and senior management, and the numbers of middle and senior level leadership in public administration should also increase.

4.3 Recommendations

As is indicated throughout this report, the current Cooperation Strategy represents a well-considered, strategic approach by Sweden to development cooperation in Serbia, that is well within the confines of Swedish philosophies and policies on development cooperation. The implementation of the Strategy demonstrates a strong focus on harmonisation (with Government of Serbia priorities, Swedish priorities and the work of other donors) as well as a strong commitment to close coordination and cooperation with the national government. The recommendations below represent therefore a refinement process; a process for strengthening the cooperation and improving the outcomes.

4.3.1 Recommendation 1 - Swedish Support To Serbia Should Continue, And Should Continue With Its Current Focus, On EU Accession.

The current strategic approach of harmonisation with Government of Serbia and EU priorities should be maintained and enhanced, with a specific focus on assisting Ministries and Municipalities in accessing EU funds.

- No significant change is recommended in existing processes, rather a refinement and strengthening of the existing strategy.
- No change in a sectoral focus is recommended – accession processes will benefit from an approach that concentrates in the longer term on existing sectors.

4.3.2 Recommendation 2 – Coaching And Mentoring

This report indicates that current Swedish support in some areas has reached a level of outcome where a shift in focus is required. The indicated shift is not in terms of partner or sector, but in the way support is provided, i.e. to continue with current support, but to focus more strongly on specific priorities in organisational capacity. A coaching/ mentoring approach is indicated as a possible shift with SEIO and the GED, each of which will benefit from increasing both the number and the skillsets of middle and senior level management, with the aim of establishing a firm, sustainable leadership group.

As defined here, coaching and mentoring is a specific type of technical assistance that can be of particular value in certain situations. Coaching/ mentoring involves a much more specific focus on an individual, the knowledge, skills and attitudes of that individual, and developing/ changing with that individual these knowledge, skills and attitudes in a way that will have a direct, positive impact on how they work and on the effectiveness with which they fulfil the requirements of their job description. The process requires a significant commitment, of intent and of time, from the coach/ mentor and from the client, and requires the development of a high level of trust between the two. The coach/ mentor must work through a detailed assessment of the client, with the client, a process that can be intrusive and difficult, and must be handled with deftness and professionalism to be most effective. Coach and client spend significant time together, with a particular focus being placed on reflection on the how and why of the approaches that are taken, and development/ implementation of changes that improve the effectiveness of the client in the implementation of their tasks and achievement of their outcomes. In the context of Swedish assistance in Serbia, *at most* such an approach would only be recommended for consideration for the one or two key managers within GED and two or three senior and middle managers within SEIO.

4.3.3 Recommendation 3 – The Sectoral Focus In The Security Sector

Discussions with the EU and other donors on development of a more structured approach to security sector reform is recommended. The key would be careful development, with the MUP and the EU, of the strategic framework for the reform process, and Swedish support to this development would be strategic and relevant. Such an approach would put the MUP at the centre of strategic discussions, and, with the involvement of SEIO, would ensure that donor contributions were effectively coordinated. The development of the strategic framework could be conceived as the initial approaches in development of a SWAp, where Swedish support might initiate the change and assist in its inception, irrespective of its long-term involvement. There are three compelling reasons for consideration of this refinement to assistance:

- As well as the current programme on forensics, intelligence-lead policing and strategy, significant work is required on organised crime, corruption, community policing and human resource management. The priorities are inter-related, as are

likely outputs and outcomes, and Swedish involvement is directly in line with its own priorities.

- The potential for significant change is apparent, as there is a clear and stated commitment to change within the MUP and the Police Service.
- From the perspectives of administrative reform, human rights and coordination with EU Police Services on organised crime, much can also be gained outside the security sector.

4.3.4 Recommendation 4 – The Gender Equality Sector

Initiatives for gender equality continue to be an accession priority, in terms of change priorities for the Government of Serbia as well as at the Provincial and Municipal levels and with civil society. On-going support to the sector is recommended, but with a change of focus. While a PBA has been demonstrated to be ineffective as an approach to date, and is not recommended in the current environment, a closer correlation between the work and funding initiatives of the FOs (and their support to civil society organisations), Sida's sector priorities, the GED, civil society and local actors is needed. As is discussed at section 3.3 above, the sector is at times divided and politicised, and Sida is in a unique position to play a key role in tightening the integration of approaches. The following canvasses a number of steps that can be taken.

