**OPEN DATA'S IMPACT**

# OPENAID IN SWEDEN

## Enhanced Transparency and Accountability in Development Cooperation

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**By Ali Clare, Stefaan Verhulst and Andrew Young***

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# OPENAID IN SWEDEN
## Enhanced Transparency and Accountability in Development Cooperation

Sweden has a long tradition of openness, democracy and public access to information. In 2010, a reform agenda for Swedish development cooperation ("Openaid") was launched by the government to bring increased transparency to donor funding through opportunities created by technological advances. Part of this reform agenda included an Aid Transparency Guarantee that required public actors to make available all documentation and public information related to international development cooperation. This spurred the development of the openaid.se site by the Swedish Ministry of Foreign Affairs and

the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida) in April 2011. The data hub, built on open government data, visualizes when, to whom and why aid funding was paid out and what the results were. The reforms are seen to be an important force for enhanced transparency and accountability in development cooperation at an international level and increased cooperation and involvement of more actors in Swedish development policy.

## Dimension of Impact

✓ Improving Government

✓ Tackling Corruption and Transparency

## Key Takeaways

- Open data can be used to increase the transparency and accountability of distinct groups simultaneously. While traditionally viewed as a means for holding government to account, openaid.se demonstrates the capability of holding, for example, both donors and recipients accountable for aid expenditures. The openaid.se platform also illustrates how the Swedish principle of open access to information can be updated in the age of digitization.

- International standards — such as the International Aid Transparency Initiative (IATI) — can help governments and other bodies releasing data do so in a manner that enables the highest levels of comparability and broad use. Metadata — in this case, project documentation and geocoding — can further improve the usefulness of standardized data sets.

- A lack of clearly defined, high-level political commitments to publishing open data and enabling reuse can create major, but not insurmountable challenges. While Sweden now boasts such high-level commitments, throughout much of openaid.se's development, no such policy existed.

# I. CONTEXT AND BACKGROUND

Transparency and access to public information has a long-standing tradition in Sweden. The government was the first country in the world to enact a bill enforcing the principle of public access to information ("offentlighetsprincipen") in 1776. This made it a requirement for all authorities to publish documents unless ad hoc legislation restricted their access.[1] An unimpeded view by the public and media into governmental activities is still prioritized today in Bill 2009/10:175 on Public Administration for Democracy, Participation and Growth.[2] Underlying this legislation is the belief that more accessible information provides a better basis for decisions and limits the scope for corruption and misuse of resources.[3] Sweden's commitment to openness and public scrutiny often places it near the top of transparency rankings.[4]

As part of its commitment to public access, Sweden launched an Aid Transparency Guarantee in 2010. Pursuant to the guarantee, all public actors that are allocated funds under international development cooperation are required to publish related information and documentation in an open format online.[5] This includes an explanation of when, to whom and why money was made available, and what results have been achieved.[6] In theory, such information enables relevant stakeholders to follow the whole

1    Östling, Alina. "Independent Reporting Mechanism Sweden: Progress Report 2012-13." Open Government Partnership. 2014. http://www.opengovpartnership.org/country/sweden/progress-report/report
2    "Open Government Partnership — Sweden's 2012 National Action Plan — Self-Assessment Report." http://www.opengov-partnership.org/sites/default/files/OGP%20Sweden's%20Self-assessment%20Report%20-%20FINAL.pdf; "Sweden's OGP Action Plan 2014-2016." Open Government Partnership. http://www.opengovpartnership.org/es/files/swedens-ogp-action-plan-2014-2016-pdf/download
3    "Sweden's OGP Action Plan 2014-2016." Open Government Partnership. http://www.opengovpartnership.org/es/files/swe-dens-ogp-action-plan-2014-2016-pdf/download
4    Sweden is ranked sixth out of 68 aid donors by Publish What You Fund, third among bilateral donors and in the top-performing group in the 2014 Aid Transparency Index. "Sweden and Sida ranks high in aid transparency index." Sida. October 16, 2014. http://www.sida.se/English/press/current-topics-archive/2014/sweden-and-sida-ranks-high-in-aid-transparency-index/
5    "A transparency guarantee in Swedish development assistance." Regeringskansliet. 2010. http://www.regeringen.se/con-tentassets/38eb101044b640b6b25677b714ed302e/a-transparency-guarantee-in-swedish-development-assistance
6    "Sweden's OGP Action Plan 2014-2016." Open Government Partnership. http://www.opengovpartnership.org/es/files/swe-dens-ogp-action-plan-2014-2016-pdf/download

