

# **Sida Supported Environmental Research Projects in Tanzania**

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**Sida Evaluation 00/24**

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## Foreword

This is not only an evaluation but also a methodological experiment. The background to the methodological experiment is that the officers of Sida/SAREC have a heavy workload and even prioritised work is delayed for long periods of time. Thus, there is a need to find ways and means to reduce their workload so that they can concentrate more on priority matters such as policy making and securing that the resources are spent on priority activities and that the results obtained correspond to intentions (accountability). With this in view, the consultant was approached to explore new avenues. The consultant was contracted in his capacity as Project Manager. The consultant was then to subcontract services at cost. Because of the project management expertise put at the disposal of Sida/SAREC it was surmised that Sida/SAREC would get “its money worth” and not least reduce the demands on Sida’s administrative capacity. To what extent the experiment has succeeded is for Sida/SAREC to evaluate at the end of this assignment.

The idea was that the consultant would firstly plan the evaluations, according to pre defined Terms of Reference, to be discussed with the University of Dar es Salaam. This Plan would then be submitted to Sida/SAREC for discussion and subsequently a decision. The results of this phase would then pave the way for the implementation of the evaluation. The consultant did not provide a tender, but agreed to contract sub-consultants according to the decision of Sida/SAREC. This method should provide necessary flexibility while securing that Sida/SAREC would not lose control of the process.

It has during all stages been the clear understanding that the implementation of the evaluation was the responsibility of the consultant and that Sida/SAREC or UDSM would in no way interfere with the work or the conclusions of the evaluation.

An additional consideration guided the work. Recipient countries often view evaluations as something imposed on them by the donors. Evaluations are often viewed as a way to control projects/programmes safeguarding mainly donor interests. Evaluations are often seen as a necessary evil to obtain more financing. See for example Lewin (1994) p. 18. To this end the active participation of the UDSM was sought at all stages of work.

In line with this method of work, Sida/SAREC and the consultant had preliminary meetings (end of March 1999) with the UDSM and all the managers of the projects to present the first draft of the TOR, and outline a first method of work. The newly appointed Director of Research of UDSM complemented Sida/SAREC for this initiative. He also noted that rarely do the donors engage in dialogue prior to an evaluation. Minutes of the meetings were prepared and circulated to the attendants.

The UDSM was explicitly invited to comment on the TOR and to suggest candidates for the evaluation. As a result of this work and consultations with Sida/SAREC on the composition of the Team a proposal was prepared by the consultant and submitted to Sida/SAREC and to the parties concerned. Communication was mainly done by e-mail. However, there have been difficulties in securing a regular contact with the Tanzanian institutions.

Subsequently, the consultant prepared a Plan of work, based on the discussions with Sida/SAREC and UDSM. This was submitted to Sida/SAREC on 20 May 1999. It contemplated the evaluation of three projects, viz.

- *Man – Land Interrelations in Semi-Arid Tanzania (MALISATA)* at the Institute of Resource Assessment, IRA
- *Environmental Aspects of Mining and Industrialization in Tanzania (EAMIT)* at the Department of Geology.
- *Technology and Environmental Management in Tanzania: Industrialization A Study of Environmental Pollution in Three Provinces of Tanzania* at the Institute of Development Studies, IDS.

A total input of 42 man weeks was budgeted. As a result of subsequent discussions within Sida/SAREC the budget frame had to be cut dramatically to 16 man weeks. At this stage, both Sida/SAREC and the consultant were considering abandoning the idea of the evaluation. Because the budgetary constraint would make it impossible to carry out the evaluation as stated in the TOR. The following main conclusions emerged:

- Only two instead of three projects would be evaluated
- Main focus would be on an assessment of the quality and relevance of the research carried out

An agreement was reached in September. With these modifications, it was decided to proceed to contract the consultants who would have the major responsibility for assessing the scientific quality and relevance of the research. At this stage one of the consultants was no longer available (MALISATA) and the consultant for the project at the Department of Geology was changing her job and location and it was uncertain whether she would be available at all.

Informal contacts with Sida/SAREC provided necessary guidelines. The consultant approached UNRISD in Geneva and Dr. Solon Barraclough, Switzerland, was contracted to review an important part of the Malisata documents. Since the volume of reports of the MALISATA programme was quite large, it was deemed necessary to engage additional evaluators. It was also considered to include an institution from the South. To this end, the consultant proposed to engage a South African university and it was finally decided to engage (Prof. Reinarth and Prof. Laker of the University of Pretoria) for evaluating another part of the documents. It also turned out that Professor Alyson Warhurst would be able to make the evaluation, although with a delay, of the research carried out by the Department of Geology.

This report contains the Main Report. Volume II, “Evaluation of Environmental Aspects of Mining and Industrialisation in Tanzania (EAMIT)” and volume Volume III “*Evaluation of Man-Land Relationship in Semi-arid Tanzania (MALISATA)*” are available at Sida, SAREC, upon request.

Dr. Marcelo Dougnac (6–27 November) and Dr. Tom Alberts (13–27 November) made a visit to UDSM and made some field visits. Although the latter aspect was not originally planned, it was felt absolutely essential to acquire some knowledge from the geographical areas covered by the projects. In retrospect, it seems clear that the conclusions would have been very different and more tentative than is now the case.

While Dr. Dougnac concentrated his efforts on the MALISTA project Dr. Alberts was mainly responsible for the evaluation of the project at the Department of Geology.

Many people have been involved in this evaluation. Tanzanian and Swedish researchers, and officials of UDSM and Sida. The evaluation Team has often made strong demands for assistance and has claimed a lot of valuable time from many people. This work would not have been possible without the generous support provided by the people visited. Special thanks goes to Professor Kikkula who apart from the professional commitment and valuable insights were essential for our job, also secured that essential logistic support was provided to the Team during its stay in Tanzania.



The Draft Final Report was discussed at Sida on 3 February 2000. Several persons from the Swedish participating institutions were present as well as many Sida officials. The department of Geology of the UDSM had forwarded written comments prior to the meeting.