- GED – The GED should continue to be the focal point of Sida's work on gender equality matters in Serbia. As is discussed elsewhere, direct emphasis is recommended on developing the knowledge, skills and attitudes of GED's senior management. A strong focus is also encouraged on the development of the skills and influence of the gender focal points as well as the role and function of the GEC, within Government and with the GED.
- UN Women – Support to the work of UN Women in Serbia is proposed. Their current project, *Advancing Women's Economic and Social Rights* project and with other initiatives in planning stages, generally covers the same components as Sida (Ministries, the NES, the GEC, civil society and GEMs) and harmonisation in this area would benefit the sector, Government of Serbia priority areas and accession processes. The project was to have worked with the GED as well – the sector would benefit from Sida assistance in a re-establishment of functioning relationships among key actors.
- Civil Society – Gender equality initiatives with civil society require continued support. It is recommended that all of this support continue to be provided through the Framework Organisations and that Sida facilitate a closer correlation between the work of FOs, civil society generally and local and national gender mechanisms.
- Gender Equality Mechanisms (GEMs) – These Provincial and local functions continue to develop and improve their effectiveness as an outcome of the variety of assistance provided by donors such as Sida. Not insignificant progress is being made, and local self-government is a fertile ground for change in laws, by-laws, procedures and policies related to gender equality. Sida should facilitate initiatives that bring GEMs into closer relationships with the all initiatives in the sector.
- SEIO – There is potentially a role for SEIO to play in coordination processes within the sector, given the involvement of donors, the significance of the sector to EU accession, and the high capacity of SEIO to coordinate multi-stakeholder initiatives. This potential should be explored, with a view to providing assistance to appropriate initiatives, should it be deemed strategic and achievable.

4.3.5 Recommendation 5 - The Environment Sector

Given the level of need, and the current status of work in the sector, it is not considered sensible to consider a sector approach in the sense of that currently being applied within the Police sector or in relation to gender equality. However, it is considered worthwhile to consider initiating a closer integration of initiatives, partners, target groups and outcomes. Such an integration would increase the likelihood of synergies between civil society and local/ regional authorities. Questions to address include:

- Is there scope within the Cooperation Strategy to link some of the work with environmental NGOs, i.e. within the REC initiative, with work on regional landfills? The clearest links can be seen in public awareness campaigns and in specific activities in support of the lessening of waste going to landfills.
- Is there scope within the Strategy to encourage development of the next regional landfills within Municipalities or regions where specific aspects of the REC initiative are on-going and have demonstrable levels of commitment from authorities?

4.3.6 Recommendation 6 – Horizontal Communication

It is the view of the evaluators that Sida can strengthen outputs and outcomes by seeking synergy between different components, taking an integrated approach in programme implementation. It is recommended that Sida encourage beneficiaries to communicate horizontally, working to better integrate Sida interventions CSOs and institutions of the public sector.

5 Annexes

5.1 List of Interviewees

Name	Title	Organisation
Djordje Stancic	Secretary General	SCTM
Aleksandar Popovic	Project Manager	SCTM
Zorica Vukelic	Deputy Secretary General	SCTM
Dragan Ignjatovic	Project Coordinator	Balkan Project Office Statistics Sweden
Srdjan Svircev	Coordinator – MDTF	World Bank
Ana Nedeljkovic	Head, Sustainable Development Unit	Office of the Deputy Prime Minister for European Integration
Nela Jovic	Project Officer	Royal Norwegian Embassy
DCAF	National Project Manager	Milan Sekuloski
Vladan Zec	Operational Forensics Quality Control	Rep of Serbia, Ministry of the Interior, Criminal Police Directorate, Forensic Centre
Lazar Nesic	Head of the Criminal Scene Investigation Unit	Rep of Serbia, Ministry of the Interior, Criminal Police Directorate, Forensic Centre
Maja Zivanovic	Assistant to Senior Police Advisor	Swedish National Police Board
Zoran Lazarov	Advisor	Rep of Serbia, Ministry of Internal Affairs, Dept to Manage Projects Financed from EU Funds
Jelena Milosevic	Analyst	EBRD
Jasmina Protic	Project Administrator	Balkan Project Office Statistics Sweden
Kristina Pavlovic	Head of Unit	Unit for European Integration, Republic Statistical Office, Rep of Serbia

