

Evaluation

Finnish Partnership Agreement Scheme



Evaluation report 2008:1 Summary

**MINISTRY FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS OF FINLAND
DEPARTMENT FOR DEVELOPMENT POLICY**

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DEPARTMENT FOR DEVELOPMENT POLICY

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PREFACE

The importance of the Finnish non-governmental organisations in supporting the development of civil society of the developing countries has been well recognised in the development policies of the Finnish Government, reflected also as increasing aid volumes channelled through the Finnish NGOs. The Ministry for Foreign Affairs monitors and assesses the performance of the NGOs, which on their part, strive to focus their activities to fulfil the responsibilities entrusted in them. To achieve the set objectives for the civil society support, mutual trust and constructive cooperation is essential.

The Finnish Partnership Agreement Scheme, currently including ten (10) Finnish NGOs was subjected to an evaluation as there was a felt need for information to further develop the scheme. The fact that circa one half of the funds for the Finnish NGOs is channelled through the Partnership Agreement Scheme underlines the importance of this aid instrument and thus also the responsibility of the Ministry for Foreign Affairs to assess regularly the performance of the scheme. The purpose of the evaluation was to achieve a thorough assessment of the entire concept of the partnership scheme, the activities and performance of the individual organisations and the governance by both the Ministry and the partnership organisations.

The evaluation of the Partnership Agreement Scheme was, after a competitive bidding, entrusted to Impact Consulting Oy Ltd and its team of experts led by Dr. Pekka Virtanen. After nearly nine months of work the evaluation report is now ready. The task of the team was cumbersome. The findings, conclusions and recommendations speak for an abundance of detailed information the team had to analyse. The reader is reminded of the fact that due to the versatility of the Partnership Organisations and their country programmes, the evaluation may not have touched every organisation with a similar depth and scope.

In next phase of the evaluation process, the management of the MFA will give its response to the recommendations of the evaluation and the team in the Unit of the MFA responsible for the Scheme will act upon the decision of the management and see that the recommendations are implemented and followed through.

It is hoped that this report shall serve as a solid basis for further dialogue between the Ministry and the partnership organisations. It will also constitute as a valuable instrument for lessons learned to benefit the future cooperation.

Helsinki, 6 May 2008

Aira Päävöke
Director
Unit for Evaluation and Internal Auditing

ACRONYMS

ABC	Activity-Based Costing
ADP	Area Development Programme
ART	Anti-retroviral treatment
BWI	Building and Wood Workers' International
CBO	Community-Based Organisation
COFCAWE	Concern for Children and Women Empowerment (Uganda)
CSO	Civil Society Organization
Danida	Danish International Development Agency
DFID	Department for International Development, the UK
EC	European Commission
EIMI	<i>Educación Inicial: Modalidad Indirecta</i> (Bolivia)
EU	European Union
FBO	Faith-Based Organisation
FCA	FinnChurchAid (<i>Kirkon Ulkomaanapu</i>)
FCGI	Full Gospel Churches of India
FELM	Finnish Evangelical Lutheran Mission (<i>Suomen Lähetysseura</i>)
Fida	Fida International, Mission and Development Co-operation Services of Pentecostal Churches of Finland (<i>Fida International ry</i>)
FIDIDA	Finnish Disabled people's International Development Association
FRC	Finnish Red Cross (<i>Suomen Punainen Risti</i>)
FS	The Free Church Federation of Finland (<i>Frikyrklig Samverkan</i>)
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GNI	Gross National Income
HDI	Human Development Index
HQ	Headquarters
ICT	Information & Communications Technology
IDP	Internally Displaced Person
ILO	International Labour Organisation
INGO	International Non-Governmental Organization
ISF	International Solidarity Foundation (<i>Kansainvälinen Solidaarisuussäätiö</i>)
KEO-33	Unit for Non-Governmental Organisations (the MFA)
KEPA	Service Centre for Development Cooperation (Finland)
LDC	Least Developed Country
LWF	Lutheran World Federation
MDG	Millennium Development Goal
M & E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MFA	Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
Norad	Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation
ODA	Official Development Assistance
OECD	Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development
OECD/DAC	Development Assistance Committee of OECD

Plan Finland	Plan National Organisation in Finland (<i>Plan Suomi Säätiö</i>)
PO	Partnership Organisation
PPA	Partnership Programme Agreement (the UK)
PRS	Poverty Reduction Strategy
PS	Partnership Scheme
SASK	Trade Union Solidarity Centre of Finland (<i>Suomen Ammattiliittojen Solidaarisuuskeskus</i>)
SCF	Save the Children Finland (<i>Pelastakaa Lapset</i>)
Sida	Swedish International Development Authority
TB	Tuberculosis
ToR	Terms of Reference
UCOBAC	Uganda Community Based Association for Child Welfare
UK	United Kingdom
UN	United Nations
VSO	Voluntary Service Overseas (the UK)
WFP	World Food Programme
WVF	World Vision Finland (<i>Suomen World Vision</i>)
WVI	World Vision India
WV	World Vision