The meeting raised several questions. One referred to the number of scientific publications of the MALISATA program. The view was that there were many more publications than listed by the Team. Another important issue was the scientific quality of the publications. The review made by the University of Pretoria was based on documents at various stages in their preparation and did not adequately reflect the growing scientific quality. The consultant has tried to deal with these rather complex issues in this Final Report.

While the consultant received comments from the department of Geology, IRA never forwarded any comments to the consultant. In consultation with Sida/SAREC it was agreed on 3 June to finalise the report without these comments.

*Amsterdam, 6 September 2000*

Tom Alberts

## Executive summary

Originally the intention was to evaluate all Sida/SAREC supported environmental research projects in Tanzania. Subsequently it was decided to limit the evaluation to two important programmes at the University of Dar es Salaam (UDSM):

- *Man – Land Interrelations in Semi-Arid Tanzania (MALISATA)* at the Institute of Resource Assessment, IRA
- *Environmental Aspects of Mining and Industrialization in Tanzania (EAMIT)* at the Department of Geology.

Both projects co-operated with Swedish research institutions. In the case of the MALISATA programme both the University of Stockholm and the University of Uppsala participated. The EAMIT collaborated with a Swedish limited company, the Swedish Environmental Group.

The evaluation method used largely follows the established policy of Sida. Nevertheless, in order to address the difficulty of evaluating a programme without clear objectives, MALISATA, the consultant reviewed evaluation literature. While the current trend of a Logical Framework Approach (LFA) predominates both in project planning and evaluations it presupposes clear objectives. However, there are alternative methodologies. One important approach suggested in literature is to focus on stakeholders' interests. This method has been used in the evaluation.

While the research objectives of the EAMIT project were clear, there was no consensus on the objectives of the MALISATA programme. In the case of both programmes, the Tanzanian researchers mainly set the research agenda. Still, it is certain that the perceived donor interests influenced the formulation of research objectives.

Both projects established a good administrative organisation, which secured a relatively transparent use of resources and a largely efficient implementation of the programmes. There was however a lack of research leadership. This became more of a problem of the MALISATA programme where researchers worked largely in isolation. It is recommended that the question of management of research projects/programmes is studied in more detail with a view to improve the efficiency.

Both projects produced a large amount of documents ranging from progress reports to international publications. On this account both projects were productive. In general, few international publications were made, although the track record of the EAMIT programme fares somewhat better. By including the research financed by other sources than the MALISATA programme (for example through SAREC's funding of academic development research at Swedish institutions), the situation is more positive.

This might be explained by an inadequate incentive scheme where the researchers main remuneration comes from the per diem from field visits. Also, publications in international scientific journals may not be sufficiently rewarded in the academic career of the researchers by the UDSM. It is recommended that UDSM, perhaps with the support from Sida, review the question of incentives.

External reviewers assessed the scientific quality of research. The reviewers acknowledged that the scientific quality was not uniform. Some pieces of excellent work have been produced but there has also been research of inadequate scientific quality.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> There has been the habit of listing research studies at varying stages of the research process. Thus early drafts and working papers have not been deleted from the publication lists when the final research report has been completed.

Both projects made concerted action to disseminate the research results. In several cases research was translated into Swahili targeted to farmers, miners and other stakeholders. However, in general the dissemination of research results has not been successful. The University Library for example, only had a very small number of the publications of the two programmes. The public administration was largely unaware of the publications. It is recommended that Sida make an even stronger effort to improve this regrettable situation in future research co-operation.

Both projects addressed key issues in Tanzanian development. The policy-making implications were potentially high. In the case of the MALISTA programme the research apparently made little impact on policy making. The EAMIT project had some impact in policy making. This question is very much linked to the question of dissemination of research results. Policy relevant research is also a difficult area of work but the potential benefits are also great.

The gender issue was not important by the EAMIT project since the social sciences dimension was largely ignored while the MALISTA project attempted to address the issue. The results are not satisfactory in this respect.

There was a significant development in research capacity of both projects, i.e. to the capacity to identify, plan and implement research projects. This was a very positive result of the two projects.

There has been an important curricula development both in Tanzania and in Sweden as a result of the two projects. There has been an almost unanimous acclaim for the methods of work and the positive contributions of the Swedish partners.

In summary, in spite of the shortcomings discussed, both projects can be considered as successful projects.

# 1. Evaluation methodology

The *Evaluation Manual for SIDA* was published by SIDA in 1994<sup>2</sup>. It is a translation of a Swedish version prepared about a year earlier. This Manual was never officially adopted by SIDA but has served as guidelines for SIDA. As stated in the TOR this Evaluation follows the format in the Manual.

The Team decided to probe into the question of evaluations. Questions such as what are evaluations and why are they undertaken and how should they be undertaken were raised. The main stream evaluation methodology follows the OECD Expert Group on Aid Evaluation's definition:

*An evaluation is an assessment, as systematic and as objective as possible, of an ongoing or completed project, programme or policy, its design, implementation and results. The aim is to determine the relevance and fulfilment of objectives, development of efficiency, effectiveness, impact and sustainability. An evaluation should provide information that is credible and useful, enabling the incorporation of lessons learned into the decision-making process of both recipients and donors.* Taken from Lewin (1994), p. 7.

The trend has increasingly been towards more rigid planning-monitoring and evaluation methods. The predominant method in project planning is the Logical Framework Analysis, LFA method. Major donor agencies rely on this method. Following this method, a subsequent evaluation becomes relatively simple, because objectives, outputs, activities and inputs are clearly specified.<sup>3</sup>

So the point of departure in an evaluation becomes to identify objectives. In practical life the evaluators are often faced with difficulties in this task.

*For many programs, the existing design is vague or implausible. This vagueness may have been a deliberate strategy of the initial planners, as too much precision about intended program activities or objectives might have inhibited the political compromises needed to initiate the program and gain the resources needed for its maintenance and expansion.* Wholey et.al. 1994, pp. 18–19.

But there are completely different approaches to evaluations. Looking more at the use of evaluations the following questions seem relevant:

*Focusing an evaluation means dealing with several basic concerns. What is the purpose of the evaluation? How will the information be used? What will we know after the evaluation that we don't know now? What actions will we be able to take based on evaluation findings? These are*

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<sup>2</sup> As of 1 July 1995 the different aid organisations were merged into one, called Sida. Prior to this date SIDA existed along with other Swedish public aid organisations such as SAREC and BITS. Sida is presently in the process of preparing a new Manual. Sida Studies in Evaluation 99/2 **Managing and Conducting Evaluation. Design study for a Sida evaluation manual** by Lennart Peck and Stefan Engström.

