

Grand Bargain in 2020:

Annual Self Report – Narrative Summary

Name of Institution:

Ministry for Foreign Affairs Sweden

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(NB. Please limit your answer to no more than **5 pages in total** – anything over this word limit will not be considered by ODI in their analysis. Please respond to all of the questions below.)

Grand Bargain in 2020

Question 1: Reflecting on the information you have provided in the Excel spreadsheet, please highlight the 2 or 3 key outcomes or results relating to the Grand Bargain that your institution achieved in 2020?

Due to the COVID 19 crisis, it has become even more obvious in 2020 that quality funding is a particularly important part of the Grand Bargain agenda.

Sweden, through the Ministry for Foreign Affairs, has continued to provide a large part of its humanitarian assistance in terms of both multi-year and unearmarked funding through its core support to humanitarian UN-organisations¹, at the same time as flexibility and predictability is sought at all stages in Sweden's humanitarian partnerships.

Sweden, through Sida, has, through its strong commitment to give humanitarian partners flexibility and adaptability, contributed to fighting the pandemic based on the specific needs in the local humanitarian context and emerging needs despite difficult circumstances, unprecedented unpredictability, travel restrictions etc..

Sweden's firm commitment to the Grand Bargain agenda is also expressed through the new strategy for humanitarian assistance through Sida 2021-2025 that the government adopted on 10 December 2020. In the strategy, there is a specific focus on system-strengthening measures to increase the effectiveness and efficiency of the humanitarian system and a specific objective to support Grand Bargain. Sweden will intensify its efforts to live up to the Grand Bargain commitments the coming years.

In 2020, Sida has reviewed its humanitarian strategic partnerships and renewed its' five-year strategic partnerships with about 20 humanitarian organisations for the implementation of approximately half of Sweden's humanitarian assistance. The objective of the partnerships is to enable predictability and flexibility for partners. In this way partners will have the ability to be flexible and adaptive to new or escalating humanitarian needs, even though much of Sida's humanitarian funding is softly earmarked for specific projects and countries.

Question 2: How has your institution contributed to the advancement of gender equality and women's empowerment² in humanitarian settings through its implementation of the Grand Bargain? What results/outcomes have been achieved in this regard? (please outline specific initiatives or

¹ OCHA, CERF, WFP, UNHCR, UNRWA and UNICEF but also UNFPA

² Refer to the IASC definitions of gender equality and women empowerment, available [here](#).

changes in practice and their outcomes/results). Please refer to the Guidelines for definitions of Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment, which are included in this self-report template package.

Sida's partner organisations have used disaggregated data and inclusive participatory processes to guarantee equal participation of girls, women, boys, and men in all activities. Partner organisations constantly analyse and evaluate age and gender data to increase participation of girls and women. As a result, several partner organizations have achieved an equal participation of women and men, girls, and boys in their interventions

In several multi-year funded programmes, partners have combined gender sensitive and gender transformative approaches; resulting in strengthened gender programming and outcomes. Sida has supported several programmes focusing on prevention and protection related to gender-based violence (GBV), resulting in increased protection for survivors of GBV. Sweden participates in *the Call to Action on Prevention of Gender Based violence in Emergencies*.

Specific examples of achievements:

- Sida has co-financed a report on *Girls associated with armed forces and armed groups* (2020) published by *Unicef* and *Plan International*. An expected result of this study is an increased awareness of how to prevent girls' participation in armed groups, including inclusion of girls in DDR programming.
- Sida has supported Cash-programmes that specifically target female heads of households which has contributed to women's empowerment since they have obtained more autonomy and been able to participate in decision making to a greater degree.
- With Sida funds, partner organisations have held awareness rising session in communities on themes as forced marriage, gender equality, different types of GBV, available care services and schooling for girls.
- By using gender as a cross-cutting issue, some partner organisations have improved their reporting on how gender analysis is included in their programming. Sida also emphasized that gender equality must be integrated into all sectors and include men, boys, women and girls. For Sida's (great majority of) partners working through the HRPs, it is mandatory to use the Gender and Age Marker (GAM).

Question 3: How has the humanitarian-development nexus been strategically mainstreamed in your institutional implementation of the Grand Bargain commitments? Please explain how your institution has linked commitments 10.1 - 10.5 with other commitments from other workstreams.

Swedish international development cooperation is increasingly focused on conflict and crisis-affected countries. In 2020, out of Sida's ten largest recipient

countries, eight are conflict-affected and receive both long-term development and humanitarian support.

As reported previous year, Sida has developed its practice with working with a nexus approach, especially from humanitarian-development interlinkages, including experiences from applying a resilience approach. Sida's humanitarian unit works in close cooperation with development cooperation colleagues to identify synergies between needs assessments and programming. Joint analysis is taking place in the humanitarian unit's annual Humanitarian Crisis Analysis (HCA) as well as through the Multi-Dimensional Poverty Analysis (MDPA) underpinning Sida's regional and bilateral strategies.

In the newly adopted strategy for humanitarian assistance through Sida (2021-2025) it states that cooperation within the humanitarian-development nexus should be done by seeking context-specific forms for collaboration, coherence, and complementarity between the mandates of the various actors. Nexus is also a recurring theme in the strategies for development cooperation for countries that receive both long-term development and humanitarian support.

