

SIPU report for the Swedish International Development Agency (SIDA)

Under contract 'Advisory Services for EU – Ukraine, Sida ref: 2007.002743'

Date: 6 May 2008

REF: SIPU/JMWEN ASS. 02

Technical compatibility of SIDA and EC assistance to Ukraine: results based management, monitoring, evaluation and joint programming

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1. EC Results Oriented Monitoring (ROM) and SIDA RBM Compatibility

In Summary: The EC RBM system is shown to be effective and compatible with OECD and SIDA standard procedures for RBM.

A number of Donor agencies are introducing Results Based Management (RBM) as they face the challenge of becoming more effective and results orientated, and to obtain the benefits of using compatible systems and standards. Alignment of RBM systems is even more essential if joint programmes and co-financing will be undertaken.

Donors have been cooperating on developing effective systems and the EC and Sweden are members of the 'joint venture on managing for development results' working group held under the auspices of OECD.

A review by DfID focuses on organisational effectiveness of multilateral bodies in using RBM type approach and produced results for all the main multilateral agencies. The European Commission (EC) received an assessment for organisational effectiveness of 85 % out of 100%, above the average of 80%, a result which was borne out by a separate peer-review. A separate study confirmed that the Commission has developed an effective monitoring and evaluation system, which was assessed as 'scientifically' effective but lacking a broader perspective to ensure usefulness to stakeholders.

Results Based Management works at different organizational levels and must form a coherent framework- from Agency wide, through country programme, to project level. RBM covers seven phases: formulating objectives, identifying indicators, setting targets, monitoring results, reviewing and reporting results, integrating evaluation, using performance information. The first five phases relate to the establishment of standards and performance measurement.

The EC ROM utilizes both the hierarchical framework and phases. The establishment of objectives and indicators are part of strategy and policy development and are undertaken by use of an analytical log frame approach for ex-ante development of the country programmes and projects.

The remaining three phases of performance measurement are undertaken by the EC's evaluation process for country and regional programmes and projects, and is focussed on programmes and strategies. It is a well established system and its methodology is laid out in a comprehensive manual. Within this process 'Results Oriented Monitoring' (ROM), using the 'CRIS' IT system, provides a systematic results-oriented assessment of project progress, based on five criteria: relevance of project design, efficiency, effectiveness, impact to date and potential sustainability.

Independent monitors, from private firms, undertake the work over the year and provide annual assessments. The result is a 2 page document for each study, which is presented to the evaluation officers based in delegations or at headquarters. The evaluation officer reviews the findings and complements it with information from project implementation reports and background country information.

The evaluation reports are reviewed for quality and compiled into aggregate reports, by specialists and the evaluation unit in HQ. There is a large degree of transparency, with final documents at country and project level available to external evaluation teams and the public. The management is responsible for ensuring the effective dissemination and use of the performance information, which is passed to relevant personnel within the organisation.

The principle and practices laid down by SIDA for the proposed RBM are in-line with OECD and EC RBM systems, including ROM. The SIDA RBM is based on a standard model results chain from input to impact. It uses analytical tools such as the 'log frame', and a system of monitoring, evaluation and reporting based on outputs, outcomes and impacts. There is a good compatibility between SIDA and EC RBM systems, though there maybe slight differences in terminology between EC and SIDA glossaries. One area of difference, which is not of concern now, is the use by the Commission of 'untargeted' aid provided by budgetary support, which triggers payments provided benchmarks are achieved. The causal link between inputs and outputs are not as clear so may not suit SIDA RBM.

The EC RBM system is measuring results, aligns to norms established by the donor community and has been evaluated as effective. Therefore it should have the same degree of results orientation as the SIDA RBM. SIDA concerns are more likely to come from quality and implementation factors. For example, the quality of the log frames, the capacity of evaluation managers in the Delegation, access to the ROM Cris IT system, or definition in the field of Agency objectives.

a. Indicators.

There is no formal proposal for the type of indicators to be used for the future EU-Ukraine enhanced agreement, much will depend on the agreement itself, particularly in the detail of the appendices.