<sup>3</sup> The Norwegian handbook on evaluation identifies two approaches to evaluations:

#### GOAL EVALUATION

*Assessment of the effects of the projects seen in relation to its given objectives: i.e. to what extent the impacts are caused by the project, or are due to external factors.*

#### PROCESS EVALUATION

*Assessment of the project and the way it functions within a societal context, in order to understand the process caused by this, and the consequences of the project in the widest sense.* Samset, 1993, p. 20.

Having mentioned the possibility of carrying out Process Evaluations the handbook is based on the LFA approach, which presupposes clear objectives.

*not simply rote questions answered once and then put aside. The utilization-focused evaluator keeps these questions front and center throughout the design process.* Patton 1997, pp 189-190.  
See also p. 298 on the same theme.

This is quite a different approach to evaluations. It puts the evaluation in a different context. The question about lessons learnt is also a dominant theme in most evaluation manuals.

The main objective for SIDA's evaluations was to: *serve as a basis for decision-making and planning concerning continued support and/or the systematic build-up of knowledge in specific areas.* Lewin (1990), p. 7.

Sida's present evaluation policies were formulated in 1995: *Sida's evaluation activities have two main objectives: learning (promotion) and control (accountability).* Taken from Peck and Engström 1999, p. 25.

The Norwegian handbook on evaluation has an almost identical formulation: *Evaluations have two main aims:*

- *to improve development aid through better knowledge of its content and consequences*
- *to document the results to the political authorities and the general public.* Samset 1993, p. 8.

The learning objective is not necessarily identical with an evaluation of a project's objectives as assessed against results. The TOR for this assignment is primarily aimed at improving Swedish aid by providing a set of recommendations to Sida on the following main themes:

- Recommendations to UDSM on how experiences of and capacities for environmental research and research training gained through the evaluated projects could be exploited.
- Recommendations to Sida on future modes of support to environmental research.
- Recommendations to both parties regarding the procedures of setting agendas for environmental research.
- Recommendations on how Tanzanian stakeholders could be involved in agenda setting.

So while the issue of assessing the scientific quality of research results was a stated major objective for this mission, it seems as if the over-riding objective of Sida/SAREC was to find practical recommendations for future support in the areas of environmental issues and research co-operation. With this in mind, the Team has attempted both to assess the research quality and by a less formalistic approach has tried to identify areas where lessons learnt could be useful in Sida's future engagement in environmental issues in research co-operation. The Team has therefore, given the limited time available, attempted to interview main stakeholders in Tanzania and Sweden. Some of them and their believed interests have been listed below:

Stakeholder		Main interest
Sida	SAREC	Main focus on research capacity building
Sida	Other departments	Main focus on obtaining research results which have a direct bearing on the Swedish aid programme
Swedish public		General assessment of "money's worth" - accountability
UDSM	Projects	Lessons learnt.
UDSM	Centrally	How to support research co-operation, particularly related to environmental issues? How to obtain more financial resources?
GOT	Ministry of Agriculture	Better research results for policy making
GOT	Ministry of the Environment	Better research results for policy making
Tanzania	Miners and Peasants	More effective public sector intervention

While this study was initiated by Sida/SAREC attempts were made to engage the Tanzanians as much as possible. The importance of making the evaluation a co-operative undertaking is present in practically all studies on evaluation. For example:

The OECD study states that: *An evaluation should provide information that is credible and useful, enabling the incorporation of lessons learned into the decision-making process of **both recipients and donors**.* (Our emphasis). Lewin (1994), p. 7.

The importance of LDC (Less Developed Countries) participation in evaluations is mentioned several times in the Manual (pp. 18, 26, 29, and 38). This theme is also expounded in the Sida Studies in Evaluation 99/2 Managing and Conducting Evaluation. Design study for a Sida evaluation manual by Lennart Peck and Stefan Engström. For example:

*Evaluations should be transparent and carried out in a spirit of co-operation. Interested parties at Sida and in the recipient countries should be informed of evaluation plans at as early stage as possible, and, whenever feasible, be provided with the opportunity to participate in the evaluation process. Interested parties in the recipient countries should be consulted at every major step in the process, including the writing of the Terms of Reference and the recruitment of the evaluation team.* Peck and Engström (1999), p. 30.

The possibilities of carrying out joint evaluations are also stressed and it should not always be assumed that Sida should be in charge of the evaluations. Peck and Engström (1999), p. 50.

Since Sida/SAREC is the client, it is natural that the consultant has tried to respond to the explicit and implicit demands of Sida/SAREC. Had for example the GOT, UDSM or other parts of Sida been more involved in the preparation of the TOR and/or in the actual disbursement of payments for services rendered, the outcome of this evaluation would probably have been different.

## 2. Main findings

### Research objectives

Contrary to what might have been believed, the researchers largely set research priorities themselves. The research agenda addressed important Tanzanian development objectives such as environmental degradation from gold mining and land degradation caused by agricultural activities..

The clarity in objectives and in proposed activities varied greatly between the two projects evaluated. The EAMIT project had defined a clear long-term objective, to establish an environmental studies group, and also six quite specific intermediary objectives:

- *Study the present methods of gold mining and processing in order to determine their suitability for sustainable mining environment.*
- *Investigate the concentration of heavy metals (including mercury) and toxic compounds in surface waters, groundwater, soil, mine dumps and tailings.*
- *Investigate the extent of land degradation (including deforestation, soil erosion, siltation of natural drainage systems, etc.) caused by gold mining activities.*
- *Study socio-economic impacts of gold mining in the study areas.*
- *Evaluate the adequacy/shortcomings of existing legislation pertaining to gold mining and environmental protection.*
- *Recommend measures for reducing negative impacts arising from gold exploration, extraction and processing*

In the case of the EAMIT project, the evaluation could be carried out in a straightforward manner.