Kumppanuusjärjestöohjelman Evaluaatio

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Alice Nankya Ndidde, Rita Dey ja Saul Mendoz*

Ulkoasiainministeriön evaluointiraportti 2008:1

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TIIVISTELMÄ

Noin puolet ulkoasiainministeriön kansalaisjärjestötuesta on kanavoitu kumppanuusohjelman kautta. Vuosina 2003–2005 ulkoasiainministeriö on solminut sopimuksen kymmenen suomalaisen kumppanuusjärjestön kanssa. Tämän arvioinnin tarkoitus on kehittää kumppanuusohjelmaa ja kumppaneiden kapasiteettia. Arviointi tarkastelee kumppanuusohjelmaa kehitysyhteistyön instrumenttina, järjestöjen kehitysyhteistyötä ja ohjelman hallintoa. Kumppanuusohjelmalla on selkeitä etuja sekä ministeriölle että kumppanijärjestöille. Etuna on tuen joustavuus, pitkän aikavälin suunnittelu ja byrokratian väheneminen. Ohjelman tavoitteet ja ohjeistot eivät ole selkeät seurannan kannalta eivätkä tue vuoropuhelun syntymistä. Järjestöjen kannalta toimintojen maantieteellinen hajauttaminen saattaa vähentää tehokkuutta ja tulosten kestävyyttä.

Arviointi suosittelee, että ulkoasiainministeriö määrittelee toiminnalle selkeät tavoitteet; parantaa rahoituksen ennakoitavuutta; tarkentaa valintakriteereitä ja avaa mahdollisuuksia uusille kumppanijärjestöille; arvioi säännöllisesti järjestöjen kapasiteettia ja toimintaa; laatii hallinnolliset ohjeistot, joissa määritellään ohjelman keskeiset toiminnot; sekä selkeyttää hallintoa ministeriössä; parantaa laadunseurantaa sekä koordinaatiota ja yhteistyötä ministeriön sisäisesti; vahvistaa KEO-33:n analyttistä ja dialogiroolia. Neuvonantajien ja suurlähetystöjen rooli ohjelmatoteutuksessa on selkiytettävä.

Arviointi suosittelee, että kumppanuusjärjestöt keskittävät toimintoja maantieteellisesti ja temaattisesti; kehittävät toimintaohjeet ideologiselle ja markkinointityölle, joita ei rahoiteta ohjelmasta; parantavat dokumentaatiota ja raportointia; yhdessä UM:n kanssa identifioivat hallintokulut; jatkavat laadun ja seurannan kehittämistyötä.

Avainsanat: kumppanuusohjelma, kumppanuusjärjestöt, kansalaisjärjestöt, kehitysyhteistyö

Utvärdering av Partnerskapsprogram

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ABSTRAKT

Ungefär hälften av Finlands stöd till frivilliga organisationer kanaliseras via ett partnerskapsprogram. Under perioden 2003–2005 har utrikesministeriet ingått avtal med tio olika frivilligorganisationer. Syftet med denna utvärdering är att utveckla programmet och de olika parternas kapacitet. Utvärderingen riktar in sig på själva konceptet för partnerskapsprogram, frivilligorganisationernas utvecklingssamarbete och hanteringen av programmet. Programmet har uppenbara fördelar såväl för ministeriet som för partnerskapsorganisationerna. Det ökar flexibiliteten, underlättar den långsiktiga planeringen och minskar byråkratin. De mål och regler som styr programmet är emellertid inte tillräckligt tydliga för att utrikesministeriet ska kunna bedriva en effektiv översyn eller för dialog mellan parterna. Den tematiska och geografiska bredden kan minska effektiviteten och hållbarheten.

Utvärderingen rekommenderar att utrikesministeriet definierar tydligare mål och kriterier för programmet; förbättrar förutsägbarheten i finansieringen; specificerar urvalskriterierna och öppnar upp programmet för nya deltagare; regelbundet bedömer frivilligorganisationernas kapacitet och prestation; utvecklar tydliga riktlinjer, inklusive definitioner för viktiga operativa koncept; tydliggör sina interna administrativa processer, sin samordning och kvalitetssäkring; samt stärker frivilligorganisationens roll vid analys och dialog samt rollen för områdesrådgivare och ambassader.