In 2020 Sida has developed a guidance note in order strengthen what the Humanitarian- Development-Peace nexus means for Sida, and to provide guidance for a nexus approach for Sida's global, regional, and bilateral strategies. The process has been specifically valuable to make sure that the responsibility of mainstreaming the nexus into Sida implementation, lies within all units working in conflict and crisis-affected countries. Sida's approach to the humanitarian-development-peace nexus (HDP-nexus) is based on the DAC Recommendation and takes the rights and needs of poor and crisis-affected people as its point of departure. The HDP-nexus approach is precisely that, an approach rather than specific or individual contributions. Sida's contributions and programming should be a part of and support the implementation of the nexus approach.

The Sida HDP-nexus guidance note, together with the DAC recommendation, provide Sida with a strong position to bring about change and to strengthen the cooperation between humanitarians, development, and peace "pillars" at Sida.

Grand Bargain 2016-2020: Overall achievements and remaining gaps

Question 4: What are the 2-3 key achievements/areas of most progress by your institution since 2016? Please report on your institutional progress for the period 2016-2020, **even** if your institution did not become a signatory until after 2016.

In 2018, Sweden entered four-year strategic partnership agreements with the CERF, WFP, UNHCR, UNICEF and UNRWA. The unearmarked core support provided by the MFA to the humanitarian actors in the UN system contributes to increased effectiveness and efficiency in the humanitarian system. Sweden takes great pride in not only being one of the largest donors to the UN, but also being able to provide predictable and multi-year support, which will enhance quality

and flexibility within the system. Sweden has the intention to renew and extend multi-year agreements.

Another achievement, as mentioned earlier, is Sida's Strategic Partnerships and the high degree of flexibility for partners Sida is committed to ensure within these partnerships. Sida has entered into multi-year agreements with a number of its "strategic humanitarian partners" enabling partnership and predictability despite funding on an annual basis as the major rule. The partnership is based on mutual trust and entails a high degree of autonomy and flexibility for partners with the funding that Sida provides.

Another achievement is the programme-based support (PBA) that Sida provides to three strategic partner NGOs. The intention is to support the delivery of a programme-based approach to humanitarian response that may include an integrated package of activities across a variety of sectors and themes. For humanitarian NGOs, programme-based funding is a new approach. There is consensus among the early adopters, that the PBA has been a positive experience, delivering a range of effectiveness and efficiency gains across the entire chain of affected populations /aid recipient, implementing organisation and donor.

Question 5: What, in your institutional view, have been the main achievements of the Grand Bargain signatories, as a collective, since 2016?

Please indicate specific commitments, thematic or cross-cutting issues or workstreams where you think most progress has been made collectively by signatories.

The format of the Grand Bargain process is one of its major achievements. The format of Grand Bargain is unique in the way that it connects all major humanitarian actors in dialogue and cooperation on a voluntary basis. The fact that it is not specifically connected to other political platforms makes it less prone to be affected by geopolitical trends and can instead focus on actual improvements in the efficiency of humanitarian action.

Regarding specific commitments there has been system-wide shift both in policy and practice on the use of *cash assistance* because of Grand Bargain. There has also been some progress in simplifying and harmonising reporting procedures as well as improving the needs analysis. Regarding need analysis, Sweden particularly welcomes the development and roll out of the Joint Intersectoral Analysis Framework as specifically important.

Question 6: What has the Grand Bargain not been able to achieve in its five year tenure? What outstanding obstacles, gaps, areas of weakness still remain after five years, in terms of improving the efficiency and effectiveness of humanitarian action? Please indicate specific commitments, thematic or cross-cutting issues or workstreams where you think there remain key gaps or obstacles.

Even though we have seen progress regarding technical issues on many of the Grand Bargain commitments there are still gaps in the overall political ownership. The process in some ways has become too technical and not strategic enough. Sweden would like specifically to point to the commitment around quality funding where there has been progress the collective understanding of quality funding but where the signatories together have not been able to deliver in practice. Signatories need to work together to scale up best practice and approaches to quality funding.

Another area in which there are still outstanding gaps is localisation and participation of vulnerable people. We need to see further strengthening of local organizations for the humanitarian response to be as local as possible, which is precondition for a more effective humanitarian system.

Sweden also believe that gender mainstreaming in all the commitments and workstreams is an area where there is gap in progress and where more focus could be placed in the prolongment of the Grand Bargain.

Risk and the Grand Bargain

Question 7a: How has risk (financial, operational, reputational, etc) affected your institution's implementation of the core commitments since you became a signatory to the Grand Bargain?

In parallel with the Grand Bargain agenda, Sida has undergone changes at institutional level that has entailed greater demands to address and strengthen internal risk management. These institutional developments have somewhat affected the possibilities of accelerating certain Grand Bargain commitments. For example, the opportunities to use other donors' assessments and evaluations of partners, instead of conducting our own, have decreased.

During the same period, there has also been an increased focus in reducing financial risks and counter corruption. As Sida has refined its methods for minimizing risks, more and more risk-taking has been transferred to partners, who in turn have transferred their risks to implementing partners.

In the process of elaborating the new strategy for humanitarian assistance, discussions emerged on how humanitarian donors need to be able to take and share risks. Therefore, there are clear wording in the new humanitarian strategy that acknowledges the need for Sida to be able to take higher risks in implementation and follow-up.

Question 7b: How has your institution sought to mitigate or address these risks to enable implementation of the core commitments?

Sida has also undergone other changes that have contributed to the implementation of the Grand Bargain agenda. Adaptive management, or an increased understanding of the need for humanitarian assistance to be adapted to changes in the local context, has gain ground and as an approach has come to

replace some of the previous practice regarding result based management (RBM).

Sida will continue the work of developing approaches to risks and ensure that risks are shared with partners. Discussions on how to do this and how to conduct remote follow-up and reporting need to continue in close dialogue with partners.