The objectives for the MALISATA project were not clearly established and the plans of action were generally weak. Different stakeholders (Sida and its different divisions), UDSM and its various departments, the co-operating Swedish Universities, different Government entities and so forth, all had different views of what the projects was to attain. Professor Carl Christiansson in a letter from January 2000 confirms the ambiguity of the objectives when he mentions that:

*Several misunderstandings have occurred in relation to the activity's objectives and goals. The objective of the programme has been presumed to be, for example, extension services to the HADO programme or to the administration of the District.*

*...There are members of the program, who would like to see themselves having an important part of their activities oriented in that direction. But such an objective, despite personal wishes, has never been written in the original documents of the project. No funds have been allocated for this purpose.*

*...Others want to see the programme as a pure environmental project that is to find solutions to particular environmental problems through a specific research activity.*

*... We have mainly seen the support to the MALISATA programme as support to building and consolidation of our respective research environments, in addition to specific funding to tutorial work. Tanzanian institutions have furthermore been provided with direct financial support for research activities*

Still, an important question remains. Why did not SAREC demand that there should be clear objectives prior to financing the programme? The writings on evaluations suggest that fuzziness in objectives is a normal outcome when there are different views. As a result, the consultant approached the evaluation in a more exploratory way as is suggested by different alternative evalua-

tion methods described above. During the development of the project, the matter was really never resolved and one of the reasons was the lack of strong leadership, not uncommon in academic research.

## **Research management**

Good Research Management is a pre-requisite for the success of a research project involving a significant number of researchers. In the opinion of the Consultant, during the implementation both projects had good administration.

Both projects present a well functioning administrative management, which gave some guarantees of the proper utilisation of resources and co-ordination of activities.

However, the MALISATA programme lacked research leadership. This is for example evident from the lack of interaction and integration of various research projects. Individual researchers have worked in isolation and little global knowledge about programme activities could be found. Research projects were more related to individual interest than to a common agenda. The lack of monitoring research activities is reflected in the absence of deadlines for report writing and submission of papers as well as by the fact that the results are not presented for general discussion.

Since the EAMIT project had well defined objectives and a strong commitment to attain these, the question of research leadership never emerged as a problem. It can however be noted that the socio-economic issues were never systematically addressed.

## **Research agenda and priority setting**

The researchers themselves mainly defined the research agenda. Having said this, it is also evident that the researchers were sensitive to societal concerns and to donor funding policies. The topics researched were relevant and important to Tanzania.

In theory MALISATA provided an ideal situation to assess potential problems linking research and conservation activities. However, the insufficient stakeholders' participation made it difficult to decide on priorities.

Proposals were prepared by individual researchers and submitted to the co-ordination of the programme. Only foreign researchers needed to present their proposals for the approval of the GOT. There were no meetings to discuss research proposals or to exchange ideas and information about individual projects. There was no deadline for report writing and submission. The papers were not presented for general discussion but distributed for information and comments.

## **Research output**

With respect to research output, both projects have produced a large amount of documents of various types ranging from progress reports to international publications.

MALISATA has produced an impressive number of reports and publications covering topics of land use, the history of land degradation in the focus area, soil erosion and sedimentation, demography, vegetation, hydrology etc. The most relevant results are included in PhD theses.

Most of the published results submitted to the Consultant were in the form of working papers, (which have a restricted circulation) and some articles, which have been published in international journals and others as part of conference proceedings.



The consultant originally received a list of MALISATA publications comprising 47 titles. This list was, after discussion with IRA, subsequently expanded to 55 titles. This list of 55 titles was then considered by the consultant as the universe of MALISATA publications.

As the Draft Report was circulated several additional publications started to appear. Individual researchers submitted some information and other pieces of information were received from the Swedish Co-ordinators.<sup>4</sup>

A closer observation of the different lists of publication leaves the impression that there has been a serious lack of co-ordination among the main actors of the programme. Each one presents lists including or excluding each other's material.

It is also extremely difficult to identify what really is a MALISATA publication and what is a publication belonging to IRA, to the Stockholm University's Department of Geography, or to the University of Newcastle. Even the Minor Fields Studies' reports appear in those lists. It seems that there are no borders between the participating institutions and the programme itself. Everything that has been hosted by the programme or any activity undertaken in the project area, independent of the funding source, seems to be considered as a product of MALISATA. The huge differences in the amount of material that IRA and the Stockholm University present as "programme publications" gives an idea of the magnitude of the problem.

There is no doubt that the lack of screening of the written information has generated an anarchic documentation process. Old and preliminary drafts are still counted as "publications" even when the revised study has been published. Working papers, Academic dissertations, field reports (MFS), conference papers, books and international articles are kept in the same basket and treated in the same way.

As part of the expected Swedish input, the role played by Swedish researchers in the programme's international publishing was several times highlighted during the interviews. Tanzanian researchers still seem to have some methodological and practical difficulties to produce internationally published research articles.

The UDSM incentive scheme may also play an important role as the researchers claimed that the time expended on it, which demand several revisions and unnecessary delays was not always worth the effort. Financial constraints were also given as a reason for the scarce international publication rate.

Nevertheless the list of publication presented by the Stockholm University with 154 titles includes 60 documents with Tanzanian single or co-authorship:

- 4 PhD theses
- 10 internationally published articles
- 8 conference papers
- 8 working papers
- 14 IRA reports

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<sup>4</sup> The Department of Geography of Stockholm University presented an initial list of working paper including 25 titles and later on a second one comprised by 154 titles, including all types of publications.

Dr Mats Eriksson, a former member of the programme, reacted to the original lists presented by IRA and the University of Stockholm pointing out that they were incomplete and inaccurate.

The University of Uppsala also provided information about publications not appearing in any of the other lists.

- 11 RCU articles
- 5 others
- 

It is positive to note that field visits and field research were predominant features of both projects. It should also be noted that the field trips enabled the Tanzanian researchers to drastically increase their earnings.<sup>5</sup> The incentives for fieldwork might have contributed to an imbalance in incentives so that publishing internationally is not sufficiently rewarded. To publish in international journals implies hard work and endurance over a long time period. There might also be a problem with UDSM where Proceedings from international conferences have a relatively high premium in the ranking of staff members.