The initial proposal for the Action Plan- which probably will be used for the enhanced agreement implementation-was for its development using a log frame

approach and objectively verifiable indicators (OVI) either quantitatively where possible for specific activities and qualitatively for indicators for policy and general issues. This proposal changed to take account of the temporary nature of the current Action Plan and the urgent need for it to be monitored. The revised system uses specialist practitioner working groups, who establish suitable indicators. Currently there are no plans to introduce a schedule of detailed indicators, such as used in EU Structural Funds programmes.

b. Trend in Action Plan Reporting in Ukraine

In line with the Paris Declaration the EC is expecting the Ukrainian government to develop its Action Plan monitoring and assessment capacity. An EC funded PCA project is currently assisting the development of the monitoring system within the government, and this IT system will probably be linked to the legal harmonisation and possibly other databases. The definition of sectors and monitoring will probably be introduced initially in the areas of energy, norms and standards, transportation, environment.

There is a need to improve the analytical and coordination capacity of the government. The Government is in the process of developing a central coordination body (known currently as the National Agency for EI), once established this body will undertake the development of the Action Plan and the strategic framework for donor projects.

c. Monthly Reports

The EC projects internal monthly reporting system is only for activities of individual experts and financial reporting; all other results based factors are provided in 6 monthly reports. Some governments in Central Europe require monthly reports on projects progress prepared by the counterparts/beneficiary organisations, they are focussed on activities rather than outcomes.

d. ROM and evaluation in the EC

While the EC's ROM system is to be recommended as mentioned above, there has been some criticism of the fact that the extremely sophisticated sector and country evaluation system is not better integrated with the ROM (see European Commission: 'Methodological Bases for Evaluation in External Assistance' 2006).

The main effort in the Commission has been to establish a viable and instructive evaluation system, focused on programmes and strategies rather than projects (in project evaluation Commission staff admit there are major failings).

The main purpose of the evaluation process, as stated by the Commission, is to:

- Contribute to the design of interventions, including providing input for setting political priorities
- To assist in the efficient allocation of resources

- To improve the quality of interventions
- To report on the achievements of the intervention – i.e. accountability

Evaluations are managed by the evaluation manager (EM) who is normally located in the EC delegation. The EM is in control of the whole process. He/she drafts terms of reference for the evaluation team, appoints the team, performs a quality check on the work and disseminates the results. The EM presides a reference group which provides assistance in the monitoring and supervision of the evaluation. This reference group consists mainly of Commission service personnel and wherever possible of partner country staff.

The evaluation team carries out the evaluation. The team consists of people who are independent of the teams designing and implementing the intervention.

Evaluations can be carried out before the intervention as a contribution to the formulation of the action, during the intervention with the aim of adjusting the mode of intervention to improve aid effectiveness, or ex post to assess the achievements of the action and its sustainability.

Evaluations first look at the intervention strategy to ensure that the intervention is understood by the evaluators. The evaluation questions used reflect the DAC concerns of relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability and impact. To these are added groups of questions reflecting coherence and complementarity (with EU policies, partner countries' policies and concerns or other donor interventions), and on EU value added. Evaluation questions are designed to validate 'reasoned assessment criteria' (judgement criteria), which are linked to indicators and targets (see above). Indicators specify what data is to be collected in advance; they will be found in the logframe, though they may be modified in the course of the action. Targets are benchmarks, based on the indicators, which are considered achievable and they allow judgements to be made about success.

While there is a clear theoretical difference between evaluation and monitoring, in practice the same people are likely to be in charge of both in the Delegations of the Commission. There is therefore a considerable overlap between the two.

ROM is aimed to give regular monitoring reports to those responsible for an intervention, to allow them to make usually small changes to implementation en route. The conclusions are also arranged around the five DAC criteria for evaluation: relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, impact and sustainability (see monitoring report in annex). Both evaluations and ROM use the logframe as a basis and the indicators used are therefore very similar.