Utvärderingen rekommenderar att partnerskapsorganisationerna fokuserar sina program geografiskt och tematiskt; utvecklar uppförandekoder för det ideologiska arbete och den marknadsföring som inte kan finansieras via programmet; förbättrar dokumentation och rapportering; utvärderar de aktuella administrativa kostnaderna tillsammans med utrikesministeriet; fortsätter utvecklingen av kvalitetssäkringssystemen; ökar samarbetet mellan partnerskapsorganisationer i Finland och andra länder.

Nyckelord: Program för partnerskapsavtal, partnerskapsorganisationer, NGO, utvecklingssamarbete, bistånd

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ABSTRACT

During 2003–2005 the Ministry for Foreign Affairs (MFA) has signed agreements with ten partnership organisations (POs). Approximately half of Finland's support to civil society organisations is channelled through the Partnership Agreement Scheme. The purpose of this evaluation is to develop the Scheme and the capacities of the partners. The evaluation addresses the Partnership Scheme concept, the PO's development cooperation, and the management of the Scheme. The Scheme offers benefits both for the Ministry and the POs through flexibility, long-term planning and reduction of bureaucracy. The objectives and guidelines are not clear for efficient oversight by the MFA and dialogue. The thematic and geographical diversity reduces effectiveness and sustainability.

The evaluation recommends that the MFA defines clear objectives and criteria for the scheme; improves the predictability of funding; specifies the selection criteria and opens the scheme for new entrants; appraises regularly PO's capacity and performance; develops clear guidelines, and defines key operational concepts; clarifies its internal administrative procedures, coordination and quality assurance; strengthens the NGO Unit's analytical and dialogue role and the roles of sector advisers and embassies.

The evaluation recommends that, the POs to focus their programs geographically and thematically; develop codes of conduct to the ideological and marketing work, which cannot be funded through the scheme; improve documentation and reporting; assess together the MFA the bases for administrative costs; continue development of quality assurance systems.

Keywords: Partnership Agreement Scheme, partnership organisation, non-governmental organisations (NGOs), development cooperation

YHTEENVETO

Noin puolet ulkoasiainministeriön kansalaisjärjestöille suunnatusta tuesta on kana-voitu vuonna 2003 perustetun kumppanuusohjelman kautta. Ulkoasiainministeriö on solminut kumppanuussopimuksen vuosina 2003–2005 kymmenen järjestön kanssa. Nämä järjestöt ovat: Fida International ry, Frikyrklig samverkan, Kansainvälinen solidaarisuussäätiö, Kirkon Ulkomaanapu, Pelastakaa lapset ry, Plan Suomi Säätiö, Punainen Risti, Suomen Ammattiliittojen Solidaarisuuskeskus, Suomen Lähetysseura ja Suomen World Vision.

Tässä arvioinnissa tarkastellaan kumppanuusjärjestökonseptia, kumppanuusjärjestöjen kehitysyhteistyötä sekä ohjelman hallintoa ulkoasiainministeriössä sekä kumppanijärjestöissä. Kumppanuusohjelma on muutosvaiheessa. Uusia yksityiskohtaisempia ohjeistoja kehitetään parhaillaan ulkoasiainministeriössä ja myös kumppanijärjestöt ovat muuttamassa toimintaansa projektikohtaisesta tuesta ohjelmalliseen kehitystyöhön.

Johtopäätökset

Kumppanuusohjelma on tarkoituksenmukainen instrumentti suomalaisessa kehitysyhteistyössä. Sen edut niin ulkoasiainministeriölle kuin myös kumppanijärjestöille ovat lisääntynyt tuen joustavuus, pitkäaikainen suunnittelu sekä vähentynyt byrokratia. Ohjelman ohjeistot eivät kuitenkaan ole riittävän selkeät tehokkaan seurannan kannalta eivätkä myöskään tue vuoropuhelun syntymistä kumppaneiden kesken. Myöskään valintakriteerit ja ministeriön seurantaohjeet eivät riitä todentamaan ja vahvistamaan tilivelvollisuutta hyödynsääjille. Raportointi sen nykyisessä muodossa ei riitä arvioimaan täyttävätkö ohjelmaehdotukset niille asetetut vaatimukset.

Kumppanijärjestöjen organisaatio, temaattiset painopisteet sekä toiminnan mittakaavat ovat erilaisia ja järjestöt toimivat maantieteellisesti sekä kulttuurisesti erilaisilla alueilla. Jotkut kumppanijärjestöt ovat keskittäneet toimintaansa, kun toiset järjestöt puolestaan ovat hajauttaneet toimintaansa useille sektoreille ja useisiin maihin. Tämä erillaisuus ei kuitenkaan tule ilmi projektidokumenteissa. Toiminnan hajauttaminen tai keskittäminen on myös keskeinen asia kustannustehokkuuden ja kestävyyskannalta, mikä tulee ottaa huomioon myös kumppanijärjestöjen strategisessa suunnittelussa. Tuen suunnittelussa tulee ottaa huomioon toimintaympäristöt ja edellytykset.

