

CASE STUDY (SWEDEN) COUNTRY STRATEGIES IN SWEDISH BILATERAL DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION

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1 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida) regularly formulates Country Strategies (CS) for the main recipient countries to outline the priority development areas for the next few years. The objective of this case study is to provide a detailed description of the decision-making process (DMP) surrounding the preparation of a CS in order to empirically test the ANSEA concepts and identify potential strengths and weaknesses. Particular characteristics of this DMP are that it is standardised and regular, it is on an abstract level and that it spans several sectors.

In a CS, the Swedish government's position on the scope, profile, design and expected results is established, but it does not have legal status. General development cooperation policy, and Sida Action Programmes and Sector Policies feed into the CS, which in turn guides annual plans and projects. The government takes the final decision concerning adoption of a CS proposal, but the preparation process (c. 18 months) is to a large extent run by Sida, with regular input from the Ministry for Foreign Affairs. Environmental consideration is mainly made through a Strategic Environmental Analysis report.

It was found through interviews with Sida staff that the CS processes to a large extent follow the guidelines, but that they are heavily influenced by a range of factors. In a comparison of Sida's DMP with a rational DMP model it emerged that there exist considerable differences, with important implications for environmental integration.

Based on a detailed identification of decisions with environmental relevance, twelve possible and generalised Decision Windows can be identified. These are described in terms of type and why they may be critical to the environmental outcome of the DMP.

Five principles for good decision-making are then applied in order to assess the Decision Windows and make recommendations. In this combined *ex ante* and *ex post* assessment it is revealed that timeliness and transparency are key aspects of Sida's CS process that can be improved. Comprehensiveness, consistency and consultation are features that can also be improved in various Decision Windows, but such improvements need to be considered in relation to time costs. However, increased awareness about these procedural issues may improve the quality of the CS decision-making process in itself.

This case study suggests that, in this specific context, key benefits of the ANSEA approach include the decision-centred perspective, the more holistic view on environmental consideration than in conventional SEA and the enhancement of transparency and accountability. It was found that applying the proposed substantive criteria would be difficult in cases of abstract and multi-sectoral DMPs. The flexibility of the concept of Decision Windows is seen as positive, as it allows for different levels of detail and purposes of an ANSEA. Lastly, some specific recommendations to Sida concerning the CS process are made on the basis of the ANSEA assessment.

2 INTRODUCTION

2.1 OBJECTIVE OF THE CASE STUDY

The Swedish government agency for bilateral development assistance, Sida (the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency), regularly carries out decision-making processes in order to develop Country Strategies (CS) for their major recipient countries. The CS acts as a 3-5 year framework for what types of projects to support in a country. The objective of this case study is to provide a detailed description of the decision-making process surrounding the preparation of a Country Strategy in order to empirically test the concepts of Decision Windows and Procedural Criteria and identify potential strengths and weaknesses.

2.2 METHODOLOGY

The research methodology for this case study consisted of a combination of desk research and interviews. Although the study object is the general system set up for the CS process, four specific and real CS processes were also studied: Tanzania CS, China CS, Central America & the Caribbean RS, and the Western Balkan region (various strategies). This was done in order to get a fuller and more accurate understanding of the decision-making process than as outlined in official guidelines and documents. In-depth, semi-structured interviews were undertaken with Sida desk officers involved in these processes (for a list of interviewees, see Appendix 1) and associated documents were reviewed. Interviewees were asked to describe the course of the preparation process and various inputs, the ways in which environmental concerns had been integrated and the potential for increased environmental assessment. The processes were all in their end phases when the information was collected.

2.3 STRUCTURE OF THE REPORT

This case study report begins with a short screening chapter, explaining why an ANSEA assessment is relevant for the CS decision-making process. Then, there an analysis of the institutional and decisional context of the CS process follows, including a description of the role of the CS, its links with other PPPs, the formal actors and underlying stakeholder interests, the legal framework, the main environmental issues and current environmental assessment procedures. In chapter 4, the decision-making process is described. The ANSEA concepts are applied in chapter 5, starting with a detailed identification of environmentally relevant decisions to facilitate for the identification of Decision Windows. Procedural Criteria are then introduced and the Decision Windows are assessed accordingly. Finally, case-specific and more general comments about the ANSEA framework are made in the conclusion.

3 SCREENING – WHY IS ANSEA RELEVANT?

In order to improve coherence and effectiveness in bilateral development cooperation, the Swedish government has assigned Sida to regularly formulate Country Strategies for the main recipient countries. Preparing this type of strategy is common practice in both bilateral cooperation (e.g. British DFID, Australian AusAID) and in multilateral cooperation (e.g. the World Bank and Asian Development Bank). The CS outlines priority development areas, cooperation forms, and collaboration partners. The environment might be a strategic cooperation area identified in a CS, but environmental impacts can also occur due to other types of cooperation, e.g. in industrial development, energy provision, and human rights promotion. The environmental impact of a Country Strategy, which can be both direct and indirect, makes this type of PPP relevant for a trial application of the ANSEA framework.

In particular, this case study will aim to highlight the problems and opportunities of the ANSEA framework when applied to a setting characterised by:

- A routine and standardised decision-making process conducted relatively often – this decision-making process is probably ‘smaller’ than those in other ANSEA case studies in terms of people and organisations involved, time and resources allocated, and number and scope of regulations of relevance.
- A decision-making process dealing with abstract and broad issues – the issues subject to decision in the CS process are probably less specified and detailed than those in domestic plans for regional and sectoral management.
- A decision-making process dealing with issues spanning several sectors – the influence of aspects of the decision-making process on the aggregate environmental impact may be more complex to identify than in cases of one-sector plans, where environmental impacts may be more typical and unambiguous.

4 SCOPING – INSTITUTIONAL CONTEXT, STAKEHOLDERS, ENVIRONMENT

4.1 THE ROLE OF THE COUNTRY STRATEGY

A short description of the Country Strategy is useful before the analysis of institutional arrangements. It is quoted by Sida as being “the most important instrument for the management of Sweden’s development cooperation with a country” (author’s translation) (Sida, 1997a:29). For some countries, such as those in Central America, CSs are replaced by a Regional Strategy (RS), due to similarities among the countries and in the cooperation relationships³. CSs are normally published every 3 to 5 years, and the preparation is initiated about 1½ years before publication (*ibid.*).

³ In this report the acronym CS will refer also the Regional Strategies for regions in which no individual Country Strategies are published.

In a CS, the Swedish government's position on the scope, profile, design and expected results is established, and it must be followed in all subsequent project work (*ibid.*). However, it is emphasised in the CS guidelines⁴ that the process is as important as the final document; it is a time for reflection on previous work and for anchoring the ideas solidly among recipient country and Sida officials (Sida, 1998a:2 and MFA, 2000a:3). The guidelines suggest the preparation process to be based on five considerations (Sida, 1998a:2):

- the dominating development problems,
- the country's development policy,
- the ambition that Swedish objectives and policies should affect the cooperation,
- previous cooperation experiences, and
- the potential Swedish political agenda.

Two important mandatory input documents to the CS process, as well as attachments to the CS document, are the *Country Analysis*, in which the development situation in the recipient country is described and analysed, and the *Results Analysis*, in which results and evaluations of projects during the previous CS period are summarised (Sida, 1997a:32-34). There are fairly detailed instructions regarding the contents of the CS document, and an outline is provided in box 3.1. After the CS is decided upon, a *cooperation agreement* is signed by Sida and the recipient country in most cases, and the CS is made more concrete through a *Country Plan* (Sida, 2000a:17-19).