MONITORING REPORT

Monitoring reference MR-xxxxx
Report date xxxxxxx
Project title xxxxxx

I. INTERVENTION DATA

Status	xxx		
Monitoring Report Type	Ongoing		
Aid Modality	Project approach		
<input type="checkbox"/> National Project	<input type="checkbox"/> Regional Project		
Cris Number	xxxxxx		
Project Title according to financing agreement/financing	xxx xxx		
Domain	xxxxxx		
Sector (DAC-CRS)	xxxxxx		
Additional DAC-CRS code	xxxx		
Geographical zone	xxxx		
Keyword			
Date Financing agreement/financing decision/contract signed	xxxxx		
HQ Responsible	xxxxx		
Delegation Responsible	xxxxx		
Monitor	xxxxx		
Project Authority	xxxx		
Start Date - Planned	x	Start Date - Actual	x
End Date - Planned	x	End Date - Likely	x
Monitoring visit date	From x	to	x

II. FINANCIAL DATA

Primary commitment (EC funding)	x
Secondary commitment (funds contracted of EC contribution)	x
Other funding (government and/or other donors)	x
Total budget of operation	x
Total EC Funds Disbursed	x
Financial data as at	x

III. GRADINGS

Relevance and Quality of Design	x
Efficiency of Implementation to date	x
Effectiveness to date	x
Impact Prospects	x
Potential Sustainability	x

IV. SUMMARY OF CONCLUSIONS

Relevance and Quality of Design

Efficiency of Implementation to date

Effectiveness to date

Impact Prospects

Potential Sustainability

Key observations and recommendations

2. Commission assessment of SIDA in preparation for ‘Indirect centralised management’ of EC Budget Funds

There are three possible modes of joint-financing with the European Union under the European Neighbourhood Policy Instrument (and indeed under all financial instruments:

1. Parallel financing: each donor finances a slice of the project/programme independently of the other party and according to their procedures and legislation
2. Co-financing where SIDA would allocate national Swedish development finance to the EU (Commission), with the latter as lead partner: it would depend on Swedish law whether on the Swedish side any specific measures must be taken. On the side of the EU, it would simply imply a transfer to the EU budget and the use of EU procedures and rules
3. Co-financing where the EU transfers money to SIDA as the lead partner and Swedish rules are applied.

In the third case, in which the Commission co-finances a SIDA led project or programme, it would be necessary first for SIDA to be assessed by the Commission as an appropriate recipient of EU budgetary funds. This assessment would usually take around 6 months and would only have to be performed once under normal circumstances.

Determining this procedure is the ‘Financial Regulation applicable to the General Budget of the European Communities’ (EC 1605/2002 of 25 June 2002 and subsequent amendments).

The Financial Regulation imposes on the Commission, as the institution implementing the budget, that in the case of indirect centralized management it has evidence to show that the entities to which it entrusts implementation of the budget resources exist and operate correctly.

The assessment which is carried out to ensure that the Financial Regulation is applied correctly in the case of the implementation of ENPI funds by a qualified third party includes the following elements:

- Transparency in procurement and grant awarding procedures
- Effective and efficient internal control system
- An accounting system to ensure correct use of EU funds
- Independent external audit
- Public access to information
- Adequate annual ex post publication of beneficiaries of funds deriving from the budget

The assessment is carried out by an external audit company which will proceed using published material and a questionnaire.

The procedure is straightforward:

1. SIDA expresses its interest in indirect centralised management to the Director General in AIDCO and asks to be assessed
2. The Commission then invites SIDA to cooperate with the Commission, explains the assessment procedure and requests general information – legal status etc.
3. The eligibility of SIDA is then checked by the Commission: have the formalities been completed (declaration of interest etc); is it eligible under the terms of Article 56 of the Financial Regulation (legal status etc).
4. The assessment is then launched through the tender to contract the external audit company – this procedure takes roughly 4 weeks
5. The auditor organises meetings with SIDA and carries out the necessary fieldwork to check SIDA's credentials. This process aims to be completed in 3 weeks.
6. The auditors present their draft report to the Commission which reacts with comments. A second draft report is drawn up to incorporate these comments and is sent to SIDA for comments. The final third draft is then sent to the Commission for acceptance as the final report. The report stage usually takes around 2 months.
7. The Commission can then accept the report as positive and continue. If a negative report is given on internal controls or accounting, the assessment fails and the process is concluded. If any of the remaining 4 criteria receive a negative report, the Commission can agree to proceed using Commission procedures for these areas. Where the Commission feels that the criteria can be met with some improvements to procedures, it may issue recommendations for improvement of procedures.
8. The AIDCO Director General then informs SIDA of the results and also notifies the Commission Delegations of the result and the conditions for signing delegation agreements with SIDA.