Sven-Arne Andreasson	Senior Police Advisor	Swedish National Police Board
Ana Ilic	Assistant Director, Department of Planning and Programme	SEIO, Rep of Serbia
Rade Mirkovic	Advisor – Resp for bilateral aid with Sida	SEIO, Rep of Serbia
Adriano Martins	Deputy Head	EU Delegation to the Rep of Serbia
Mira Marjanovic		GED
Jasmina Muric	Manager NAPI	GED
Branimir Mitrovic		GED
Djordje Vukotic		ORR
Danica Dajevic		ORR
Bojana Jovic		ORR
Branko Radulovic		ORR

5.2 Terms Of Reference

TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR A STUDY ON RESULTS OF COOPERATION UNDER THE CURRENT SWEDISH STRATEGY FOR DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION WITH SERBIA, JANUARY 2009-DECEMBER 2012

1 Background

A cooperation strategy is the most important instrument that governs Swedish development cooperation with a country or a region. Sida's work on the development of cooperation strategies is done jointly with the Swedish Ministry for Foreign Affairs and the strategies are approved by the Swedish government.

The preparation of a cooperation strategy starts with poverty analysis and the collection and study of other analyses and evaluations already done by different departments of Sida, the Embassy, the beneficiary country or by other donors. However, further analytical work is often needed and in these cases, Sweden occasionally hires consultancy support. This specific assignment represents one such instance.

The current cooperation strategy for Serbia is valid for the period January 2009 – December 2012. However, Swedish government has commissioned Sida to start the preparations of the new cooperation strategy that will be valid beyond December 2012. In this process, the Embassy/Sida have developed the list of existing analyses and identified the ones that need to be done. One of the basic premises in this process is that the focus of future cooperation strategies should be guided by experience gained from cooperation during the most recent strategy period. This experience is to be analysed on three levels – contribution, sector and strategic goals and the final assessment should provide an overview of outcomes and effects. This type of analysis is usually called the outcome assessment and it is the object of this assignment.

The outcome assessment shall assess experiences gained and outcomes of Swedish development cooperation with Serbia in the given period. It shall contain conclusions on the types of cooperation that are efficient; the channels that function best; weaknesses; and experience of other donors. Its conclusions should form the basis for recommendations on the next strategy period, enabling Sweden to steer the cooperation by results.

2 Purpose and Scope of the ASSIGNMENT

The main purpose of this assignment is to produce an outcome assessment for the current Swedish Cooperation Strategy with Serbia, which will serve as an input in elaborating the main areas of interest under the new Swedish cooperation strategy with Serbia.

The final outcome of this assignment will be an outcome assessment report for Serbia for the period starting with the launch of the current Swedish Cooperation Strategy with Serbia, January 2009. The scope of the assignment may be extended to include a few contributions that were launched right before the beginning of the new Strategy period, but are still in line with its goals. The report shall be prepared according to instructions below and in close coordination with the Embassy of Sweden in Serbia.

The outcome assessment shall consist of three parts:

1. A general assessment and analysis that takes up:
 - The overall outcomes and experience of development cooperation in relation to the overarching goal of making it possible for poor people to improve their living

conditions and the specific goals of the Cooperation Strategy for Serbia, January 2009-December 2012

- Ownership on the part of the partner country
 - The implementing capacity of the partner country
 - Procurement issues
 - Systems and capacity for dealing with risks of corruption
 - The channels of cooperation that function best (government counterparts, central/regional/local level, NGOs, etc.)
 - The forms of cooperation that are assessed as suitable (programme support/project support)
 - The experience of other donors.
2. An assessment and analysis of the most important areas of cooperation, that is based on programme and project documents, assessment memoranda, monitoring and follow-up, audit and evaluations.
 3. Summary of conclusions and recommendations from these two sections.