TABLE 4.1: CONTENTS OF A COUNTRY STRATEGY

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|---|
| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Summary 2. Conclusions from the Country Analysis 3. Conclusions from the Results Analysis 4. The country's development policy (summary of the Country Analysis and assessment of possibilities, weaknesses and results of the country's own policies) 5. General considerations (other conditions that may affect the cooperation, e.g. cooperation instruments, dialogue issues and the role of other donors) 6. Objectives of the development cooperation (main aims and main directions) 7. Cooperation areas (aims and directions for each area, with reference to the <i>Regleringsbrev</i>) 8. Administrative resources (short- and long-term resource requirements in Sida and in the field) |
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Source: MFA, 2000a:15-16

⁴ Three versions of guidelines were reviewed for this case study: Sida 1997a and 1998a, and MFA 2000a. They broadly recommend the same procedure.

4.2 INSTITUTIONAL AND DECISION-MAKING CONTEXT

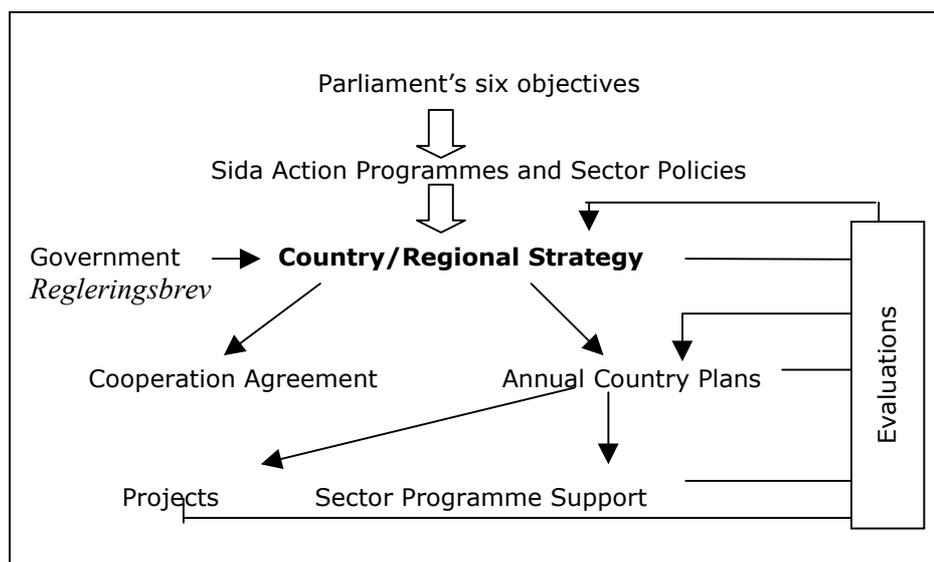
4.2.1 Links with other policies, plans and programmes

The structure of CS-related policies, plans and programmes (PPPs) is outlined in figure 3.2.1. The Country Strategy should be based on parliamentary, government and agency decisions regarding development cooperation in general. Firstly, the main aim of poverty reduction and the six sub-objectives for development assistance established by the Parliament in 1978 must be complied with in all of Sida's work (MFA, 2000b:6):

- “growth of resources,
- greater economic and social equality,
- economic and political independence,
- democratic development of society,
- the far-sighted management of natural resources and consideration for the environment [added in 1988], and
- the promotion of equality between women and men [added in 1996]”.

However, prioritising between these objectives is subject to Sida's discretion (Sida, 1997a:10). Secondly, the government issues an annual *Regleringsbrev*, in which budgets are set and directions and priorities for cooperation are given (*ibid.*). It is also in this instruction that Sida is formally commissioned to prepare specific CSs. Lastly, Sida has its own policies relevant to the CSs. The General Director has established four action programmes detailing priorities and working methods: poverty reduction; gender equality; peace, democracy and human rights; and sustainable development (Sida, 1997b and 1998bcd). Departments within Sida have also developed policies concerning specific sectors and activities.

FIGURE 4.1: THE LINKS BETWEEN THE COUNTRY STRATEGY AND OTHER PPPs



Source: Sida, 1997a and MFA, 2000a.

With a finalised CS, ‘downstream’ plans and projects follow. As was mentioned, the CS gives rise to a cooperation agreement between Sida and the recipient country and a Country Plan, which is prepared by the Embassies and approved by the General Director (MFA, 2000a:19). Country Plans are concrete activity plans that are followed up and revised annually. In the plan responsibilities are assigned, budgetary considerations are made and time-frames are set (Sida, 1997a:36 and MFA, 2000a:19). Based on the Country Plan, decisions regarding individual projects⁵ are made. One guideline states that “the problem analysis and the guidelines of the strategy [CS] should be reflected in Sida’s participation in each project and throughout the project cycle” (author’s translation) (Sida, 1997a:37). The CS and the associated sector analyses are also a basis for ‘Sector Programme Support’, a cooperation form intended to reduce aid fragmentation, strengthen national ownership of the programmes and improve donor coordination (Sida, 2000a:8-11).

4.2.2 Legal framework

The Country Strategies and Regional Strategies do not have legal status. In Sida, the CS is conceived more as a statement-of-intent and as a tool for project planning (Sida, 1997a and MFA, 2000a). According to the latest guideline (MFA, 2000a:3), the CS “states the objectives and direction of the Swedish development cooperation with the country” (author’s translation), but any obligation to adhere to these is not specified. However, it is explicitly required that the CS “should be the basis of Swedish considerations in the policy dialogue with the recipient country, in multilateral contexts and in the donor coordination” and that it “should also be the basis for what is accounted for to the parliament about the cooperation country” (author’s translation) (*ibid.*). As has been mentioned, there is more emphasis on the CS as a process than as a document only (Sida, 1998a:2). Overall, the issue of public accountability seems to be more addressed in terms of the recommended evaluations of the CSs and ensuing projects.

Thus, the implementation of a CS does not have a legal or formal basis. Some interviewees argued that, at the same time as it is practically helpful and politically sound to have a standardized strategy document to refer to in the project cycle, it can also reduce flexibility in project selection and planning. This debate will surely become even more important when the planned organizational reform takes place in Sida, in which the CS will allegedly get a more central importance.

4.3 ACTORS AND STAKEHOLDERS

At least six actors or stakeholder groups with potentially different interests can be distinguished in the CS process:

- Ministry for Foreign Affairs (representing the government)
- The Embassies

⁵ Sida defines projects as “an activity for which a government or an organization request support from Sweden [that] can be of highly varied scope and complexity”, and they can thus range from testing a working method to sector-wide support (Sida, 1997a:13).

- Sida (external interest)
- Sida departments (internal interests)
- Swedish stakeholders (NGOs, private sector, academics, tax-payers)
- Recipient country stakeholders

The government takes the final decision concerning adoption of a CS proposal, but the preparation process is to a large extent run by Sida and the Embassies. According to the latest CS guideline, the responsibility for the CS process is mutual between Sida and the Swedish Ministry for Foreign Affairs (MFA), which represents the political level in the process (until the final decision) (MFA, 2000a:4). However, Sida does most of the analytical and drafting work, with the MFA arranging the initial meeting and detailing Sida's assignment after the preparatory phase. The degree of MFA involvement seems to be determined to a large extent by the political relationship with the recipient country and how controversial that might be. For example, in the case of the Western Balkan strategies, there were meetings between Sida and MFA on a weekly basis, due to the sensitivity and changeability of the situation there. For the Central America & the Caribbean RS, on the other hand, the contact was less intense, partly due to the long-term and relatively routine Swedish involvement in this region. In the interviews with Sida staff, a range of views was expressed on the actual and the ideal nature of the relationship between Sida and the MFA, with some favouring a clearer distinction of roles. The guideline, however, emphasises active participation of and cooperation between both sides, as well as the importance of ensuring solid support among all actors in order to get effective implementation of the CS (*ibid.*, Sida 1998a:2).

The interaction between different Sida departments also influences the CS outcome. The responsibility for the CS processes within Sida lies with the respective Regional Departments, which lead the CS working groups. These groups are composed by representatives from the five Sector Departments: democracy and social development; infrastructure and economic development; natural resources and the environment; research cooperation; and cooperation with NGOs and humanitarian assistance (MFA, 2000a:11). The interviews suggested that the group composition is made on an *ad hoc* basis after having initially prioritised cooperation areas and that there is a tendency for continuity in the choice of cooperation areas, and hence the participation of different Sector Departments and Units, between different CS periods. From a public choice theory perspective, it could thus be argued that there is a risk of bureaucratic self-interest influencing the appointments of working group members, but this risk is of course difficult to verify.