Suosituksat ulkoasiainministeriölle

- (i) Ulkoasiainministeriön tulee määritellä selkeämmin kumppanuusohjelman tavoitteet uusissa kehitteillä olevissa ohjeistuksissa. Ennakoitavuutta ja rahoituksen läpinäkyvyyttä tulee parantaa. Ministeriön tulee myös selkeyttää mitä edellytyksiä se asettaa eri toiminnolle kuten palvelujen tarjonta, tiedotustoiminta, paikallisten kumppanijärjestöjen toiminnan rahoittaminen ja järjestöjen kehittämistyö. Evaluaatiotiimi suosittelee, että kumppanuusohjelma tukisi erityisesti järjestöjen kehittämistyötä ja tiedotusta. Tilivelvollisuutta hyödynsääjille tulee parantaa.

- (ii) Kumppanuusjärjestöjen valintakriteerit tulee tarkentaa ja ohjelmaan tulee ottaa uusia kumppaneita. Kumppanuusohjelmaan liittyminen ja siitä lähteminen voisi tapahtua esimerkiksi kahden vuoden siirtymä- tai koeajalla. Tällöin voidaan tehdä tarvittavat muutokset ja kehittämistyö. Evaluaatiotiimi ei suositakaan automaattista kumppanijärjestöjen vaihtuvuutta, vaan säännöllistä kapasiteettia ja toiminnan arviointia.
- (iii) Uusien kumppanijärjestöjen arvioinnin lisäksi jo mukana olevien kumppanijärjestöjen kapasiteettia ja toimintaa tulee arvioida säännöllisesti. Euroopan komission laatimia indikaattoreita voidaan soveltaa arvioinnissa.
- (iv) Ulkoasiainministeriössä tulee selkeyttää hallinnolliset käytännöt, koordinaatio ja laadunvalvontamekanismit. Samoin myös KEO-33 rooli laaja-alaisessa kansalaisyhteiskunnan kehittämistyössä tulee selkeyttää. Taloudellisen seurannan ja toiminnan monitoroinnin lisäksi KEO-33 roolia tulisi vahvistaa analyttisessä työssä ja vuoropuhelussa kumppaneiden kanssa. Kumppanijärjestöjen ja ulkoasiainministeriön yhteistyötä voi vahvistaa kutsumalla sektori-neuvonantajat ja lähetystöt mukaan.
- (v) Ulkoasiainministeriön tulee kehittää uuden ohjeistot erityisesti ohjelma-luonteista toimintaa varten. Näissä ohjeissa pitää määritellä ministeriön edellytykset kapasiteetin kehittämisen, tiedotustyön sekä palvelujen tarjonnan toteuttamiselle sekä myös kumppanuusohjelman seurantaindikaattorit. Talousraportoinnin periaatteet tulee selkeyttää uusissa ohjeistoissa.
- (vi) Evaluaatio suosittelee, että kumppanuusohjelmaa ei sidota Suomen kahden-välisen kehitysyhteistyön tavoitteisiin, sillä se antaa mahdollisuudet toimia myös maissa, jotka eivät ole kehitysyhteistyön pitkäaikaisia kumppaneita.

Suositukses kumppanuusjärjestöille

- (i) Niille järjestöille, joiden toiminta on hajautettu useisiin maihin ja useille sektoreille, suositellaan toimintojen keskittämistä. Kestävyyttä ja kustannustehokkuutta tulee analysoida toimintaohjelmien kehittämisessä. Evaluaatiotiimi suosittelee, että kumppanijärjestöt keskittyisivät järjestötyön kehittämiseen sekä tiedotustoimintaan.
- (ii) Kumppanijärjestöjen tulee kehittää yhdessä ulkoasiainministeriön kanssa toimintaohjeet erottamaan kehitystyö ideologisesta toiminnasta ja markkinointi tiedotustyöstä.
- (iii) Dokumentointia ja raportointia tulee parantaa. Nykyinen systeemi ei anna ministeriölle mahdollisuuksia todelliseen seurantaan. Suunnitelmiin ja raportteihin pitäisi sisällyttää maakohtaisia taustatietoja.

- (iv) Kumppanuusjärjestöjen ja ministeriön tulee arvioida mistä nykyiset hallintokulut koostuvat.
- (v) Laadunvarmennusjärjestelmien kehittämistyön tulee jatkua. Yhdenmukaista järjestelmää ei kuitenkaan voida luoda, sillä monet kansainvälisten verkostojen jäsenet käyttävät oman verkostonsa laatusysteemejä.
- (vi) Suomalaisten kumppanijärjestöjen yhteistyön tulee heijastaa kumppaneiden muuttuvia tarpeita. Kumppanijärjestöjen yhteistyötä sekä maatasolla että myös temaattista yhteistyötä tulee lisätä ja myös kumppanimaiden hallituksen edustajat tulee ottaa mukaan toimintaan.