The EAMIT project was much smaller both in terms of time horizon and in terms of number of researchers involved. There were six Progress Reports, one Handbook on environmental impacts from small-scale mining and mineral processing in Tanzania and two Conference Proceedings and three articles published in international journals. In addition an environmental geological map was prepared. In terms of out-put the project has been quite productive.

In summary, as a result the MALISATA project shows weak and insufficient results in international publication while the EAMIT project is slightly better. Both projects have, with the support of the co-operating partners, produced several Conference Proceedings.

### **Scientific quality of research output**

Samples of the original material made available to the Team, mainly working papers and research reports, a couple of books and all available research articles<sup>6</sup> have been independently assessed. In the case of MALISATA, Dr Solon Barraclough (UNRISD), Dr M. C. Laker, Professor of Soil Science and Land Use Planning) and Dr C. Reinardh (Professor of Weeds Sciences) both from the University of Pretoria were engaged. (See Appendix IV.)

The conclusions of the evaluators differ from each other. As can be expected, the assessment of the scientific quality of research vary, ranging from excellent to poor. It seems clear that the co-operation with Swedish partners contributed to an improvement in the quality of publications.

Dr Barraclough has in general a positive impression of the material published but indicates some weaknesses in the methods and concepts used by the authors. He also points out inadequate peer-review and the impression that northern researchers dominate the research agenda at the expense of development concern of Tanzanian colleagues.

The University of Pretoria is more critical about the quality of the material assessed. They state that with the exception of internationally published research articles most of the papers are very disappointing revealing several weaknesses. They note that there has been an unnecessary repetition between different reports/publications and a lack of co-operation and integration among research-

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<sup>5</sup> During the field trip to the Gold mine area, the consultant stayed at the hotel previously used by the researchers during the project. The per diem paid to the researchers was several times higher than the costs incurred. This impression is also confirmed in a report to NORAD: *COMBINED REVIEW OF NORAD SUPPORT TO SOKOLNE UNIVERSITY OF AGRICULTURE, SUA, AND APPRAISAL OF PROJECT PROPOSAL UNDER THE TANZANIA AGRICULTURAL RESEARCH PROGRAMME, TARP II*. Tom Alberts et.al., Tyresö 25 May 1999.

<sup>6</sup> Theses were excluded from the sample because they have already been positively assessed by independent academic bodies at time of degree granting.

ers. Poor research leadership; Poor theoretical background and insufficient scientific knowledge; Weakness in methods and concepts; and Irrelevance of results are other critical points highlighted by the reviewers.

At the end of the evaluation exercises the Team noticed and regret the fact that the lists and the material made available to the evaluators were not complete or, in some cases lacked accuracy.

Several of the internationally published articles were not included in the lists and consequently never sent for quality assessment. Unfortunately the assessed material does not fully represent the programme's research output.

The assessment done by the University of Pretoria caused strong reactions from the Swedish management of the programme. Their reactions are included in Appendix IV. This evaluation concerns the MALISATA programme and not the participating institutions. For this reason not all publications of relevance for the MALISATA programme should be included in the list of publications.

Many of the publications by the Swedish institutions are the results of projects financed outside the MALISATA programme. For example, Sida/SAREC provides grants to Swedish academic institutions for research on development. Sida/SAREC then acts as a Swedish Research Council. The screening process is very rigid and only a smaller number of projects are financed. This means that a Swedish PhD student has been subject to a strict peer review process before financing is obtained. Swedish students could not receive funding from the MALISATA programme. Tanzanian scholars within the MALISATA programme were not subjected to the same stringent peer review process. This can also have been a factor explaining the relatively weaker performance of many of the MALISATA researchers in Tanzania.

Prof. Alyson Warhurst carried out the assessment of the EAMIT project's research publications and reports. Since a major effort has gone into preparing the Progress reports. As is noted in the assessment: *The progress reports summarise outputs from the project (September 1992 to December 1997). The reports are clearly aimed at those closely involved with the development and funding of the project and do not contain sufficient detail to allow an external evaluator to understand fully the aims and objectives of the project or to comment fully on many aspects of the research methodology and data through consideration of these reports in isolation.*

*This could be considered a shortcoming on the part of SAREC's project management and may reduce policy relevance.*

At the outset of the project it was not made clear to the Department of Geology that good quality research was the main objective of SAREC. As a result too much time was spent on producing reports of doubtful value.

The assessment concludes that: *Overall, the project represents an important body of work which is demonstrated by the existence of key articles in recognised international journals and the successful compilation of high quality, policy relevant and accessible conference proceedings. However, the detailed research output is of mixed standard and some is of patchy quality. The best research is clearly built upon research experience gained while working overseas (e.g. Japan) with exposure to internationally recognised scientists and research methodologies. The project could clearly have benefited from a larger training input and additional scientific exchanges, and ongoing evaluation with feedback, as the 'learning process' is not as high as might be expected from a 5 year SAREC sponsored programme. It is to the detriment of the project and the overall effort of SAREC that, for example, better training in environmental impact assessment methodology and geo-chemical surveys and analysis, were not given prior to the undertaking of such extensive and clearly important fieldwork.*

Nevertheless, the review of the internationally published papers received a positive appraisal by all the evaluators.

## Dissemination of research results

Both programmes made efforts to disseminate research results. Both programmes organised seminars with the local population and information was translated into Swahili. Still, the dissemination of the research results has not been successful.

MALISATA shows the same weakness of most research institutions: a lack of an identification of potential end-users of the research results. And, more important, the packaging of the research results according to end-users needs. This is somehow confirmed by the fact that most information is still in working papers. Only a small part of it has gone to the international scientific readership and almost nothing has gone to adaptive researchers, rural developers, policy makers and farmers, those supposed to get practical benefits of research findings. In part this can be explained by factors beyond the control of the projects, but is also the result of a lack of a policy for dissemination of research results. All actors claim to have done everything possibly to disseminate information using the traditional channels. MALISATA has even translated several findings into Swahili papers.

This problem should have been addressed already when the projects were identified.