Regarding Swedish stakeholder involvement in the CS process, the guideline proposes meetings and seminars with organizations and persons with an interest in or special knowledge of the recipient country. Academics, NGOs and company representatives can either be part of a reference group that is continuously consulted or participate in an 'interested parties meeting' towards the end of the process in which a draft CS is discussed (Sida, 1998a:8 and MFA, 2000a:14). In the CS processes reviewed for this case study such meetings were held (especially for the China CS), but it was unclear how large their influence on the CS was. The Swedish general public is not addressed.

How and to what extent involvement of the recipient country in the CS process should occur might be more difficult. In its policies, Sida emphasises the importance of 'partnership' with the country and the ambition of national or local 'ownership' of the development projects (e.g.

Sida, 1997a). This is reflected in the CS guidelines, in that national development plans and priorities should constitute starting points for Swedish CS discussions (MFA, 2000a:7). Meetings with different representatives of the recipient country society during the preliminary phase are encouraged, along with the continuous dialogue (*ibid.* p.13). Then, the recipient country's national plans should in effect be compared with the Swedish objectives for development assistance, as well as the potential political agenda, and common ground can be found. The influence of the political agenda was clearly evident in the CS processes reviewed. For example, the long-standing, broad and voluminous cooperation with Tanzania has made development assistance the major component of the Swedish-Tanzanian political relationship and therefore the political agenda is relatively transparent and simple. Consequently, the new CS is to a large extent based on the national Tanzania Assistance Strategy. The relationship between China and Sweden, on the other hand, has more aspects that development cooperation needs to take into account, e.g. China's role in the world economy, trade issues and ideological differences. There has therefore been a seemingly stronger emphasis on gaining 'mutual benefit' from the cooperation (Sida, 1997c:6).

4.4 ENVIRONMENTAL DIMENSION

4.4.1 The main environmental issues in Country Strategies

Because Swedish bilateral development cooperation spans a range of activities in various sectors, the potential environmental impacts differ considerably in terms of media, magnitude and how direct/indirect they are. However, having identified the planned sector activities in a certain country, predicting impacts can be difficult. Firstly, the environmental outcome depends on how the project is implemented. Secondly, since a Sida-sponsored project often represents only a fraction of activities in the sector or region, it is difficult to predict whether the potential impact will be amplified or neutralised. Thirdly, it may be difficult to compare the impacts against a no-action scenario, because the recipient country might have taken up a similar activity. Lastly, with the emphasis on capacity development that Sida has today, it might be more complicated to predict impacts from such activities than from purely physical projects. While precise prediction can be complex, Sida has taken actions to identify connections between the environment and various development issues. Identifying such connections is one of the main tasks of the Strategic Environmental Analysis (SEAN⁶) (see further discussion below) (Sida, 2000b) and a number of reports have been published, relating the environment to poverty (Sida, 1995), to population (Sida, 1996), to conflicts (Sida, 1998e), to human rights (Sida, 2000f) and to economic growth (Sida, 2000g).

4.4.2 Provisions for environmental assessment in the CS process

After it was found in an evaluation of environmental considerations in Sida's CSs that the integration of environmental aspects was insufficient (Sida, 1999a), new guidance for a *Strategic Environmental Analysis* (SEAN) was published in March 2000 (Sida, 2000b). The guidance prescribes that a SEAN needs to be done for every CS, independently of type and

⁶ The acronym 'SEAN' is used in order to distinguish from 'SEA' (Strategic Environmental Assessment).

magnitude of the cooperation, but that they may differ in scope and detail (*ibid.* Preface). The exact role of the SEAN is somewhat unclear, and flexibility is indeed encouraged, but broadly it should analyse the environmental status, driving-forces and national response to environmental issues, as well as identify strategic areas for Swedish environment-related cooperation. This includes both directly environment-related projects and environmental components of projects with other main objectives (*ibid.* p.15). Potential cross-sectoral issues are given special emphasis, e.g. human rights and environment, health and environment.

Both the guidance document itself and the interviews suggested that the SEAN is more of an input to the CS process than an assessment exercise. Although it is suggested that it may contribute to the Results Analysis (i.e. an *ex post* assessment of the previous CS), there is no systematic or formal linkage between the SEAN process and the CS process facilitating for continuous (or reactive) *ex ante* assessment of the CS proposals. The degree of integration of the SEAN into the CS process and how proactive the SEAN can be is rather determined on a case-by-case basis. However, the importance of indirect and informal assessment in the CS discussions were emphasised by some interviewees. Both Sida staff and external consultants have undertaken SEANs. Because Sida has the responsibility for doing SEANs, they can be seen as both promoters and ‘assessors’ of the CSs. While the institutional bias might be reduced by doing the SEAN externally, many of the interviewees argued that the SEAN can only be truly effective if the person doing it is closely involved throughout the CS process.

4.5 DECISIONAL BOUNDARIES OF THE CASE STUDY

The structure of PPPs in Swedish development cooperation (see figure 3.2.1), the allocation of the responsibilities in the CS process and the stages in the CS process are all relatively well-defined, and therefore the decisional boundaries can be specified. For this case study, only the CS decision-making process was analysed, and not the policies informing it (i.e. the decision boundary between Sector Policies/Action Programmes/*Regleringsbrev* and CSs) or the plans emanating from it (i.e. the decision boundary between the Country Plans and the CSs). In terms of stages in the CS process, the focus was placed on the process from the start meeting initiating the preparatory phase through to the formal decision by the government regarding the adoption of a CS proposal. Thus, CS formulation was prioritised over CS implementation and evaluation. In the formulation part of the process there are only three formal decisions: (1) the government assigning Sida to do a particular CS, (2) the more detailed description of the task provided by the government through the MFA after the preparatory phase, and (3) the government adoption/rejection of the CS proposal (MFA, 2000a:10). However, the informal, implicit and Sida-level decisions must of course also be included as objects of study. A final limitation was made to study the decision process within Sida only, and not within the MFA or in the Embassies. In short, the analysed ANSEA decision-making process (DMP) in this case study is the Country Strategy formulation phase as processed in Sida.

