



2006 • (DESO) GENDER SECRETARIAT

Action plan for Sida's work on sexual orientation and gender identity in international development cooperation 2007–2009

Sida's work on Lesbian,
Gay, Bisexual and Transgender
issues in international
development cooperation



Published by Sida 2006

Department for Democracy and Social Development

Printed by Edita Communication AB, 2006

Articlenumber: SIDA30657en

This publication can be downloaded/ordered from www.sida.se/publications

Background and mandate

In the Letter of Appropriation for the budget year 2006, the Government stated: “By 1 September 2006, Sida shall submit an action plan for the follow up of the study carried out in 2005 on Swedish policy and administration of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT)¹ issues in international development cooperation. Sida shall explain how work on sexual orientation and LGBT issues will be concretized in development cooperation.”

In December 2003, the Swedish policy for global development based on the Government’s proposals in the bill “Shared responsibility – Sweden’s policy for global development” (PGD)² was adopted by the parliament. The policy states that “The rights perspective focuses on discriminated, excluded and marginalized individuals and groups. People must be able to enjoy their rights regardless of sex, age, disability, ethnic background and *sexual orientation*.” (PGD, p. 21, our italics). The parliament has further emphasized that “Sweden will continue to raise and take initiatives with respect to difficult and controversial issues. Experience shows that progress can be made if we take a long-term view and work together purposefully with like-minded nations and groups”(ibid., p. 15).

¹ The designation LGBT (lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender persons) is controversial in a non-western context, but Sida has chosen to use it in the absence of a more widely accepted alternative. Many people do not identify themselves as LGBT. Note also that Sida’s use of the term includes intersex persons.

² Government bill 2002/03:122, Parliamentary report 2003/04:UU3, circular 2004/05:4.

Sweden's international policy on Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights, (adopted by the Government in December 2005), lays the foundation for the work in which Sweden in various ways is engaged internationally. Among other areas for strategic actions, the policy specifically states that Sweden will increase its focus on lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender persons. Sweden will *inter alia* contribute to increase the level of knowledge and competence concerning sexual orientation and gender identities in its international work, and will also continue to draw attention to and ensure that discrimination against LGBT persons is recognized as constituting violations of the full enjoyment of human rights (SRHR Policy, p. 16–17). In 70 countries, many of which are Sida's partner countries, sexual relations between persons of the same sex is illegal. Sweden will work for further decriminalisation of same sex relations, and for the introduction of protective measures against discrimination on grounds of sexual orientation (ibid., p. 25).

The perspectives of poor people are highly relevant to LGBT persons, as there is a strong correlation between marginalisation and poverty. The study "Sexual Orientation, Gender Identity and Development"³ finds that in most parts of the world LGBT persons are subject to "cultural and legal injustice", leading in turn to "economic injustice". As a result of being marginalised and socially excluded, and as a consequence of the stigma that is culturally imposed, LGBT persons are prevented from participating in society on equal terms, for example by having limited opportunities to for earning a livelihood and providing for themselves. This has led to a situation of widespread poverty among LGBT persons in many countries. One of the conclusions of the study is that LGBT issues should continue to be treated as a human rights issue, and to form part of the discourse on gender, gender equality and social justice. In order to achieve this, it is necessary to ensure higher capacity and to increase competence on

³ A study of Swedish policy on and administration of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender issues in international development cooperation; Samelius and Wågberg, November 2005.

the part of decision-makers and public officials. It must be recognized also that civil society has an important role to play in this process.

With the mandate to highlight and concretize the rights of LGBT persons, and the importance of these issues in reducing poverty, Sida hereby submits the present action plan on how Sweden can contribute to better living conditions for LGBT persons in Sida's partner countries.

Organisation and division of responsibilities

Overall responsibility for implementation of the action plan rests with the Department's for Democracy and Social Development (DESO's) head of department, and otherwise with each head of department, head of division and development cooperation counsellor are responsible for their respective levels and substantive areas of work. The work to implement the plan will be followed up and monitored at the ordinary meeting of DESO's Management Group held in October every year.

The head of DESO's thematic division (DESO/TEMA) is responsible for coordinating the work. A working group with the gender secretariat as coordinator and convenors has been established to follow implementation of the work. Sida's working group for LGBT issues comprises representatives of various departments within Sida⁴. The gender secretariat will prepare documents for and report to DESO's Management Group, and revise and update the action plan in accordance with the Management Group's decisions.

Purpose

The action plan follows up a study, carried out in autumn 2005⁵ on Swedish policy and administration of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender issues in international development cooperation. It shall present in concrete, operational terms how the work with LGBT issues can be integrated in Sweden's international development cooperation.

⁴ The following departments are represented: DESO/DESA – HÄLSO – TEMA (The Equality and HIV/AIDS Secretariats), SEKA/EO, EUROPA/SEE.

⁵ A study of Swedish policy on and administration of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender issues in international development cooperation; Samelius and Wågberg, November 2005.

In order to achieve this purpose, the action plan identifies eleven activities, sorted under two intermediate objectives, which shall promote the enabling conditions necessary for Sweden to contribute to an improvement in living conditions and opportunities for LGBT persons through implementation of development cooperation measures, in analyses and in various forms of policy dialogue.