2.1 General assessment

The general assessment will analyse the progress in relation to two aspects: 1) the overarching goal of Swedish development cooperation, i.e. contributing to an environment supportive of poor people's own efforts to improve their quality of life³⁷ and 2) the specific goals of the most recent cooperation strategy, especially its overall objective, which is to strengthen democracy and promote sustainable development in a way that improves the prospects for membership in the European Union (EU)³⁸. Swedish support in relation to Serbia's EU integration shall be the absolute and dominant assessment criterion. It will answer the following questions: Is the programme permeated by the perspectives of the poor and a rights perspective³⁹? In what way are central component elements reflected in cooperation? Is this relevant in relation to Serbia's Poverty Reduction Strategy? What is the situation with regard to effectiveness, feasibility and sustainability? How are the outcomes related to the goals established in the cooperation strategy? What effects and trends can be seen and what effects and trends cannot be seen? Why is the situation as it is?

Accordingly, the general outcome assessment should reflect the contributions in a wider context in which the partner country's policies and strategies in relevant areas and contributions of other donors shall be taken into consideration. It should not be restricted to a narrow account of whether the goals established for Swedish support have been achieved or not.

2.2 Assessment and analysis of the most important areas of cooperation (as identified in the cooperation strategy)

The outcome assessment of most important areas of cooperation shall present experience gained in respect of planned and achieved results, goals and effects. This assessment shall be supplemented with a report on the results achieved in a few selected programmes and/or contributions. The assessment shall answer the questions "why" and "what will the consequences be". It shall include a presentation of conclusions, based on goal fulfilment, effects of the programme/contributions, use of resources and a comparison between planned and achieved results. The assessment should contain the following headings:

³⁷ Shared Responsibility: Sweden's Policy for Global Development, 2003

³⁸ Strategy for Development Cooperation with Serbia, January 2009-December 2012, 2009

³⁹ Perspectives on poverty, 2002, Complement to Perspectives on Poverty, 2005

- **Basic facts:** A short and concise presentation of the area of cooperation. What projects and programmes are included? How long have they been running? Who are the stakeholders?
- **Relevance and effectiveness:** A short assessment of relevance and effectiveness in relation to the country's needs and its own strategies and in relation to Sida's cooperation strategy. Is the analysis of relevance and effectiveness that was made in the planning stage still valid, both in relation to Swedish policies and the goals of the partner country? Specify possible changes, including the changes in donor composition and the framework for cooperation.
- **Assessment of outcomes:** What has – or has not – been achieved in relation to plans? Is there a difference between planned and actual results and, if so, why? An analysis of feasibility, including the implementing capacity of the partner in cooperation, should be included. What factors – inside and outside the areas of cooperation – have influenced the results?
- **Assessment of goal fulfilment, effects and sustainability:** It is often not possible to assess long-term fulfilment, effects and sustainability until after the programme/contribution has been implemented. Therefore, it is important to give prominence to both short-term and long-term goal fulfilment (if there are any indications of the latter). It is not sufficient to state that “the result is good”. The analysis must be broken down into effects and what they have led to for the target group.

2.3 Conclusions from previous cooperation

The section on conclusions and recommendations should answer the following questions: Should cooperation be terminated, expanded or reduced and why? This section should include a description of sustainability, based on a financial and institutional perspective. What assessment is made for the future in respect of the overall problems that have arisen during the course of the implementation?

Furthermore, the section on conclusions shall include the following components:

- A brief assessment of the outcomes of development cooperation during the most recent strategy period and their relevance in relation to the development and poverty reduction strategies of Serbia;
- Attempt to answer the question “in what way” should the outcomes and the lessons learned during the strategy period influence goals, focus, content, etc. of cooperation with Serbia from both a general and a specific (area of cooperation) perspective?
- Success factors and difficulties that affected the results of the most recent strategy in general or in specific sectors?
- Factors/outcomes/conclusions of importance for the selection of future areas of development cooperation?
- Factors that should be taken into consideration in the design, implementation and selection of forms of cooperation and partners in cooperation?

References to sources

A specification of references to sources of information is important throughout the outcome assessment. Most of the information provided in the assessment shall be based on existing documents. In the analysis section, references to documentation, evaluations and the like shall be provided in the form of footnotes.