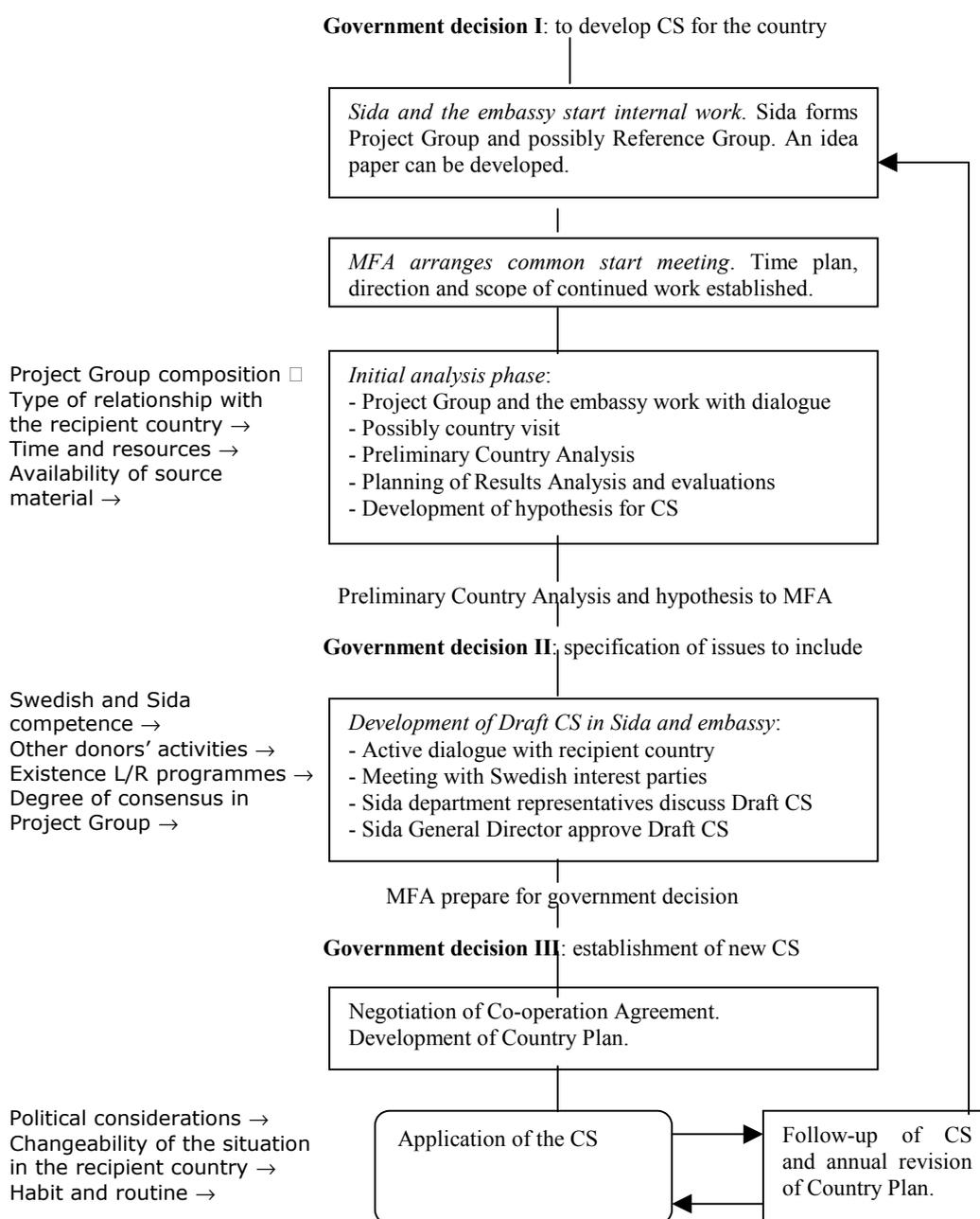
5 FUNCTIONAL DESCRIPTION OF THE DECISION-MAKING PROCESS

5.1 DESCRIPTION OF THE OVERALL CS PROCESS

Going through the sample CS processes in the interviews, it emerged that they to a large extent followed the guidelines. In figure 4.1, the process as outlined by the CS guidelines has been supplemented with factors identified in the interviews that may affect the activities at different stages.

FIGURE 4.1: THE COUNTRY STRATEGY PROCESS

FACTORS OF INFLUENCE



Source: Adapted from Sida 1998d and MFA 2000a.

5.2 IDENTIFICATION OF DECISIONS WITH POTENTIAL ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT

Based on the description of the decision-making process those single implicit and explicit decisions with potential environmental implications throughout the process can be identified together with possible inputs and tools (see table 4.2, first and second columns). The decisions range from those having a relatively direct environmental relevance, e.g. the inclusion/exclusion of environmental issues as a preliminary development area to focus on, to those with a less direct and unambiguous environmental impact, e.g. choice of participants and their respective competences and motivations.

Because it was found that the CS process does not fit well with a strictly rational DMP model, the division of the process into stages (first columns) is instead based on the concept of 'rounds'. Teisman's 'rounds model' concentrates on the time dimension and it is argued that "decision making does often not happen at one specific point in time, but as a far more gradual and continuous process of interaction, negotiation and learning, in which rounds can be distinguished in which agreement on a certain aspect or part is reached and accepted as basis for the next round" (Kørnøv and Thissen, 2000:8). The individual decisions in each round should not be regarded as sequential, because the *de facto* sequence can vary between different CS processes. Since this case study is concerned with Sida's participation in the CS process, only those decisions which Sida may influence have been included here.

TABLE 5.1: IDENTIFICATION OF ENVIRONMENTALLY RELEVANT DECISIONS AND DECISION WINDOWSTABLE

Round	Decisions and possible inputs and tools	Decision Windows (DW)
1. Context – Outcome of initial meeting	1. Mechanisms for regular country information input to Sida ▪ Tools: Sida guidelines, professional judgement	<u>DW Background/content</u> <u>DW Specifying issue</u> <u>DW Objectives</u>
	2. Project Group composition ▪ Inputs: Past cooperation work, new ideas ▪ Tool: Professional judgement	
	3. Possible Reference Group and composition of such ▪ Inputs: Past cooperation work, new ideas ▪ Tool: Professional judgement	
	4. Distribution of tasks and responsibilities between Sida and Embassy	
	5. Preliminary development areas and forms that will be focussed upon ▪ Inputs: Evaluations, semi-annual reports, political considerations, country developments ▪ Tools: Report reviews, professional judgement, country dialogue, field work	
	6. Preliminary scope of cooperation ▪ Inputs: Evaluations, semi-annual reports, political considerations, country developments ▪ Tools: Report reviews, professional judgement	
	7. Time-frame for CS process ▪ Tool: Professional judgement	
2. Outcome of initial meeting – Hypothesis paper	8. Preliminary Country Analysis (CA)	<u>DW Information</u> <u>DW Analysis</u>
	a) Whom to involve ▪ Inputs: Past cooperation work, new ideas ▪ Tool: Professional judgement	

Round	Decisions and possible inputs and tools	Decision Windows (DW)
	<p>b) Source selection</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Inputs: Previous reports ▪ Tools: Professional judgement, literature review, country dialogue 	
	<p>c) What to focus on</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Inputs: Evaluations, semi-annual reports, political considerations, country developments ▪ Tools: Report reviews, professional judgement, country dialogue, field work 	
	<p>d) Possible integration of results from sector analyses and SEAN (see below) and final edit of draft</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Inputs: Sector analyses and SEAN, draft CA document ▪ Tools: Report reviews, professional judgement 	
	<p>9. Results Analysis (RA)</p>	
	<p>a) Whom to involve</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Input: Past cooperation work ▪ Tool: Professional judgement 	
	<p>b) Evaluation methods</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Tools: Guidelines, professional judgement 	
	<p>c) Possible integration of results from sector analyses and SEAN (see below) and final edit of draft</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Inputs: Sector analyses and SEAN, draft RA document ▪ Tools: Report reviews, professional judgement 	
	<p>10. Identification of need for and commissioning of various sector reports, to feed into CA, RA and CS</p>	
	<p>a) Identification of need</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Inputs: Choice of preliminary development areas, evaluations, semi-annual reports, political considerations, country developments ▪ Tools: Guidelines, professional judgement 	
	<p>b) Whom to involve (internal or external)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Inputs: Existence and availability of in-house expertise ▪ Tool: Professional judgement 	
	<p>c) What to focus on</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Inputs: Evaluations, semi-annual reports, political considerations, country developments ▪ Tools: Report reviews, field research, professional judgement 	
	<p>d) When to submit (if external)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Input: Time-frame for CS process ▪ Tool: Professional judgement 	
	<p>11. Strategic Environmental Analysis, to feed into CA, RA and CS</p>	
	<p>a) Identification of need (it is mandatory, but interviews suggested it is not always done)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Inputs: Choice of preliminary development areas, evaluations, semi-annual reports, political considerations, country developments ▪ Tools: Guidelines, professional judgement 	
	<p>b) Whom to involve (internal or external)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Inputs: Existence and availability of in-house expertise ▪ Tool: Professional judgement 	
	<p>c) What areas to focus on</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Inputs: Evaluations, semi-annual reports, political considerations, country developments ▪ Tools: Report reviews, field research, professional judgement 	
	<p>i) Whether and how to analyse only environment sector or all sectors of cooperation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Inputs: Evaluations and reports ▪ Tools: SEAN guidelines, professional judgement, report review, field research 	
	<p>ii) Whether and how to analyse previous activities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Inputs: Evaluations and reports ▪ Tools: SEAN guidelines, professional judgement, report review, field research 	