Overall goal

The overall goal is to enable lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex persons to improve their living conditions in the countries where Sweden is engaged in development cooperation. This means that in those countries where Sweden systematically includes an LGBT perspective in the development cooperation, the rights and poverty situation for LGBT persons is expected to improve, both de jure and de facto, and thereby increasing their opportunities and ability to influence their own situation.

This goal is in line with the overall goal of Swedish international development cooperation, which is to help create conditions that will enable poor women, men, girls and boys to improve their quality of life. The work will be characterised by the consistent inclusion of poor people's perspectives on development, and a rights perspective.

Intermediate objective 1:

Measures in the field have led to improvements for LGBT persons as a result of Sida's work to include an LGBT perspective and LGBT issues in country and/or regional development cooperation strategies.

Indicator: LGBT relevant measures and dialogue on LGBT issues are being implemented in the partner countries.

- 1) *Activity:* Provision of appropriate and targeted guidance on how Sida can give attention to LGBT issues in development cooperation strategies so that at least one strategy per region and year includes explicit attention to LGBT issues, as well as support for implementation of these strategies.

Timetable: 2007–2009

Operational responsibility: Gender secretariat, regional HR/democracy and HIV/AIDS advisers.

- 2) *Activity:* Provide support for LGBT organisations and LGBT-relevant measures bilaterally or through Swedish NGOs and organisations in partner countries, at national, regional and global levels.

Timetable: 2007–2009

Operational responsibility: Development Cooperation Sections at Swedish Embassies, DESO, Division for Cooperation with Non-Governmental Organizations at the Department for Cooperation with Non-governmental Organizations, Humanitarian Assistance and Conflict Management (SEKA/EO).

- 3) *Activity:* Raise and incorporate LGBT issues in dialogue, lobbying and advocacy activities in the development cooperation strategies that include LGBT issues or where the focus is on a rights perspective, in order to explicitly include these issues in policy statements and commitments.

Timetable: 2007–2009

Operational responsibility: Development Cooperation Sections at the Embassies, regional HR/democracy and HIV/AIDS advisers.

- 4) *Activity:* Implement ITP training programmes⁶ on LGBT persons' and human rights.

Timetable: 2007–2009

Operational responsibility: ITP

- 5) *Activity:* Introduce Sida's Management Group, all heads of divisions and development cooperation counsellors to LGBT issues, human rights and LGBT measures with a particular bearing on country and/or regional cooperation strategies, using existing structures and mechanisms, e.g. the managers' forum.

⁶ ITP (International Training Programmes) are designed for participants from cooperation countries working within public authorities, the private sector or NGOs.

Timetable: 2007, for development cooperation counselors: in connection with consultations during visits to Stockholm 2007–2009.

Operational responsibility: Gender secretariat

- 6) *Activity:* Explicitly include LGBT issues in existing training sessions for Sida's staff and cooperation partners on HR, gender equality and hiv/aids, and in other relevant training. The regional HR/democracy and hiv/aids advisers in the field will receive special training to support the implementation of the cooperation strategies.

Timetable: 2007–2009

Operational responsibility: Course planners and leaders (DESO/DESA, Gender and HIV/AIDS Secretariats, SEKA/EO, SEKA/Härnösand)

Intermediate objective 2:

The foundations have been laid for more effective LGBT measures in the form of awareness-raising, competence-building and work to establish knowledge about LGBT-issues firmly within Sida.

Indicator: A qualitative assessment of experiences showing how LGBT issues have been given a higher profile within Sida and recommending a continued focus on the work.

- 1) *Activity:* Disseminate knowledge of the action plan and Sida's undertakings in an appropriate and time-effective manner.

Timetable: 2007–2009

Operational responsibility: Gender secretariat

- 2) *Activity:* Arrange a series of seminars in Stockholm, for staff, consultants, NGOs, the private sector, the research community and other authorities. Each seminar will highlight a national, regional or thematic aspect of LGBT issues.

Timetable: At least 3 lunch seminars per year, 2007–2009

Operational responsibility: Gender secretariat

- 3) *Activity:* Include LGBT issues in Sida's internal staff policy and, where relevant, in organisational policies which are being revised or developed during the period.

Timetable: 2007–2009

Operational responsibility: Department for Personnel and Organisational Development (PEO/HR), sector departments, Department for Policy and Methodology Development (POM)

- 4) *Activity:* Compile an inventory of all Swedish contributions within the LGBT area as a baseline study⁷.

Timetable: February – June 2007

Operational responsibility: Gender secretariat

- 5) *Activity:* Evaluate the action plan with a view to adopting a position on the future focus of work in this area.

Timetable: June – October 2009

Operational responsibility: Gender secretariat in collaboration with the Department for Evaluation and Internal Audit (UTV)

Financing

Financing is expected to come mainly from global and regional programmes, as well as from the respective country appropriations in cases where LGBT issues are included in country development cooperation strategies.

Follow-up/revision

The action plan is to be viewed as a living document and shall be reviewed at the end of each year, and be revised or supplemented as required.

An evaluation of this action plan should be carried out at the end of 2009. The evaluation shall form the basis for Sida's continued work to integrate LGBT issues in Sweden's international development cooperation.

⁷ In contrast to the study carried out by Samelius/Wågberg (2005), this study will identify and briefly describe all the LGBT-relevant contributions that Sweden is financing worldwide.

Halving poverty by 2015 is one of the greatest challenges of our time, requiring cooperation and sustainability. The partner countries are responsible for their own development. Sida provides resources and develops knowledge and expertise, making the world a richer place.



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