3 METHODOLOGY, TIME SCHEDULE AND REPORTING

The Consultant is expected to be familiar with Sida's key steering documents and methodological approaches. In particular, this includes the following:

- Sweden's Policy for Global Development
- Perspectives on Poverty and Complement to Perspectives on Poverty
- Sida at Work (2005)
- Strategy for Development Cooperation with Serbia, January 2009-December 2012
- Guidance on Programme-Based Approaches
- How to Start Working with a Programme-Based Approach

The assignment will take part during the period August-September 2011 and will take up to 40 person-days. The team is expected to include two people. The Consultant shall propose the methodology, time plan and division of labour. The Consultant shall be responsible for all logistics during the assignment.

The Consultant shall start the assignment by contacting the Embassy of Sweden in Belgrade for relevant information and documents. Briefings will be held with the Head of the Development Cooperation Section and each Programme Officer in the beginning and in the end of the field work. The Embassy in Belgrade shall provide the Consultant with the background documentation that is considered necessary to carry out the assignment.

The assessment shall be based on existing reports, evaluations and studies and meetings with relevant stakeholders, which will include government institutions, Embassy's implementing partners, NGOs and other donors.

The assignment will consist of the following parts:

- Planning and implementation phase

This phase will include the collection and *review* of relevant *documentation* for the assignment and *interviewing the relevant actors* in Serbia. Embassy of Sweden in Belgrade will be at the Consultants' disposal for discussions or questions during the assignment.

Contact person at the Embassy in Belgrade will be Ms. Svetlana Bascarevic, phone +381 11 2069 261, e-mail: svetlana.bascarevic@foreign.ministry.se.

- Report writing

The Consultant shall prepare a *draft report* and submit it to the Embassy in electronic form by 15 October 2011. The draft report shall be discussed at the Embassy/Sida. Within two weeks after receiving Embassy's comments on draft report, a final version shall be submitted to the Embassy, electronically and in two hardcopies. The report must be presented in a way that enables publication without further editing. If publication is considered, either by the Embassy or the Consultant, it should be discussed between the two parties.

The report shall be written in English and shall not exceed 30 pages, excl. annexes.

4 Profile of the Supplier and requirements for personnel

4.1 Person principally responsible for the implementation of the service (team-leader)

The tenderer must propose a person or persons with:

Academic or other vocational education Work experience adequate for the project. The person proposed must have very good knowledge in spoken and written English. The tender must include:

- A description in the form of a Curriculum Vitae for the person who is to be responsible for the performance of the project. The CV must contain a full description of the person's theoretical qualifications and professional work experience. The CV must be signed by the person proposed.
- Two written specifications of previously performed similar projects by the proposed person within the past three years.

4.2 Other personnel

Tenderers must assign personnel with adequate education for the project. The proposed personnel must have a total of at least two years of work experience of similar projects. The personnel proposed must have very good knowledge in spoken and written English. The tender must include:

- A description in the form of Curriculum Vitae for the personnel who is/are to participate in the performance of the project. The CV must contain a full description of the person's or persons' theoretical qualifications and professional work experience. The CV must be signed by the person proposed.
- Two written specifications of previously performed similar projects by the proposed person(s) within the past three years.

4.3 Rating system

The selection and evaluation of tenders will be conducted on the basis of the Quality and Cost-Based Selection (QCBS) with the quality to cost ratio of 80:20. Under the technical evaluation, the following qualifications will be assessed and measured: 1) Approach and methodology, 2) Qualifications of the consultant. Under Approach and methodology, we will assess and measure the relevance of the proposed methodology and the grasp of the assignment and the work and time plan. Under Qualifications of the consultant, we will assess and measure the experience in Serbia, the experience in M&E and the experience in assessments of development cooperation.

5 CONTACT INFORMATION

All tenders shall be submitted to the following address:

Svetlana Bascarevic
Programme Officer
Embassy of Sweden in Belgrade
Ledi Pedzet 2
11040 Belgrade

At the back of the envelope, the bidder should write the following : "Tender for Study on results of cooperation under the current Swedish Strategy for Development Cooperation with Serbia, January 2009 – December 2012".