The Department of Geology at UDSM has invested a lot of effort into reporting the different activities to SAREC. These reports have only been reproduced in a few copies and have consequently only been distributed on a limited scale. While this procedure may be warranted in the case of commissioned research, Sida/SAREC's support has been more focussed on producing relevant research results, and this type of reporting may not be as useful as other forms of disseminating research results

Only a few of the publications of the programmes can be found at the University Library. Stakeholders outside the UDSM were largely ignorant about the publications of the programmes.

Both programmes are good examples on how difficult it is to disseminate results of academic research. If some practical impact of their work is expected, the issue of diffusion of information must be properly addressed already at the time of project preparation and continuously monitored at the time of implementation.

## The policy making dimension

Since both projects addressed key issues in Tanzanian development the **policy making** implications are potentially high.

In general it can be said that MALISATA has been trying to follow the University Research policies and has played a role influencing the same, specially in the area of capacity building, research support environment, research planning and sharing of research resources. More efforts are needed in areas like internal procedures for Approval, Control and Monitoring of Research Projects, Dissemination of Research results and Effectiveness of Research.

The role of MALISATA in the policy setting and implementation of national, zone and district policies is more difficult to assess, specially when neither the UDSM nor the other organisations have institutionalised systematic ways of collaboration.

The Ministry of Natural Resources acknowledged the contribution of three IRA staff members in the elaboration of the National Forestry Policy in 1989.

The Ministries of Agriculture and of Natural Resources criticised the academic research work for being non-relevant and mentioned that they have never been invited to discuss IRA's research programmes but at the same time they are very clear stating that the UDSM does not belong to the National Research System. They consider UDSM to be outside the national agricultural research system whereas the Sokoine University belongs to the national system

These institutional bottlenecks make even more difficult to influence a national system especially if the UDSM is not welcome as an equal partner.

Nevertheless, the former MALISATA co-ordinator's participation as Chairman of the Tanzania Wildlife Research Council, and as a board member of the National Land Use Planning Commission and the National Agriculture Research Fund necessarily imply influences in their policies.

There are also a couple of clear cases in which MALISATA staff have created awareness and contributed to policy interventions. But in general it seems that personal contacts, seminars and workshops have been the only tangible ways in which the programme has contributed to this goal.

KIRDP, the most influential body in policy setting in the Kondo District as well as the District Commissioner expressed their disappointment about the low profile showed by MALISATA in the policy making at District level.

The EAMIT project fairs better on this account. At the local level stakeholders were aware of the project and several of the recommendations made had been implemented. For example, the project developed a retort to minimise the spread of mercury. This method was used in several areas visited. The expertise of the project was instrumental in the design of UNIDO/WB project on mitigating the environmental effects of small-scale gold mining in Tanzania.

## **The gender dimension**

The gender issue was not considered important by the EAMIT project while the MALISATA project attempted to address the issue. In spite of the efforts of MALISATA there are few female researchers

With respect to gender issues incorporated into the research agenda, it can be noted that the EAMIT project had social science concerns at the outset but during the course of implementation these received hardly any attention at all. As a consequence gender issues were also practically absent. All researchers were men but this is not surprising since there is only one woman PhD holder at the department.

The MALISATA project on the other hand had social science ambitions but gender issues never received sufficient priority (This is a Sida priority and it is not necessarily shared by the UDSM). The methodological approaches to gender were inadequate.

## **Research capacity development**

Research capacity development<sup>7</sup> has been a particularly important aspect of both projects. While the EAMIT project started out with a qualified group of researchers, their experiences of jointly planning and implementing research have contributed to the development of a research group with a significant knowledge of the problem area of environmental effects of mining. There has also

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<sup>7</sup> The concept of capacity building contains a notion that there is no capacity at the outset. Both institutions had an important capacity at the outset of the projects.

been some training undertaken. Defining research capacity as the capacity to identify, plan and implement research, the Department of Geology has definitely been strengthened as a result of the Swedish support.

As is noted by the external reviewer: *It appears that training was not originally envisaged as a major component of the project. However, to enhance the understanding of mining and environmental issues by researchers and students, training did assume a more central role, and, in the view of the evaluator it contributed significantly to the development of capacity within the research team:*

- *Partial support of two geology undergraduate students and one M.Sc. student in their project work.*
- *More general training included academic staff's attendance at workshops and conferences.*
- *Short-term training of Tanzanian researchers in metal analysis at the University of Uppsala (Sweden).*
- *Short-term training of Tanzanian researchers in various analytical methods at the GKSS Institute (Germany).*
- *Training of Principal Technician in analytical geochemistry for three months at the Royal Museum for Central Africa in Belgium.*
- *Training of two Tanzanian researchers for four weeks at the National Institute for Minamata Disease (Japan) in methods for mercury analysis and speciation.*

*The project was also well supported by a number of visits of staff of the Swedish Environmental Research Group. It is clear from the progress reports, that the capacity of the research team to undertake quality research was enhanced considerably by training activities under the auspices of the project.*

The training component was central in the MALISATA programme. There have been four Tanzanians PhDs graduated of which two from IRA and two from the Department of Botany. Two more Tanzanians from IRA are in the pipeline. The rest of the students, three of them already graduated, are Swedes connected to MALISATA but funded from various other sources, including SAREC's support to Swedish researchers (Svensk Ansökan). The IRA has an impressive research staff of more than 25 researchers and research students. The support provided in doing research and in strengthening the human resources base has certainly increased the research capacity of IRA.

However in other departments of the UDSM, at the Swedish Universities, at the ministries visited in Dar es Salaam and at the District level several voices raised in favour of a wider concept of "capacity building". Without neglecting PhD training, possibilities for undergraduate and Master training should also be included. The Department of Botany/UDSM believes that more benefits are obtained from a mixed research team and would also like to see resources reoriented to strengthen not only the research but also the teaching capacity of the University.

Especially the Ministry of Agriculture insisted on the need to build up "a practical research capacity". The Director of Research and Training stressed that it is not enough to train PhD's. Resources must also be available to put those highly qualified people in the field.

In the same direction, the Swedish institutions claimed that higher degrees are not a given proof of capacity but an important step in creating conditions to build capacity. Resources for post-doctoral activities should be given priority in research programmes. The Department of Plant Ecology, University of Uppsala means that the only way to monitor and evaluate capacity is by including, at the time of research planning, some applied and adaptive research.