SAMMANFATTNING

Ungefär hälften av Finlands stöd till frivilligorganisationer kanaliseras för närvarande via det partnerskapsprogram som startades 2003. Det finska utrikesministeriet har mellan 2003–2005 ingått partnerskapsavtal med tio finska frivilligorganisationer. Dessa organisationer är Fida International rf (Fida), Frikyrklig samverkan (FS), Internationella solidaritetsstiftelsen (ISF), Kyrkans Utlandshjälp (KU), Rädda Barnen Finland, Plan Finland, Finlands Röda Kors (FRK), Fackliga Solidaritetscentralen i Finland (SASK), Finska Missionssällskapet (FMS) och Finlands World Vision (SWV).

Partnerskapsprogrammet är under utveckling. Nya, mer detaljerade riktlinjer för urvalet av frivilligorganisationer förbereds av utrikesministeriet. Dessutom rör sig partnerskapsorganisationerna mot ett allt mer programmerat tillvägagångssätt vid planering och implementering av bistånd. Denna utvärdering har undersökt de olika delarna av frivilligorganisationernas utvecklingssamarbete samt ledningsrutiner och administrationen av programmet såväl på utrikesministeriet som inom partnerskapsorganisationerna.

Huvudslutsatser

Partnerskapsprogrammet är ett lämpligt instrument för finskt utvecklingssamarbete. Det har uppenbara fördelar för både utrikesministeriet och de deltagande frivilligorganisationerna vad gäller ökad flexibilitet, planering på lång sikt och minskad byråkrati. Man observerade emellertid att de mål och regler som styr programmet inte är tillräckligt tydliga för att utrikesministeriet ska kunna bedriva en effektiv översyn eller för en meningsfull dialog mellan parterna. Inte heller de allmänna urvalskriterier och instruktioner som styr utrikesministeriets översyn är tillräckliga för att verifiera och stärka ansvarsskyldigheten gentemot förmånstagarna. För närvarande ger inte den information/dokumentation som tillhandahålls via frivilligorganisationerna och utrikesministeriet tillräcklig information för att bedöma om det föreslagna programmet uppfyller de uppställda kraven.

Partnerskapsorganisationerna skiljer sig vad gäller organisatorisk struktur, tematiskt fokus och verksamhetsvolym. Även geografisk spridning samt sociokulturell och politisk heterogenitet är olika i partnerländerna. Vissa av partnerskapsorganisationerna är förhållandevis väl fokuserade och koncentrerar sig på några få huvudsektorer och/eller några få länder medan andra är relativt spridda. Denna spridning reflekteras inte på ett adekvat sätt i frivilligorganisationernas huvuddokumentation och väcker kritiska frågor angående stödets kostnadseffektivitet och hållbarhet. Vid planering av stöd ska ett vidare sammanhang beaktas och utvecklingsinterventionerna tillämpas.

Rekommendationer för programmet och utrikesministeriet

- (i) Utrikesministeriet ska i de nya riktlinjer som tas fram på ett bättre sätt definiera mål, syften och strategisk vision för partnerskapsprogrammet. Även förutsägbarhet och transparens i finansiering ska förbättras. Ytterligare ska utrikes-

ministeriet tydliggöra sina förväntningar angående tjänsteleverans kontra befrämjande arbete samt beträffande aktivitetsstöd och stöd till organisationsutveckling. Utvärderingsgruppen rekommenderar att partnerskapsprogrammet betonar organisationsutveckling och befrämjande arbete. Ansvarsskyldigheten för förmånstagarna ska förbättras.