Several assessments have been undertaken and others are being processed. One of the successful assessments was that of GTZ.

Points which may need to be clarified with the Commission include:

The European Court of Auditors (ECA) are likely to undertake audits of EU Funds, irrespective of the Commission agreements with SIDA.

The Commission may require more detailed written documentation on operational procedures than SIDA would normally require

The Commission will wish to ensure the Swedish Audit function is capable of undertaking the work of the Commission Audit services.

ANNEX

Article 56 Financial Regulation applicable to the general budget of the EC

Article 56

1. Where the Commission implements the budget by indirect centralised management, it shall first obtain evidence of the existence and proper operation within the entities to which it entrusts implementation of the following:
 - (a) transparent procurement and grant-award procedures which are nondiscriminatory and exclude any conflict of interest and which are in accordance with the provisions of Titles V and VI respectively;
 - (b) an effective and efficient internal control system for the management of operations, which includes effective segregation of the duties of authorising officer and accounting officer or of the equivalent functions;
 - (c) an accounting system that enables the correct use of Community funds to be verified and the use of funds to be reflected in Community accounts;
 - (d) an independent external audit;
 - (e) public access to information at the level provided for in Community Regulations;
 - (f) adequate annual *ex post* publication of beneficiaries of funds deriving from the budget in conformity with Article 30(3).

The Commission may accept that the audit, accounting and procurement systems of the entities referred to in paragraphs 1 and 2 are equivalent to its own, with due account for internationally accepted standards.

2. In the case of decentralised management, the criteria laid down in paragraph 1 with the exception of the criterion provided in point (e), shall apply, in full or in part, depending on the degree of decentralisation, agreed between the Commission and the third country, national or international public-sector bodies concerned.

Notwithstanding paragraph (1)(a) and Article 169a, the Commission may decide:

- in the case of pooling of funds, and
- under the conditions provided in the basic act, to use the procurement or grant procedures of the beneficiary partner country or as agreed among donors.

Before taking such a decision, the Commission shall first obtain evidence on a case-by-case basis that such procedures satisfy the principles of transparency, equal treatment and non-discrimination, prevent any conflict of interest, offer guarantees equivalent to internationally accepted standards and ensure compliance with the provisions of sound financial management which requires effective and efficient internal control.

The third country, national or international public-sector bodies concerned shall undertake to fulfil the following obligations:

- (a) to comply, subject to the first subparagraph of this paragraph, with the criteria laid down in paragraph 1;
- (b) to ensure that the audit referred to in point (d) of paragraph 1 is exercised by a national institution for independent external auditing;

(c) to conduct regular checks to ensure that the actions to be financed from the budget have been implemented correctly;

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(d) to take appropriate measures to prevent irregularities and fraud and, if necessary, to bring legal proceedings to recover funds wrongly paid.

3. The Commission shall ensure supervision, evaluation and control of the implementation of the tasks entrusted. It shall take the equivalence of control systems into account when it carries out controls using its own control systems.

3. Joint Programming with the European Commission in the context of the ENPI Programme

Background

Increasing aid effectiveness is the central theme of the Paris Declaration of 2005. It was also the reason that the EU agreed the EU Code of Conduct on Complementarity and Division of Labour in 2007. The European Neighbourhood Policy Instrument Regulation (October 2006) emphasises, in its article 5, the importance of coherence and coordination between the Member States and the EU in order to raise the effectiveness of EU aid.

Donor coordination is underlined as an objective in all relevant documents. In the EU, donor coordination meetings are called regularly, usually by the Commission's Delegation, in order to improve coordination within the EU. The EU, in-country, also attempts to coordinate with other non-EU donors.

A step beyond donor coordination is joint programming. This is encouraged by the EU Code of Conduct in which the Member States and the Commission commit themselves to increase their participation in joint multi-annual programming based on partner countries' development strategies.

Both the Paris Declaration and the EU Code of Conduct emphasise that the partner country should be responsible for coordinating donors. Where this is not entirely possible at present, assistance should be given to ensure partner countries' capacity is enhanced.