## Curricula development

As a result of the projects, there has been significant development in the **curricula** at both institutions as well as for UDSM at large.

The Director of Postgraduates Studies mentioned that MALISATA has indeed contributed to the fact that most faculties are starting to include environmental issues in their curriculum. For instance the department of Geography is introducing environmental courses and one environmental course was added to the Master training in Demography. The programme's staff also uses MALISATA research results in lecturing.

The University of Stockholm is already utilising research results from MALISATA to formally improve and reformulate their curriculum. Courses in underdevelopment studies are already undergoing and there are plans to expand an existing course about land use and environmental changes in the tropics.

Uppsala University gives every second year an elective undergraduate course in Tropical Ecology for Swedish students, which includes a field visit to the project area in Tanzania

## Collaborative research

There has been an almost unanimous acclaim for the methods of work and the positive contributions of the Swedish **co-operating partners**.

One major achievement and probably one of the most important in the long run are the collaboration links established among researchers, especially among PhD students from both countries. This is the best guarantee of integration, understanding and long term collaboration between two different research cultures, creating a solid ground for long-term joint research work. Everyone interviewed felt that this collaboration also has improved the quality of each other's research results and it was generating a similar academic quality thinking.

However, there is a unanimous positive experience among former and current PhD students of the methods and quality of training. The sandwich-methods seem to work properly and there is no complaint but only satisfaction about the tutorial system and the field support given by the programme.

The access of Tanzanian researchers to research facilities in Sweden, the support given by Tanzanians to Swedish researchers and the equipment acquired, is also mentioned as contributing to increase the research capacity of the collaboration institutions.

Swedish students are learning about the functioning and structures of African research institutions, which broaden their perspective about research problematic.

One aspect mentioned by almost every Tanzanian researcher is the contribution that the programme has made to the improvement of their skill in processing research data. The Swedish and the Tanzanian co-ordinators both highlighted the improved skills in project management.

### 3. Lessons learnt and recommendations

Environmental research is by its nature multidisciplinary. The lesson learnt from these two projects, not uncommon in most countries, is the difficulty of creating an institutional environment where interdisciplinary research actually takes place. Quality research presupposes that the participants have a strong background in their own disciplines and are willing to co-operate with other disciplines in the pursuit of new knowledge.

Another important conclusion stresses the need for clearly defining over-all objectives, intermediary objectives, activities and inputs at the planning phase of a project/programme. There is also a need for a monitoring and on-going evaluation system to be introduced at the outset of the project/programme. This suggests that project planning has to be improved.

The dissemination of research results has been weak. The lesson learnt is that unless this activity is built into the project, very little will be accomplished. Sida/SAREC as well as other donors have for many years recognised this problem area.

The results of the evaluation confirm the experiences of a tension between academic research and the need for policy recommendations and advice. Still, although the projects were aware of this difficulty, little was actually done to overcome this problem.

It has been noted that one of the reasons of the success of the EAMIT project was that Swedish support was not stopped after 2–3 years, which is customary in international co-operation but was maintained for 5 years. Although not mentioned in the Report, the same is also true for the MALI-SATA programme. Investing in research is a long-time endeavour and shortcuts are not possible.

The academic quality of researchers and an enabling environment are important for the success of a project. Equally important is good project/programme management. This does not only include the provision of a well functioning infrastructure but also the setting of the research agenda, the planning and implementation of the research. The investments in research, often using taxpayers money, should in the end produce benefits to justify the costs. The management has a responsibility to ensure that the money is well spent.

In spite of efforts made by the consultant, the UDSM was active neither in elaborating the TOR nor in the identification of evaluators. With the exception of the Department of Geology, no comments have been received from the UDSM on the Draft Report. This tends to violate the spirit of evaluations and it is recommended that SAREC study the matter more in depth.

It seems as if more quality research could be obtained with the same input of resources. The question of incentives plays an important role in this context. It is recommended that the UDSM, with support from SAREC, review its incentive schemes so that they are more in line with UDSM priorities. (The DSA rates generate a lot of fieldwork but not necessarily good research.)

In the case of the EAMIT programme it was clear that the researchers assumed that they would have to provide detailed reports on the research and research results to SAREC. It was not made clear that the production of high quality research was the major objective of SAREC. This highlights the need for a change. SAREC should already at the outset of research co-operation make the objectives of the support clear to the participating institutions.



# Annex 1

## Terms of Reference for the evaluation of Sida/Sarec supported environmental research projects in Tanzania

### 1. PURPOSE AND SCOPE OF THE EVALUATION

Sida's bilateral research cooperation with Tanzania has been directed to individual projects. In the coming years Sida will put more emphasis on institution strengthening at the University of Dar es Salaam UDSM. Sida's endeavour is connected to the efforts made by UDSM in the "Institutional Transformation Programme UDSM 2000". The programme aims at making the University a more effective institution for research and higher education with relevance to development issues in Tanzania. Part of the transformation is to develop the institutional capacity of setting the universities research agenda. In this context it is important to explore lessons learned that could be exploited in future research cooperation.

Environmental research will continue to be an important area for cooperation. Sida supported programmes in this area are in a stage of finalisation or have just completed important steps, which make an evaluation timely. Hence, this evaluation should provide Sida and UDSM with recommendations for the following general issues:

- Recommendations to UDSM on how experiences of and capacities for environmental research and research training gained through the evaluated projects could be exploited.
- Recommendations to Sida on future modes of support to environmental research.
- Recommendations to both parties regarding the procedures of setting agendas for environmental research.
- Recommendations on how Tanzanian stakeholders could be involved in agenda setting.

These recommendations should also be in line with the policies in the UDSM 2000 and taking other plans on environmental research at UDSM into consideration.