Round	Decisions and possible inputs and tools	Decision Windows (DW)
	iii) Whether and how to analyse suggested cooperation areas and forms <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Inputs: Preliminary cooperation areas and forms ▪ Tools: SEAN guidelines, professional judgement, literature review, field research d) Scope and level of detail <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Input: Identified need of SEAN ▪ Tool: Professional judgement e) When to submit (if external) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Input: Time-frame for CS process ▪ Tool: Professional judgement 12. Whether and how to involve Swedish stakeholders, and whom <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Inputs: Past involvement of stakeholders, new ideas ▪ Tools: Guidelines, professional judgement 13. Whether and how to conduct country dialogue, and with whom <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Inputs: Past form of dialogue, new ideas ▪ Tools: Guidelines, professional judgement 14. How to write up hypothesis <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Inputs: Results from CA, RA, sector analyses and SEAN, discussions ▪ Tools: Guidelines regarding contents structure, professional judgement 	
3. MFA assignment – Sida draft	<i>Continued work and incorporation of possible changes. See decisions 8-14.</i> 15. Drafting of Country Strategy <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Whom to involve <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Inputs: Project Group composition ▪ Tools: Guidelines, professional judgement b) What to focus on and how to incorporate recommendations made in sector analyses and SEAN <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Inputs: Results from CA, RA, sector analyses and SEAN, discussions ▪ Tools: Guidelines regarding contents structure, professional judgement c) Possible final edit of draft <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Tool: Professional judgement 	<i>Possibly reconsideration of:</i> DW Specifying issue DW Objectives DW Information DW Analysis
4. Sida draft – Modified draft	16. Suggestion of changes by General Director <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Inputs: CA, RA and draft CS, other considerations ▪ Tool: Professional judgement 17. How to incorporate MFA's suggested changes <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Inputs: Suggested changes ▪ Tool: Professional judgement 	<i>Possibly reconsideration of:</i> DW Analysis
5. Modified draft – Final CS	18. General Director adopts the CS proposal <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Input: CS proposal ▪ Tool: Professional judgement 	

As for key decisions, it appears that the decisions of the first stage determine much of the subsequent work. The preliminary identified development areas and forms to some extent govern what the various analyses will focus on, and this may cause an exclusion of possible areas and forms discovered later in the process. From an environmental perspective, all decisions regarding the SEAN are of course of key importance. Integrating information becomes an important element when there is no formal or distinct stage at which options are developed and evaluated. Therefore, the decisions on how to integrate certain information are

pivotal, since it can be argued that they reflect some implicit options consideration (see Table: decisions 10c, 11c, 14 and 15b).

Appropriate timing is also a precondition for a DMP that relies on effective information integration rather than formal consideration of options. However, as can be seen in the second and fourth rounds, relatively much work is done without a prescribed sequence. Especially the timing of support analyses and studies, including the SEAN, can be difficult. It may be desired for them to be focused on the issues identified for the new CS, but still not be made too late for them to be able to cause fundamental changes to the proposed CS. It can be argued that this lack of a prescribed sequence requires the Project Group to have constantly good insight into all analyses undertaken and be familiar with their contents throughout the process. A last comment regarding the CS DMP is that it is clearly intended to give rise to a consensus at an early stage. The actual decisions regarding adoption of the proposal, can perhaps be seen more as confirmations of the many decisions that have been taken up until this point.

6 APPLYING THE ANSEA CONCEPTS

6.1 IDENTIFICATION OF DECISION WINDOWS

Decision Windows (DWs) are defined as “moments in the decision-making process that are critical to the direct or indirect environmental outcome of a decision” (ANSEA, 2001a). Clearly, this definition leaves the choice open as to with what level of detail Decision Windows should be identified. It is left unsaid whether ‘moments’ refer to decisions at the most detailed scale, for example choice of terminology in an environmental report, or whether they can refer to the more formal and larger-scale decisions, perhaps even to the outcome of a whole stage in the decision-making process. In the context of this case study, all decisions with environmental relevance that were identified in the previous chapter could be classified as DWs. Indeed, the identified decisions could probably be broken up into many more decisions. However, depending on the purpose of the ANSEA and under what conditions it is conducted, it may be necessary to rank the DWs or generalise a group of DWs to an overall DW. The latter approach was chosen here, in order to be able to make a general assessment of the whole decision-making process rather than a detailed and more lengthy one.

Each stage, or round, in the DMP was looked at and examined for the presence of a DW. The identification criterion was that the moment should be associated with an environmental dimension. In ANSEA, environmental dimension is defined as the direct or indirect environmental implications of a DW. The general DWs identified were then classified according to the typology of DWs provided in the ANSEA Update document (ANSEA, 2001b). The added-value of classifying DWs in this case study is doubtful. However, the typology was an aid in the identification process, in that it suggested at what DMP stages important DWs typically exist. Perhaps more importantly, it also helped in identifying which typical DWs did not exist in the case study DMP.

The following types were found: DW Background/context, DW Specifying the issue, DW Objectives, DW Information and DW Analysis. The other three decision windows in the suggested typology are less relevant to the CS process. ‘DW Deliberation/negotiation’ with external actors occurs through continuous dialogue with the recipient country and through a meeting with Swedish ‘interested parties’ towards the end of the process when the CS is drafted. Informal discussions are also held continuously within Sida. However, as a DW it is difficult to pin down and deliberation/negotiation involving external actors is instead considered in terms of applying a consultation criterion to the identified DWs (see below). ‘Options/alternatives’ are not defined and evaluated formally enough in the CS process to allow for assessment here, and therefore such a DW cannot be identified. The lack of such a DW should be considered as a flaw of the CS process. Finally, ‘DW Implementation’ is outside the decisional boundaries of this case study.

The result of the identification is presented in table 4.2 (third column). For practical reasons, the identified DWs are justified and described in terms of environmental dimension, actors and stakeholders, and procedure in section 5.3, along with the assessment of DWs. Please note that only the underlined DWs in the table are examined more closely. These DWs are deemed to be the most significant ones in the process. It is assumed that although they are likely to

occur in an iterative way, their first occurrence is normally the most important one and the assessment comments made are likely to be relevant also for 'repeated' DWs.

6.2 THE ANSEA PROCEDURAL CRITERIA

Procedural criteria in the ANSEA framework are defined as “prescriptions for how decisions should be taken. They are based on principles of good environmental decision-making and provide a basis for assessing the quality of the process in a particular decision window (DW). They can be used *ex ante* as prescriptions, or *ex post* as evaluation criteria”. The five principles that are translated into concrete procedural criteria are briefly summarised below.

Comprehensiveness – if the DMP is comprehensively conducted, all relevant environmental considerations are made.

Timeliness – relates to receiving critical information inputs and producing outputs in time, as well as allocating sufficient time for various tasks and decisions.

Transparency – improves the opportunities for both internal and external parties to promote or ensure incorporation of environmental values, through clarification of what basis decisions are made upon and by whom.

Consultation – consultation with stakeholder groups, environmental experts and the general public can make decisions more well-informed and potentially more socially acceptable.

Consistency – alternatives considered in a decision should be so on an equal basis, in order to avoid bias against the more environmental-friendly alternatives.

Because the DWs are described in terms of Input, Analysis/Deliberation and Output (IAO), the reference list of procedural criteria where these principles are adapted to the IAO framework is used.

6.3 ASSESSMENT OF THE DECISION WINDOWS

The DMP stages and the decision moments most pivotal in environmental terms were described in section 4. This description provided the basis for the identification of general DWs. Below the procedures in each DW are compared against the set of Procedural Criteria, in order to see how consideration of the environment in the CS DMP might be improved. This trial assessment is a combination of an *ex ante* and an *ex post* approach. The main purpose is to assess the general system set up for the CS DMP and make prescriptive comments, but the assessment is also based on the findings in the four case study CS processes.