In the Code of Conduct, EU donors agree to focus their active involvement in partner countries on a maximum of three sectors, although this concentration should be achieved flexibly and, if it would mean a substantial reduction in sector coverage, it is suggested that, taking account of partner views, more sectors might be covered. Support to civil society, research and education schemes and general budget support are also excluded from the three sector rule.

The three sectors should be chosen taking account of the comparative advantage of the donor. Normally donors are expected to remain in the sectors chosen over the medium-term. Lead donors in each sector should be selected by the participating donors.

As with the Paris Declaration, the Code of Conduct is a voluntary agreement between donors.

SIDA has decided to explore the implications of entering into joint programming with the European Commission, as a practical implementation of the various international agreements. Joint programming is in fact rare and in ENPI, this would be the first case where it was tried.

Basic programming documents

It is worth while looking first at the various programming documents, which are produced, as well as the programming cycle.

The basic document prepared by the Commission (and most other donors) is the Country Strategy, which covers the whole period of the Financial Perspective, and therefore at present runs from 2007-2013. The Country Strategy considers the Objectives of EU/EC Cooperation with the Country, the political and economic situation of the country, past and ongoing EC assistance, and the response strategy of the European Union.

The National Indicative Programme is established for three or four years (2007 to 2010 and 2011 to 2013). This programme outlines the main priorities and goals for assistance to the country, the available indicative budget, the priority areas to be supported as well as questions of the implementation.

On the basis of the priorities identified in the National Indicative Programme, Annual Action Programmes are produced, which described the main concrete actions to be undertaken in a specific year. Below the level of the annual action programme, project fiches (or sector policy support or general budget support documentation) present the individual actions to be undertaken.

The most extensive use of joint programming has been made in the 10th European Development Fund (2008-2013). The European Commission reported that 13 out of the 27 member states had taken part in joint programming with the Commission, though Sweden apparently preferred to focus on Joint Assistance Strategies.

Joint programming can take several different forms;

- joint programming of specific parts of the annual action programme
- joint annual programmes
- joint multiannual programming and the common framework for country strategy papers

The basis for the most ambitious joint programming was laid in the Council conclusions entitled 'financing for development and aid effectiveness: delivering more, better and faster' from the 11th of April 2006.

One should however bear in mind that while there has been a considerable effort to standardise procedures across all external aid programmes of the European Union, there is a considerable difference between Ukraine and the countries covered by the EDF.

In the current situation, the immediate and practical cooperation between SIDA and the European Commission is likely to be confined to the annual programming exercise (ENPI AAP 2009) and to certain elements only of that annual action programme.

Joint programming in the AAP 2009

Timing and the Management Cycle in the EU

The EC management cycle is particularly important in the context of joint programming. Unless preparation is undertaken at the appropriate time, it will be impossible to meet the Brussels deadlines set by the need to obtain approval of the Management Committee and the decision of the Commission.

The objective of the rather lengthy management cycle is to achieve the quality objectives of:

- relevance
- a feasibility
- effectiveness

The procedures and the details which need to be supplied will vary depending on whether it is the project, sector policy support or general budget support approach which is being used. However the management cycle remains much the same.

The first essential element is the preparation of the 'identification fiche'. This fiche checks the formal qualities of the proposal – legal basis, budget line, method of implementation and a provisional timetable – as well as the initial substantial elements. The latter include a check on consistency with European Community policy, consistency with partner policies and strategies, and identification of the main problems, an analysis of the key stakeholders and target groups, the complementarity that the proposed action with other planned or current activities, resource is and costs, issues around the implementation of the proposal at its sustainability.

The identification fiche then undergoes quality screening by the office quality support group in AIDCO. This will normally lead to comments and requests for improvements in the identification fiche.

The second step is the preparation of an action fiche at the 'formulation stage'. At this stage a very detailed analysis of the relevance, feasibility and management of the action is required. A key part of the work to be done at this stage is the development of an adequate Logframe matrix. The Logframe will contain a series of indicators which will allow management information to be collected and analysed.

The work at this formulation stage is again assessed for quality before the proposal is sent to interservice consultation by AIDCO. The final action fiche is annexed to the Commission proposal and a file centre translation.

The proposal is then sent to the ENPI management committee for discussion with the member states. After its passage through the management committee the proposal is then sent to the European parliament and consultation. This part of the process alone takes one month after consultation with the European Parliament, the Commission takes its decision.