- (ii) Tydliga urvalskriterier ska definieras och programmet ska vara öppet för ett begränsat antal nya deltagare som väljs i en öppen process. Inträde i och utträde ur systemet kan ske via en övergångs-/försöksfas under vilken exempelvis nödvändiga ändringar och åtgärder kan vidtas och verifieras.
- (iii) Frivilligsorganisationernas kapacitet ska utvärderas regelbundet. Förutom förhandsbedömningen av nya deltagare ska organisationernas organisatoriska kapacitet och prestation inom programmet bedömas regelbundet. Indikatorer och prestationskriterier som har utvecklats av EG kan tillämpas.
- (iv) Utrikesministeriets interna administrativa processer och samordning ska stärkas. Områdesrådgivare och ambassader i Finlands långsiktiga partnerländer ska engageras och kommunikation mellan ambassaderna och KEO-33 ska förbättras och ske regelbundet. Utrikesministeriet ska tydligt definiera den huvudsakliga roll som KEO-33 har i ett bredare perspektiv av stöd till civila samhällsorganisationer. Utvärderingsgruppen rekommenderar att den roll som KEO-33 har vid analys och dialog stärks.
- (v) Nya riktlinjer för ledningsarbetet ska utvecklas som återspeglar ett planerat tillvägagångssätt. Dessa riktlinjer ska innehålla (a) beslut angående tillvägagångssätt vid kapacitetsutveckling, befrämjande arbete och stöd för tjänsteleverans inom programmet samt (b) programmets grundläggande prestationsindikatorer. De nya riktlinjerna ska även rationalisera den finansiella rapporteringen.
- (vi) Partnerskapsprogrammet rekommenderas att inte kopplas samman med målen för Finlands bilaterala utvecklingssamarbete. I dess nuvarande form tillåter programmet samarbete i länder som inte är långsiktiga partners för finländskt utvecklingssamarbete.

Rekommendationer till frivilligorganisationerna

- (i) De frivilligorganisationer som för närvarande är spridda över ett stort antal länder och/eller tematiska områden rekommenderas en bättre geografisk och tematisk fokusering. Kostnadseffektivitet och hållbarhet ska ingå som en del av partnerskapsorganisationernas strategiska tänkande. Frivilligorganisationerna ska företrädesvis fokusera på organisatorisk utveckling och befrämjande arbete.
- (ii) Frivilligorganisationerna ska tillsammans med utrikesministeriet utveckla genomförbara uppförandekoder för att skilja utvecklingsarbete från ideologiskt

arbete, som till exempel omvändelsearbete, och marknadsföring från information och befrämjande arbete.

- (iii) Dokumentation och rapportering till utrikesministeriet ska förbättras eftersom det nuvarande systemet inte tillåter utrikesministeriet att utöva en adekvat översyn. Kontextuella frågor på nationell nivå ska återspeglas i relevanta programdokument såsom operativa planer.
- (iv) Frivilligorganisationerna ska tillsammans med utrikesministeriet tydliggöra definitioner och tillvägagångssätt och därefter utvärdera de nuvarande administrativa utgifterna. Detta skulle tjäna som utgångspunkt för att vid behov justera den övre gränsen för att säkra en högkvalitativ administration.
- (v) Utvecklingen av kvalitetssäkringssystemen ska fortsätta. Med tanke på mångfalden av partnerskapsorganisationer är det eventuellt inte realistiskt att alla antar samma kvalitetssystem, i synnerhet eftersom flera av de partnerskapsorganisationer som arbetar via internationella nätverk har tillgång till och använder nätverkets kvalitetssäkringssystem.
- (vi) Samarbetet mellan frivilligorganisationer i Finland ska på ett bättre sätt fokusera på att återspegla parternas skiftande behov. Samarbete mellan frivilligorganisationerna, på såväl nationell som tematisk nivå, bör ökas och relevanta statliga myndigheter bör involveras. Samarbete, inklusive utbyte och spridning av information angående bästa praxis, bör ökas.

SUMMARY

Approximately one half of Finland's support to NGOs is currently channelled through the Partnership Agreement Scheme, which was established in 2003. The Ministry for Foreign Affairs in Finland has signed partnership agreements with ten Finnish partnership organisations (POs) between 2003-2005. These organizations are Fida International ry (Fida), the Free Churches Federation in Finland (FS), International Solidarity Foundation (ISF), FinnChurchAid (FCA), Save the Children Finland (SCF), Plan Finland, the Finnish Red Cross (FRC), the Trade Union Solidarity Centre of Finland (SASK), the Finnish Evangelical Lutheran Mission (FELM) and World Vision Finland (WVF).

The partnership scheme is evolving. New, more detailed guidelines for the selection of partnership organizations are being prepared by MFA. Likewise, the partnership organizations are in the process of moving forward towards a more programmatic approach in their aid planning and implementation. This evaluation examined partnership organisations' development cooperation activities and the management procedures and administration of the Scheme in the MFA and the POs.

Key conclusions

The Partnership Scheme is a suitable instrument for Finnish development cooperation. It has evident benefits for both the MFA and the participant NGOs in terms of increased flexibility, long-term planning and reduced bureaucracy. It was, however, observed that the objectives and rules guiding the scheme are not clear for efficient oversight by the MFA and meaningful dialogue between the partners. Also, the general selection criteria and the instructions guiding oversight by the MFA are insufficient for verifying and strengthening accountability towards beneficiaries. Currently, the information/documentation provided by the POs to the MFA does not provide sufficient information to assess whether the proposed programme meets the set requirements.