For some DWs, not all principles are deemed relevant or not relevant in all IAO categories. Such situations are marked by 'N/A'. The aim of the assessment is to focus on the most important procedural criteria and to make proactive recommendations in relation to these.

6.3.1 Decision Window of Background/context

This DW is relatively indirect to identify and continuous in nature. It refers to the decisions on what background material to develop and consider for upcoming CS processes. Often these decisions may not be made with only the CS process in mind, but also for other purposes. To a large extent, the outcome of this DW is determined by the general guidelines and procedures Sida have for reporting mechanisms, monitoring and evaluation of strategies and projects, and information management. Thus, it may be more difficult for the decision-makers in a specific CS case to influence the outcome. Although this DW is to a large part outside the scope of this case study, some procedural recommendations will still be made.

DW # 1 – Background/context		
Environmental dimension	Depending on how much and what type of environmentally relevant information is present at this earliest stage in the DMP, the premises and priorities for the DMP, in terms of process design (including or excluding some kind of environmental assessment) and objectives (including or excluding environmental objectives), may be differently set.	
Actors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Sida is responsible for its system of evaluations and information management. ▪ General and close co-operation with the embassies and the Ministry for Foreign Affairs suggests they can make direct and indirect contributions to this DW. ▪ Contacts with recipient country representatives and Swedish interested parties may contribute to the continuous understanding of the situation. 	
Input	Analysis/Deliberation	Output
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Issues emerging from past CS and cooperation - Country dialogue - Formal reporting, eg project evaluations, mid-term reviews - External events (outside Sida's sphere of activity) 	Professional judgement: writing reports, discussions, etc.	More or less commonly shared understanding of the development situation in the country and Sida's role and activities
PROCEDURAL CRITERIA		
Comprehensiveness		
Consider how general information collection can be improved, as a long-term and overall Sida initiative.	Use an integrated approach (ec, env, pol, soc, tech) when managing information, in order to avoid sectorisation of interdependent issues.	Although the natural focus is on sectors/activities that Sida is involved in, arrange for environmental issues to be considered continuously, e.g. assign responsibility to one person.
Timeliness		
N/A	N/A	N/A Because this DW is continuous in nature, it is not relevant to assess timeliness.
Transparency		
N/A	N/A	Much of the background information is publicly available, while more politically sensitive information may not be. However, background studies and reports could be referred to in the CS documents in order to clarify how priorities were set.
Consultation		

N/A	Sida has constant contacts with various stakeholders, but their influence in the build-up of a new CS process is unclear. Consider more formal consultation at this early stage, before the issue is specified.	N/A
Consistency		
Sida relies on its own information sources to a large extent, which may increase the risk of bias but may also contribute to efficiency and appropriate focus.	N/A	N/A

Overall, this Decision Window is difficult to assess due to its continuous and implicit nature. Clearly, there is a trade-off between increased background information and resource efficiency. Regarding transparency, it is difficult to imagine how it could be improved in a useful way. Generally, Sida performs satisfactory in relation to all decision-making principles, except for perhaps comprehensiveness. Because the background reports relate to a large extent to ongoing Sida activities, there is a risk for giving insufficient attention to issues within areas that Sida is not active in. Perhaps Sida also relies too much on its own channels for information and thereby exclude other sources from consideration.

6.3.2 Decision Window of Specifying issue

While the previous Decision Window spans a long period, the initial specification of the issue and formulation of the objectives occur relatively quickly and almost simultaneously. In this second general DW in the CS process it is basically decided ‘what to decide’. However, formally the specification of issues does not occur until the MFA gives the detailed assignment to Sida, halfway into the process. The understandings formed during the previous DW are compared and discussed in order to get a more unified understanding of the development situation in the country and the general role Sida.

DW # 2 – Specifying the issue		
Environmental dimension	If the main development problems and opportunities in the country in question are (partly) understood in terms of the environment and if they are related to environmental opportunities and constraints, there is a greater chance that later studies and the final CS proposal will focus on or consider environmental impacts.	
Actors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Ministry for Foreign Affairs is responsible for arranging a start meeting, in which Sida representatives participate. ▪ Embassy staff contribute. ▪ A Sida Project Group is appointed, which may elaborate the issue specification. 	
Input	Analysis/Deliberation	Output
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The formal government assignment to prepare CS proposal. - The understanding gained in DW Background/context. - MFA political considerations. 	Professional judgement: discussion in initial meeting and in early Project Group meetings.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Common understanding of the development problems and opportunities (this acts as a basis for what to focus on in the Country Analysis).
PROCEDURAL CRITERIA		

Comprehensiveness		
Comprehensive inputs depend on the Decision Window of Background/context.	N/A	Ensure that the environment as an issue and/or as an aspect of other issues is part of the understanding.
Timeliness		
Ensure that the initiation of the CS process is well planned in advance. Due to the regularity of the CS process, this should be no problem.	Consider whether more time is needed for initial discussions and deliberation, since the outcome generally influences the rest of the process to a large extent, eg what studies to make and what Sida activities to propose.	While this stage must necessarily take place early to guide the process, there is also the risk that it may be difficult to depart from the agreed specification and objectives as new information enter the CS process.
Transparency		
See DW Background/context.	Consider how to document discussions and underlying assumptions.	Consider how to make the understanding of the development situation public, directly after it has been reached, e.g. web publication, web newsletter.
Consultation		
Consider how to get information from stakeholders and experts more actively.	Consider how to involve stakeholders and experts more actively.	By increasing transparency (see above), stakeholders and experts can give more feedback.
Consistency		
Consider how to deal with potential bias towards traditional Swedish understanding of the country's development, if such a bias is negative for the environmental profile of the CS.	N/A	N/A

The main procedural issue that may have environmental implications in this Decision Window is the lack of accountability and transparency. Explicit justification for how the environment is addressed (or not) would facilitate subsequent discussion of environmental aspects of proposed activities and how they are weighed against other aspects. There could also be clearer guidelines regarding consultation. In the sample CS processes reviewed, the problem of striking a balance between specifying the issue and allowing for changes later on was highlighted. It is important that this timing issue is considered and discussed in this Decision Window.

6.3.3 Decision Window of Objectives

This DW is intimately linked to the previous one, and the output of this DW is strongly dependent on the previous output. Depending on how the decision issue is specified, the objectives may seem more or less straightforward and self-evident. For this reason, many of the procedural criteria are the same. Some other comments can be made about this DW. First, the objectives are to a large extent the 'contents' of a CS, and therefore they have a different function here than in other DMPs. Second, formal objectives are not set until MFA details the assignment. However, since the preliminary objectives seem to determine so much of the work preceding this assignment, the first occurrence of this DW may be the most important one.

DW # 3 – Objectives		
Environmental dimension	If environmental and natural resource protection is part of the preliminary objectives of the CS, either as an objective in its own right or as a significant component of another type of objective, there is a greater chance that the CS outcome will stimulate a more positive/less negative environmental impact.	
Actors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Ministry for Foreign Affairs is responsible for arranging a start meeting, in which Sida representatives participate. ▪ Embassy staff contribute. ▪ A Sida Project Group is appointed, which may elaborate the issue specification. 	
Input	Analysis/Deliberation	Output
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The formal government assignment to prepare CS proposal. - The understanding gained in DW Background/context. - MFA political considerations. - The understanding of the issue (output of DW Specifying the issue). 	Professional judgement: discussion in initial meeting and in early Project Group meetings.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Preliminary development areas and forms to focus on - Preliminary scope of cooperation - Time-frame for CS process - Distribution of tasks between Sida and embassy - Project Group composition - Possible Reference Group and its composition
PROCEDURAL CRITERIA		
Comprehensiveness		
Comprehensive inputs depend on the Decision Window of Background/context.	N/A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ensure that the environment as an issue and/or as an aspect of other issues is part of the objectives. - Consider whether to have environmental experts in the Project Group.
Timeliness		
N/A	Consider whether more time is needed for initial discussions and deliberation, since the outcome generally influences the rest of the process to a large extent, eg what studies to make and what Sida activities to propose.	While this stage must necessarily take place early to guide the process, there is also the risk that it may be difficult to depart from the agreed specification and objectives as new information enter the CS process
Transparency		
See DW Background/context.	Consider how to document discussions and underlying assumptions.	Consider how to make the choice of preliminary development areas and scope public, directly after it has been reached, e.g. web publication, web newsletter. The same could be made for the Project Group composition.
Consultation		
Consider how to get information from stakeholders and experts more actively.	Consider how to involve stakeholders and experts more actively.	By increasing transparency (see above), stakeholders and experts can give more feedback.
Consistency		
Consider how to deal with potential bias towards traditional Swedish activities in the country's development, if such a bias is negative for the environmental profile if the CS.	N/A	N/A

Again, timeliness is an important procedural issue at this stage, since the outcome is crucial to the rest of the CS process. More extensive and formalised consultation at this early stage could also potentially provide better information and better incorporation of environmental values.