This whole process, from the identification fiche to the commission decision takes at least six months. **This means that if SIDA is interested in undertaking some joint programming with the Commission for 2009, the ultimate date for a decision is the end of May 2008.**

Practical questions associated with the joint programming decision

(An interesting discussion of potential problems is to be found in the Nordic Plus, Practical guide to delegated cooperation, October 2006).

Clearly there are limitations on the arrangements for the AAP 2009. Firstly SIDA has not been assessed by the Commission services for approval for indirect centralised management, so there is no perspective of undertaking joint action under which community funding is administered by SIDA. As much of the available community finance is likely to be spent either as general budget support or sector specific budgetary support, there would be little interest in SIDA transferring its limited finance to the Commission as lead donor.

This suggests that the most appropriate financing arrangement would be parallel financing of action or actions in the programme for 2009.

The identification of the actions to be jointly programmed should depend partly on the comparative advantages of the donors. However the concept of comparative advantage is itself difficult to analyse. Apart from specific experience in certain areas of policy or in certain sectors, comparative advantage must also depend on elements such

as the size of the particular assistance programme and the flexibility of procedures of the different owners.

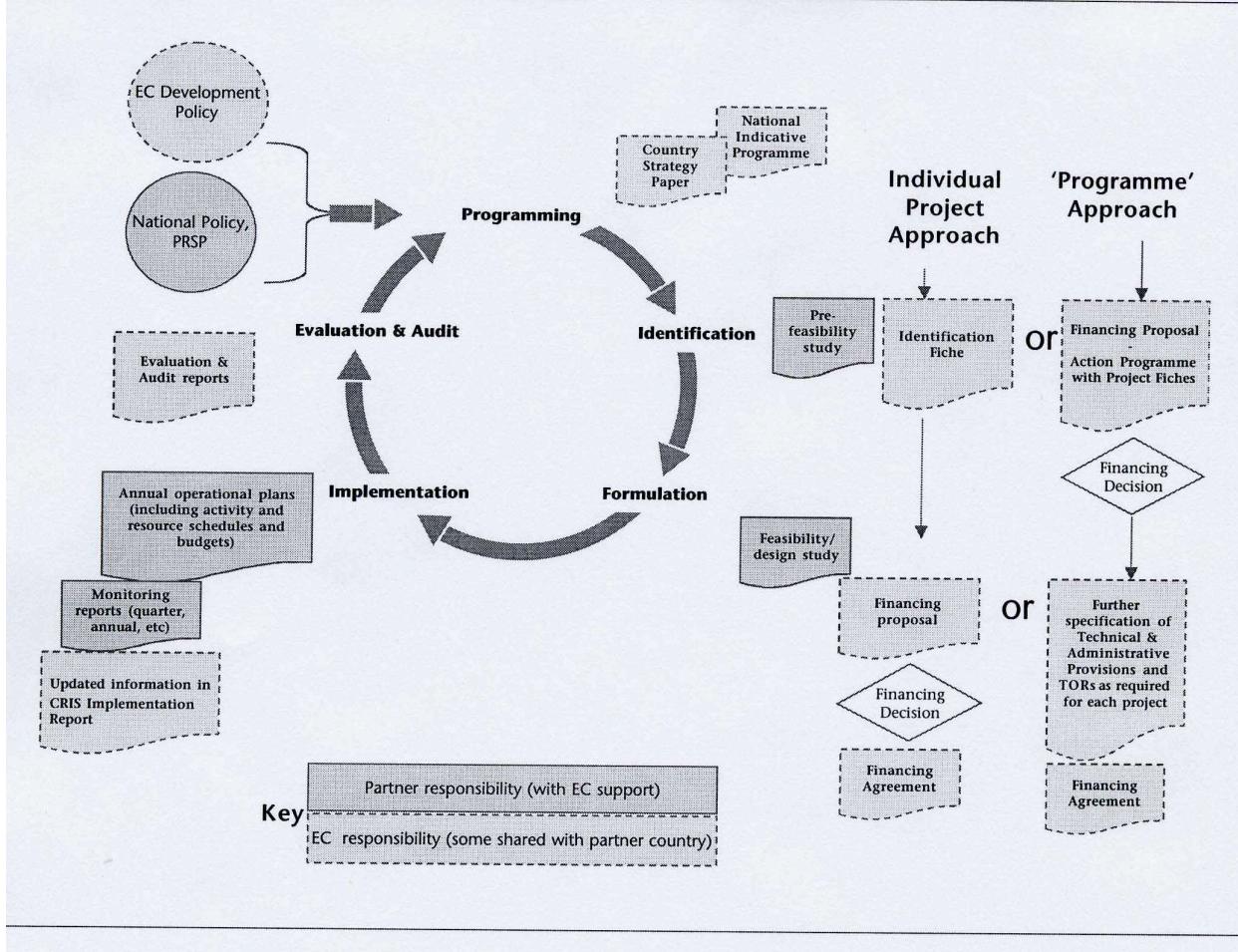
It is clear that SIDA has certain sectoral advantages in areas like environment and energy, as well as in certain management areas such as that public financial management. However one of the main advantages which SIDA has over the European Commission is that its procedures are far more efficient and that it is therefore able to show much more flexibility in the use of its finance.