The POs diverge in terms of organisational structure, thematic focus and volume of operations, and also in terms of geographical spread and related socio-cultural and political heterogeneity of the partner countries. Some of the POs are fairly well focused, concentrating on a few key sectors and/or a few countries, while others are rather dispersed. This diversity is not adequately reflected in the key documentation prepared by the POs and it raises critical questions about cost-effectiveness and sustainability of the support. Support should be planned taking into account the wider context in which the development interventions are implemented.

Recommendations regarding the scheme and the MFA

- (i) The MFA should better define the goals, objectives and strategic vision for the Partnership Scheme in the new guidelines which are being prepared. Also predictability and transparency of funding should be improved. Further, the MFA should clarify its expectations regarding service delivery vs. advocacy

work, and in terms of activity support and support to organisational development. The evaluation recommends that the Partnership Scheme should emphasise organisational development and advocacy work. Accountability to beneficiaries should be improved.

- (ii) Clear selection criteria should be defined and the scheme should be opened for a limited number of new entrants to be selected in an open process. Entry to and departure from the system can take place through a transition/trial phase lasting e.g. two years during which the necessary changes and corrections can be implemented and verified.
- (iii) The capacity of the POs should be assessed regularly. In addition to the pre-appraisal of new entrants, the organisational capacity and performance of the organisations within the scheme should be regularly appraised. Indicators and performance criteria developed by EC could be applied.
- (iv) The MFA's internal administrative procedures and coordination should be strengthened. Sector advisers and the embassies in Finland's long-term partner countries should be engaged and communication between the embassies and KEO-33 improved and made regular. The MFA should define clearly the main roles of KEO-33 in the broader context of CSO support. The evaluation team recommends strengthening the role of KEO-33 in analysis and dialogue.
- (v) New management guidelines should be developed reflecting programmatic approach. These guidelines should include (a) determination of the approach to capacity development, advocacy work and support to service delivery in the scheme; and (b) basic performance indicators of the Scheme. The new guidelines should also streamline financial reporting.
- (vi) The Partnership Scheme is not recommended to be tied to Finland's bilateral development cooperation targets. In its current form it allows cooperation in countries which are not long term partners for Finnish Development Co-operation.

Recommendations to Partnership Organisations

- (i) Better geographical and thematic focusing is recommended to those POs currently scattered over a large number of countries and/or thematic areas. Cost-effectiveness and sustainability should be part of the strategic thinking for the POs. The PO should focus preferably on organisational development and advocacy work.
- (ii) The POs should develop, jointly with the MFA, enforceable codes of conduct for separating development work from ideological work such as proselytising, and marketing from information services and advocacy work.

- (iii) Documentation and reporting to the MFA should be improved as the current system does not allow for adequate oversight by the MFA. Country-level contextual issues should be reflected in relevant programme documents, e.g. operational plans.
- (iv) The POs, together with the MFA should clarify the definitions and procedures and then assess what are the current administrative expenses. This would serve as a basis for adjusting the cap if deemed necessary for securing high quality administration.
- (v) The development of quality assurance systems should continue. Considering the diversity of the POs, however, adopting the same quality system may not be a realistic proposal especially as several of the POs working through international networks have access to and are using the network's quality assurance systems.
- (vi) Cooperation between POs in Finland should better focus to reflect the changing needs of the partners. Collaboration between the POs at both country level and thematically should be increased and relevant government authorities drawn in. Cooperation including information sharing and dissemination of best practices should be increased.

Summary: Findings, Conclusions and Recommendations regarding the Scheme		
<i>Recommendations to the MFA</i>		
FINDINGS	CONCLUSIONS	RECOMMENDATIONS
The Partnership Scheme is a valid instrument for Finnish Development co-operation. However, the objectives of the Partnership Scheme are not clear. The funding of the scheme has increased of more than 100% per year in some cases. Accountability is mostly dealt with as sets of bilateral rather than multi-stakeholder relationships. The approach and expectations of the MFA regarding service delivery vs. advocacy work, and in terms of activity support vs. support to organisational development are not clear.	One of the key objectives of the Partnership Scheme of increasing the predictability and continuity of MFA funding in order to facilitate long-term planning has not been realized. The funds allocated by MFA automatically release other funds available to the organisation for uses which may or may not be acceptable under the Scheme, i.e. the funding is fungible. The structure of the Scheme can make the POs behave as a donor. Sustainability can be improved by integrating service delivery with strategic capacity building and advocacy interventions.	The MFA should better define the goals, objectives and strategic vision for the Partnership Scheme. A more predictable and transparent system of annual allocations is needed even in times of increasing MFA appropriations. The partnership programmes of the POs should be assessed in the institutional context, not as separate free-floating entities. POs and the entire Scheme needs to find ways how to meet the concrete local level needs in project activities and at the strategic level. Accountability towards beneficiaries should be improved. The approach of the Scheme to capacity development, advocacy work and support to service delivery must be determined by the MFA and POs. Each PO must translate them into a coherent strategy. These should also be reflected in the basic performance indicators of the Scheme. The evaluation team recommends that the Partnership Scheme should emphasise organisational development and advocacy work