6.3.4 Decision Window of Information

In round two of the CS process (see table 4.2) some direct decisions regarding what information to collect and use are made, e.g. what sources to use for the CA and SEAN and whether and how to integrate information from the SEAN into the CA, RA and hypothesis paper. There may also be decisions of an indirect character, e.g. whom to involve and will this individual tend to collect and use environment-related information. This DW mainly occurs in the second round of the CS process, but it may be relevant later on if objectives are changed and new information is required of if studies and analyses are submitted late.

DW # 4 – Information		
Environmental dimension	If more environmental information sources are used, there is a greater chance of getting CS outcomes that stimulate positive environmental impact. If a SEAN is done, there is a greater chance of getting CS outcomes that stimulate positive environmental impact.	
Actors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Sida Project Group and embassy ▪ Possibly influence from external consultants 	
Input	Analysis/Deliberation	Output
- Outputs of DW Specifying the issue and Objectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Sida guidelines - Professional judgement 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Country Analysis: whom to involve, sources, focus areas - Results Analysis: whom to involve, methods - Possibly sector reports: whom to involve, focus areas, when to submit - Possibly SEAN: whom to involve, focus areas, scope and detail, when to submit. (The need for sector reports and a SEAN is in practice identified on a case-by-case basis, although SEAN is prescribed as obligatory.) - Swedish stakeholder involvement: whether and how - Country dialogue: whether and how
PROCEDURAL CRITERIA		
Comprehensiveness		
N/A (should be addressed in previous DWs)	Consider how information can be collected in an integrated way, i.e. to understand linkages between environment, economy, society, politics and technology.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ensure that a SEAN is always done, establish appropriate focus areas and scope. - Ensure that environmental issues are to be addressed in the CA, RA and any sector reports. Consider whether to involve staff with environmental competence in these. - Ensure that environmental issues are to be addressed in stakeholder meetings and in country dialogue.

Timeliness		
N/A	Consider whether the existing information base is sufficient to decide on what new studies may be needed.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ensure that there will be sufficient time for a SEAN and that it will be submitted at a stage when it can still influence the CS, ideally before the hypothesis. - Ensure that there will be sufficient time for other reports with environmental components.
Transparency		
See outputs of DWs Specifying the issue and Objectives.	Consider how to document the motivations behind decisions concerning studies and SEAN.	Consider how to document these decisions and how to make them publicly available, e.g. web publication.
Consultation		
See inputs and analysis of DWs Specifying the issue and Objectives.	Consider how to get inputs and advice on what studies to undertake.	By increasing transparency (see above), stakeholders and experts can give more feedback.
Consistency		
N/A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Consider how ad hoc decisions can be avoided with regards to needed studies. - Consider whether the persons undertaking studies may be biased for a more/less environmental-friendly CS. 	If the environment is established as an objective in the previous DW, ensure it is addressed in the studies.

A serious issue that emerged from the sample CS processes reviewed was in appropriate timing of information inputs, especially environment-related information. This can to some extent be attributed to practical problems, but more planning of and concern with the information flow could surely improve the current practice. It is imperative that timing of the SEAN is addressed at this early stage. There is also a problem of maintaining transparency in deciding on information sources. A relatively easy step towards improving this would be to include a list of information sources along with short justification in the final CS, and perhaps also include a timeline of the process and information inputs. While it emerged that Sida does not actively oppose consultation and participation throughout much of the CS process, more could be done to encourage stakeholder involvement, e.g. informing the public when particular CS process are started and invite comments on the Sida website.

6.3.5 Decision Window of Analysis

This DW is about integrating all information collected and analysing it, by drawing some conclusions for the CS draft. It is possibly the most difficult to pin down at particular moments. In Sida, analysis is made continuously as information is collected, discussions held (internally and externally) and in drafting and editing the CA, RA and CS proposal. The various analysis modes range from formal and explicit, e.g. in the Results Analysis, to more informal and implicit, e.g. how to combine the findings from various analyses into an overall picture. Again, this DW may reappear later in the process when drafting a CS proposal.

DW # 5 – Analysis		
Environmental dimension	If the findings from the studies addressing the environment, including the SEAN, are properly integrated in the final CS documents (CS, CA, RA), there is a greater chance that the projects emerging from a CS stimulate positive environmental impact.	
Actors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sida Project Group, especially persons responsible for drafting • A meeting is held for Swedish interested parties. 	
Input	Analysis/Deliberation	Output
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Preliminary objectives - SEAN - Poss. sector studies - Other material 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Professional judgement: discussions and writing draft - Interested parties meeting 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - CS draft - CA draft - RA draft
PROCEDURAL CRITERIA		
Comprehensiveness		
See DW Information.	Consider how information can be collected in an integrated way, i.e. to understand linkages between environment, economy, society, politics and technology.	Ensure that the environment is addressed in the CA, RA and CS drafts. If it is not one of the priority areas, include a short explanation why this is so.
Timeliness		
Ensure that the SEAN and other studies concerned with environmental issues have been submitted and carefully read before drafting the CA, RA and CS documents. If this is not possible for some reason, ensure that verbal communication between the writer and the drafter is working well.	Ensure that there is sufficient time to contemplate and find linkages between various development issues.	Ensure that drafts are not circulated too late for response and feedback to be incorporated.
Transparency		
Ensure that there is transparency regarding what input information is used, for example by including a list of sources and studies in the draft CS.	Consider how to document the reasoning behind the inclusion/exclusion of issues in the draft CA, RA and CS.	Consider how to make the drafts publicly accessible directly after completion, e.g. through web publication.
Consultation		
Ensure that feedback on the SEAN and other studies can enter into the analysis.	Consider whether to arrange the interested parties meeting before writing the drafts or after. Ensure that this decision is followed through and that a broad range of parties are invited. (A dilemma exists in whether Sida's analysis should be far developed so that discussion can be facilitated, or if participation should occur earlier but with less analysis for the participants to react against.)	If the interested parties meeting is held after the drafts have been produced, ensure that comments and suggestions made are incorporated.
Consistency		
Consider whether the information inputs are biased against more environment-friendly alternatives for the CS.	Consider whether the same criteria and objectives are applied when discussing different CS options, e.g. the Sida action programmes.	If the environment is established as an objective in DW Objectives, ensure it is addressed in the CS draft.

This Decision Window is very dependent on how decisions in the previous windows were made. It is also critical in that it may not be until now that the multitude of considerations,

perhaps conflicting ones, must be integrated into a coherent analysis and strategy. Comprehensiveness is to a large extent dependent on the previous Decision Window. Consultation is most explicitly addressed in this Decision Window, but whether it is satisfactory conducted can vary greatly between different cases. As with the previous Decision Window, timeliness and transparency emerge as the procedural issues not satisfactory approached. While it may be difficult for inherent reasons to radically change the procedures, some easy improvements can be made, e.g. providing a list of inputs and when in the course of the process key decisions were made.