The European Commission has budgetary allocation for assistance to Ukraine of approximately EUR 140 million annually. As we understand it, the SIDA allocation is approximately EUR 12 million. While SIDA is one of the largest bilateral donors to Ukraine, it is obvious that assistance is dwarfed by that of the European Union. With much of the Community aid being given either as general or sectoral budget support, it is probably sensible for SIDA to finance the technical assistance elements of sector or general budget support programmes. Such a policy could combine Sweden's comparative experience in areas like environment, transport and energy with its greater advantage of flexibility and the ability to deliver necessary assistance quickly.

There are several questions which need to be solved before such a programme is agreed;

- Is the partner country interested in receiving assistance in the areas agreed between Sweden and the European Commission? Would the partner country accept that in discussions of actions where joint programming was taking place between Sweden and the European Commission, the two donors jointly meet the appropriate Ukrainian authority.
- as each side would be using its own procedures under parallel financing, what degree of mutual consultation would be established in areas like tendering?

Figure 5 – The project cycle, main documents and responsibilities



Source: European Commission: Project Cycle Management Guidelines, March 2004

- presumably in the case of joint financing, SIDA Would be involved also in the evaluation of the programme
- presumably both SIDA and the EU will present a joint documentation to the ENPI management committee. Given that the Commission now has strict rules about identifying clearly programmes which are financed by the EU, can we assume that joint programmes would be clearly marked as such?

Joint programming for the longer term

In a longer term perspective, there is an interest to move towards joint programming for the medium and longer term. This would involve member states and the Commission jointly agreeing on Country Strategy Papers and National Indicative Programmes. A template has been drawn up for Country Strategy Papers.

As far as SIDA is concerned, there would be a minor change which will be necessary to bring the SIDA country strategy period in line with the financial framework. This would mean that the country strategy for Ukraine which is being prepared at the current time would run to 2013 and then in 2011 or 2012 a joint country strategy paper would be drawn up.

There are a great many questions which need to be asked:

- whilst one can understand that the Commission could deal with one bilateral donor such as SIDA, will the current procedures be capable of dealing with joint programming between multiple donors
- whilst the European Union agrees a financial framework which guarantees finance for a period of up to seven years, is it possible in the Swedish case to have a similar guarantee of budgetary resources over the medium term? If Sweden does not adopt the Euro, might there also be an exchange-rate question over the medium term?
- The whole question of cofinancing would need to be raised and many questions asked (see JMWFEN paper on cofinancing)
- how would deep medium-term joint programming be implemented and what evaluation methods and rules would be applied
- and many others

The complex arrangements which would need to be made to realise joint programming should be studied carefully by SIDA before proceeding.

Annex:

Meetings arranged:

April 10. 2008: In Kyiv	Ulrika.Lindberg-Labasauskas and Olga Sandakova, SIDA, Laura Garagnani, Head of Operations, Delegation of the EC
April 16 2008: In Brussels	Marzia Pietrelli (AIDCO), Steve Bullock (RELEX) on joint programming Goran Segerlund (ELARG), on IPA procedures and evaluation Luc Bagur (AIDCO): joint programming, co-financing Jean-Louis Chomel (AIDCO) on evaluation