### 2. BACKGROUND

Within the current bilateral research cooperation with Tanzania four programmes or projects focus on environmental research:

1. "Man – Land Interrelations in Semi-Arid Tanzania (MALISATA)" at the Institute of Resource Assessment, IRA at the University of Dar es Salaam, UDSM.
2. "Environmental Aspects of Mining and Industrialization" at the Department of Geology, Faculty of Science at UDSM.
3. "Technology and Environmental Management in Tanzania: A study of Environmental Pollution in Three Provinces of Tanzania" at the Institute of Development Studies, IDS, UDSM
4. "The Marine Science Programme" at the Institute for Marine Science, IMS, Zanzibar and the University of Dar es Salaam, UDSM.

The Marine Science Programme was evaluated in 1996 and 1999. The "Technology and Environmental management ... I" is a small project. Hence both of these projects will be excluded from the current evaluation, and focus will be on projects 1–2.

### 3. THE APPROACH

Development agencies and other stakeholders have great interests in the field of environmental research, which makes this field particularly prone to different actor perspectives in agenda setting. For some years a number of generalized environmental problems have dominated the environmental research agenda. Recent debate has increasingly questioned the interpretations of phenomena in the environment behind such agendas. The emerging challenge for donors and researchers is to learn more about agenda setting for environmental research.

This evaluation should use an approach where the research project history is discovered. Of special interest is the influence of generalized research topics or “problem narratives” and the impact stakeholder perceptions have had during design and execution of the research projects. To illuminate the processes of agenda setting and research proceedings from a critical and constructive perspective the approach emerges from the questions:

To what extent do these research topics reflect prevailing “problem narratives” in the field of environment and development, made popular due to environmental misreading and/or false agenda priorities of the donor community and civil society groups?

To what extent has the research based on the agenda generated new research questions, continued or branching research programs and/or made generative inputs in curriculum development.

### 4. THE ASSIGNMENT

The following issues **should be** covered in the evolution:

#### *Relevance*

- *general development relevance* – to what extent does research topics in the programme/project cover environmental problems relevant for Tanzania ? Would other environmental problems be of higher priority for research?
- *relevance in relation to Sida’s general goals, especially regarding the Environment and Gender goals?*
- *policy relevance* – What is the degree of potential and actual use for research results in policy making and for policy implementation?

#### *Achievement of objectives*

The general objectives of Sida’s research cooperation is to strengthen research capacity and to produce research results. Research capacity has many aspects (see enclosure 11), to be assessed in those projects where it is relevant. The following should receive special attention:

#### **Research training** (The MALISATA-programme)

Assessment of examination rate and results, quality of supervision and relevance and quality of training components:

- How could research training be improved?
- How significant has research cooperation with Sweden been for research training?

#### **Research administration, management and facilities**

- Has research cooperation fostered the ability to identify and define research problems, to plan and execute projects?
- Has institutional structures for research administration and management been built up through

research cooperation?

- To what degree has research cooperation contributed to building up of research laboratories and other facilities?

### **Research results: reports, publications, conferences, dissemination**

- Scientific quality should be assessed regarding theory, methodology and empirical findings, related to international and regional standards of academic research in similar fields.
- Productivity should be assessed in relation to accomplishment of plans, to reporting and to dissemination of research results.

### *Gender aspects*

Four main aspects should, where relevant, be assessed by the evaluators:

- Status of female researchers in projects
- Existence of gender related research problems in projects
- Use of gender relevant data and methods for analysis.

## **5. METHODOLOGY, EVALUATION TEAM AND TIME SCHEDULE**

### **Organisation of evaluation**

The team leader is responsible for contracting an evaluation team with the composition and competence described below. The team leader shall present a plan for the evaluation, including methodology and division of work tasks between team members. The plan should be approved by Sida, UDSM and the partners in research cooperation.

### **Composition and competence of evaluation team**

The team should consist of two evaluators experienced in academic studies of environment in developing countries. The following competence should be covered by the evaluators together. Skills:

- in assessing policy relevance and impact
- in assessing research capacity building with an institutional approach
- to assess research training
- in assessing scientific quality in the relevant fields

For any item, the team leader could subcontract external reviewers.

### **Participation from UDSM and research cooperation partners**

Project coordinators should provide the evaluation team with material (such as research proposals, reports, publications, contracts and correspondence, etc.) and links to stakeholders. They should facilitate for the evaluation team to interview UDSM staff, and project participants.

### **Role of Sida officials**

Sida officials are responsible for assigning the evaluation team, and for coordinating the approvals of the evaluation plan and reports. Sida officials may also be interviewed regarding the role of Sida.

### **Places and institutions to visit and interviews to be made.**

The evaluation team should visit all involved departments and institutes at UDSM and in Sweden. A small selection of stakeholders at policy levels should be visited and interviewed regarding policy relevance (ministries, donor and implementation agencies, etc.).

### **Other Data Sources**

Assessment of secondary sources such as quotation indexes, reviews of books and other publications, debates in journals, comments in conference proceedings, etc.. If such material is scarce, "peer reviews" of publications, reports and working papers should be requested from international and regional scholars in respective field.

### **Time schedule**

The draft report should be submitted to Sida and to the evaluated institutions not later than 20 December 1999.

Total time for the assignment is 16,5 weeks to be divided by the evaluators and sub-consultants.

Field trips should cover totally 2–3 weeks/evaluator, to be divided for visits in Tanzania and Sweden.

## **6. REPORTING**

The evaluation report should clearly describe conclusions regarding relevance, achievements of objectives, cost effectiveness and gender status for each project.

Recommendations should be clearly defined according to the scope of the evaluation.

The evaluation report shall be written in English and should not exceed 50 pages, excluding annexes. The outline of the report shall follow Sida Evaluation Report – a Standardized Format (see Annex 3, p 71 of Evaluation Manual for SIDA). Ten copies of the draft report shall be submitted to Sida no later than 20 December 1999. Within three weeks after receiving Sida's comments on the draft report, a final version in 30 copies and on diskette shall be submitted to Sida. Subject to decision by Sida, the report will be published and distributed as a publication within the Sida Evaluations series. The evaluation report shall be written in Word 97 for Windows or a compatible format and should be presented in a way that enables publication without further editing.

The evaluation assignment includes production of a summary according to the guidelines for Sida Evaluations Newsletter (Annex 1) and the completion of Sida Evaluations Data Work Sheet (Annex 2). The separate summary and a completed Data Work Sheet shall be submitted to Sida along with the final report.

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