6.4 COMMENTS ON THE ASSESSMENT

The recommendations made above regarding the procedure of preparing a CS proposal can act as a checklist for the CS process coordinators. However, it would be naïve to think that they could all be picked up immediately. One obvious trade-off, that needs to be addressed by the decision-makers, is that between comprehensiveness and timeliness. Time is often the critical resource needed when increasing the comprehensiveness of an information base. On the other hand, delays and late compilation of reports may have negative consequences for further information collection and discussion later in the DMP. Another important trade-off in the CS process environment may be that between increasing transparency and maintaining timeliness and efficiency. Documentation will take time, and it has to be asked whether the value of transparency matches this time cost. Hopefully, this could be solved rather easily by for example publishing minutes from meetings and reports on the web. In a similar way, increased consultation is also likely to take more time.

These examples of potential trade-offs show that incorporation of procedural recommendations into the CS process is by no means a straightforward task. This type of initial assessment is only the first step, and it should be discussed with the responsible decision-makers, in order to find priorities and decide how to deal with trade-offs.

7 CONCLUSION

7.1 CONCLUSIONS ABOUT ANSEA

This case study attempted to test the ANSEA concepts on a decision-making process characterised by standardised and routine procedures, a high level of abstraction and proposals including multiple sectors. Several benefits of applying an ANSEA approach emerge. Most importantly, it brings the DMP perspective as an addition to conventional environmental assessment and it elucidates the question whether the DMP context facilitates for integration of environmental assessment or not. This feature must be considered as useful for DMPs at all levels. In this case study, the sequence of decisions clarified by the use of ANSEA tools appears as a particularly important factor. It was seen that key decisions are often made early and this will partly determine the amount of influence the SEAN can potentially have. A conventional SEA approach focus on the final approval decision and in this way neglects the perhaps even more significant early and ‘implicit’ decisions. However, a conceptual challenge when applying ANSEA at more abstract DMP levels may be that the environmental implications of particular decisions are less direct and more difficult to identify. For example,

it may be relatively easy to identify a potential environmental impact arising from a decision to use a cost benefit analysis with a low value for an environmental resource such as biodiversity rather than a higher value. In DMPs at abstract levels, there may be less such concrete examples. However, an ANSEA only indicating potential direction of environmental impact (positive or negative) can of course be equally as valuable.

Another advantage is the holistic view on the environmental assessment component in the DMP. Conventionally, the SEA or EIA is often seen as the exclusive mode for integrating environmental aspects. In this study, it was revealed that other channels exist, e.g. ‘non-environmental’ analyses and discussions. Such channels must be recognised in order to determine the overall effect of environmental integration on the final decision outcome.

Using the ANSEA concepts can greatly enhance transparency and accountability. By carefully mapping the DMP and considering both explicit and implicit decisions, external actors are informed when they should try to influence the decision-making and who is responsible for the outcomes of this decision moment. Understanding the DMP is also useful for the decision-making organisation internally; better planning and timing of inputs and appropriate appointment of responsible staff can be made.

Lastly, a strong advantage of ANSEA appears to be the ease with which ‘environmental values’ could be replaced or complemented by other types of values, for example ‘social values’ and ‘gender equity values’. The ANSEA concepts of Decision Window and Procedural Criteria seem easily adaptable for such changes.

If substantive criteria, in addition to procedural criteria, will be proposed within the ANSEA framework, there may be difficulties in applying them to DMPs encompassing many and varied sectors, such as Sida’s CS process. Because proposed activities are not extensively specified, potential impacts may be difficult to identify and to measure against a set of substantive criteria. Because many sectors are considered simultaneously in the various Decision Windows, detailed comparison of the activities with criteria may be very time-consuming and complex.

A specific issue was also raised during the identification of Decision Windows. The level of ambition with the ANSEA will strongly influence this stage. It should be emphasised that in this case study a generalising approach was adopted, rather than consideration of each Decision Window at a more detailed scale (see discussion in section 5.1). This demonstrates that the concept is flexible and allows for different types of assessments (internal/external, formal/informal, general/precise).

A last note to make regarding the ANSEA methodology is that the concepts were modified during the course of this case study. Therefore, there may be some overlap between the DMP description and the identification and assessment of decision windows. However, it should be easy to avoid such problems when using the final version of the ANSEA methodology.

The case study also raised some relevant questions outside the realm of ANSEA. The balance between taking key decisions early in order to focus the rest of the process and allowing new information input to alter the main directions was highlighted. Whereas ANSEA can help expose how this balance was struck in individual cases, this is clearly a value judgement that has to be made by the actors involved. The issue of political sensitivity was also raised in terms of foreign policy considerations in the CS process. How much clarity and rationality can we expect from DMPs at more political levels (as opposed to more operational levels)? While

ANSEA can help describe where and when value judgments are made, it does not and should not dictate the actual values. Being interested in environmental values particularly, ANSEA users must also recognise the existence of and possible trade-offs with other values such as political stability and economic development. Finally, it was emphasised from Sida that there is a purpose with CS process in itself and not only with the outcome. This serves as a warning against adopting a too functional perspective of the DMP and being concerned with the document outcomes only.

7.2 RECOMMENDATIONS TO SIDA

Based on the ANSEA assessment, some recommendations can be made concerning Sida's practice. It should be acknowledged that Sida has been internationally recognised for being proactive with environmental issues. Furthermore, the limitations inherent to the CS setting must also be recognised: the high level of abstraction, the limited potential of the CS to affect the ultimate course of development in a country, and the potential existence of political agendas external to Sida's control. Thus, Sida's choices in the CS process are constrained.

While a fundamental change of the CS process is unlikely to be useful, some minor revisions could be made. Firstly, Sida could easily improve transparency and accountability by documenting various Decision Windows in the process better. Information sources and a brief description of how the process was conducted could be included in the final CS document. The timing of inputs to the process could also be better planned, especially by not letting the SEAN enter at a late stage. While it has been argued that consideration of alternatives in the CS process is understandably difficult, the whole issue of alternatives could be addressed more in the various documents in order to convey any informal discussion of alternatives taking place within Sida. Thirdly, it could be suggested that Sida should consider the relative merits of continuous integration of environmental issues (especially through the SEAN) as opposed to a more formalised system in which it is guaranteed that the environmental issues are presented at a distinct stage in the process. While the former method is probably more effective, mechanisms are needed which ensure that it is pursued and realised in all cases.

It was argued above that applying substantive criteria to a DMP such as the CS process may be difficult. However, this does not preclude addressing the issue in a more explicit way. Sida could make more explicit what set of substantive environmental criteria or objectives is employed, e.g. the recipient country's national sustainable development strategy (if such exists) and/or Sweden's 15 national environmental quality objectives (see MoE, 1998). Furthermore, Sida could make more use of or refer more to its own resources, e.g. back up general considerations on the publications detailing the relationship between the environment and other development issues and use the sectoral checklists (adding one on public finance support) in the environmental impact assessment guidelines (Sida, 1998f).

8 ABBREVIATIONS

AusAID	Australian Agency for International Development
CA	Country Analysis
CS	Country Strategies
DFID	Department for International Development
DMP	Decision-Making Process
EIA	Environmental Impact Assessment
IAO	Input, Analysis, Output
MFA	Swedish Ministry for Foreign Affairs
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
PPP	Policies, plans and programmes
RA	Results Analysis
RS	Regional Strategy
SEAN	Strategic Environmental Analysis
Sida	Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency

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10 APPENDIX 1. LIST OF INTERVIEWEES

Mr Jan Essner, Department for Asia – Sida coordinator of the China CS

Mr Karl Hallding, external consultant – author of Strategic Environmental Analysis for the China CS

Ms Annika Lysén, Department for Africa – Sida coordinator of the Tanzania CS

Mr Tomas Andersson, Swedish Embassy in Tanzania – author of Strategic Environmental Analysis for the Tanzania CS

Ms Ina Eriksson, Department for Latin America – Sida coordinator of the Central America & the Caribbean RS

Ms Ulla Andréen, Department for Natural Resources and Environment – participant in the Western Balkans strategies

Mr Mats Segnestam, Head of Environmental Policy Division, Department for Natural Resources and Environment