The partnership organisation status is not permanent but dependent on fulfilment of certain organisational capacity and performance criteria.	The partnership organisation status should be regularly assessed. Participation in the Scheme should reflect changes in the focus and capacity of the organisations as well as Finnish and global development context.	The PO qualifications should be sharpened. Clear selection criteria should be defined and the Scheme should be opened for a limited number of new entrants to be selected in an open process. In addition to pre-appraisal of new entrants, the organisational capacity and performance of organisations within the Scheme should be regularly appraised. Entry to and departure from the system can take place through a transition/trial phase lasting e.g. two years during which the necessary changes and corrections can be implemented and verified.
The current guidelines are inadequate for a programme-type instrument. There are no clear performance indicators for the Scheme.	New guidelines and performance indicators for the Scheme are needed.	New management guidelines should be developed reflecting programmatic approach. Basic performance indicators for the Scheme must be developed. The performance indicators proposed for EC's cooperation with CSOs in developing countries (EC 2007) a useful point of departure for drafting such indicators.
Internal administrative principles and procedures in MFA are not coherent.	As the personnel rotation is likely to continue in the MFA, transparency of administration would ensure equal treatment to all POs.	The MFA's internal administrative procedures should be clarified, including strengthening of coordination within the MFA and quality assurance. The role of KEO-33 should be strengthened in analysis and dialogue. The sector advisers and the embassies in Finland's long-term partner countries should be engaged and communication between the embassies and KEO-33 made regular.

<i>Recommendations to the POs</i>		
FINDINGS	CONCLUSIONS	RECOMMENDATIONS
Some POs concentrate on a few sectors and/or a few countries, while others are dispersed. Many projects deliver services which may not be sustainable.	Service delivery together with capacity building and advocacy work may produce sustainable effects. Dispersing activities to many countries and sectors raises critical questions about cost-effectiveness and sustainability.	The PO work should be more focused. They should focus on organisational development and advocacy work. A move towards longer, e.g. 4+4 years programmes should be considered. Geographical and thematic focusing is recommended to those POs currently scattering their programme interventions over a large number of countries and/or thematic areas.
Development work versus ideological work, marketing versus information services and advocacy work are areas where there is a possibility of using MFA funding contrary to current regulations.	Separation of missionary and development work is crucial, as the use of ODA for proselytism is against both MFA regulations and international conventions. Excluding religious organisations from the development partners would make little sense e.g. in countries where faith-based organisations are strongly rooted on community.	Codes of conduct are needed to separate development work from ideological work, and to distinguish marketing and information services from advocacy work.
Information about country and sector and challenges related country diversity are not reflected in the documentation prepared by the POs.	The documentation provided to KEO-33 does not give sufficient basis for assessing the feasibility of the PO programmes, especially in cases where the implementation is spread over 20 or 30 different countries.	Documentation and reporting to the MFA should be developed as the current system does not allow for adequate oversight by the MFA. By providing a format for project reporting in the annual NGO project catalogue (which includes also PO projects), the MFA can establish common standards for minimum data for all NGOs.

Reporting on administrative costs is not consistent. Most POs do not have a functioning work-time monitoring system.	What is reported to the MFA are not actual administrative costs, but rather a theoretical figure based on artificial definition of 'administrative costs' created by each organisation.	The POs, together with the MFA should assess what are the current administrative costs, to serve as a basis for adjusting the current 10% cap if deemed necessary. There are large differences in the quality and cost of administration of different partnership programmes by different POs.
Some POs use the quality system developed with KEPA or by their international networks. Others have tried to integrate quality monitoring into their planning and monitoring.	Development of the quality scorecard towards a more practical format would seem relevant for those POs which cannot build on already existing systems within their network.	Development of quality assurance systems in the POs should continue. However, adopting the same quality system may not be a possible, because several POs work through international networks and use the network's quality assurance systems.
The POs found regular meetings useful, especially the meetings on thematic issues. Local partner organisations keep local authorities informed about their activities.	The Partnership Forums and PO meetings have not been used sufficiently for dialogue with the MFA. The meetings without focused agenda could be replaced thematic meetings, in which the MFA could participate more actively. There is not sufficient coordination with government authorities.	Cooperation between POs in Finland should better focus to reflect the changing needs of the partners. Collaboration between the POs at both country level and thematically should be increased and relevant government authorities drawn in.

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