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chain of aid from overall decisions to implementation and monitoring.[7]

The manifestation of the Transparency Guarantee is the Openaid website (www.openaid.se) jointly launched in April 2011 by the Swedish Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida). The openaid.se data hub has several policy objectives: to promote active transparency, provide a better knowledge base for planning, steering and making decisions about Swedish aid allocations and aid policy priorities, increase participation in Swedish development cooperation, strengthen the preconditions for true accountability, restrict the space for corruption, duplication and inefficient use of resources and promote innovative thinking across different sectors related to development.[8]

The reform of aid development cooperation was inspired in part by commitments that had been made in the international fora, including IATI and the Paris Declaration, Accra Agenda for Action.[9] The platform was also a core component of Sweden's Open Government Partnership (OGP) National Action Plan, signed in September 2011. The Action Plan was focused on enabling the government to stay on track with planned proposals, as well as increasing the amount of input from civil society and committing to publish standardized data in the IATI format.[10] Sweden's commitment to reform in this sector also led the government to sign the Busan Partnership Agreement for Effective Development Cooperation, which sets time-bound commitments to fully publish aid information to a common, open standard.[11] It also offers a framework for "continued dialogue and efforts to enhance the effectiveness of development cooperation" through information access on aid flows and activities in both donor and partner countries.[12]

# II. PRODUCT DESCRIPTION AND INCEPTION

First launched in April 2011, openaid.se is a Web-based information service about Swedish aid built on open government data.[13] The site enables the public, aid actors and other stakeholders to follow when, to whom and for what purposes aid funds have been disbursed, and with what results.[14] The interface of the platform is extremely simple and intuitive, enabling anyone to use it.

The website is built using public data at the activity level of individual aid contributions from the

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7    "Sweden's OGP Action Plan 2014-2016." Open Government Partnership. http://www.opengovpartnership.org/es/files/swe-
     dens-ogp-action-plan-2014-2016-pdf/download
8    GovLab interview with Hanna Hellquist, former State Secretary for International Development, Sweden, September 30, 2015.
9    GovLab interview with Hanna Hellquist, former State Secretary for International Development, Sweden, September 30, 2015.
10   http://www.opengovpartnership.org/country/sweden
11   "The Busan Partnership for Effective Development Cooperation." OECD. July 2012. http://www.oecd.org/dac/effectiveness/
     Busan%20partnership.pdf
12   "The Busan Partnership for Effective Development Co-operation." OECD. http://www.oecd.org/development/effectiveness/
     busanpartnership.htm
13   http://www.openaid.se/about/
14   http://www.openaid.se/about/

Ministry for Foreign Affairs, the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida) and other authorities and ministries that handle aid funds.[15] The data is visualized as treemaps and graphs showing how and where aid is distributed by recipient type.[16] Depending on the choice of filter, users also have the option of viewing a list of all activities, ranging from one to several thousand for each recipient.[17] These activities can then be downloaded in an Excel compatible comma separated values (CSV) file and used to develop new applications.[18]

Other functionalities include visibility of the entire aid chain and activity structure displaying the link between, for example, a policy decision and a disbursement.[19] A contact form is also available on the site in Swedish and English, allowing for citizens to directly share feedback and concerns with Sida. There is also an interface for mobile devices with customized interaction and design and a mobile app.[20] One of the key features for this mobile app is a whistle-blower function, enabling users to report suspicions of fraud directly.[21]

## Underlying Data

The data available on the website is published according to the IATI standard on a monthly basis, making it easier to analyze and compare data sets from various sources. This commitment to a common standard of data is part of Sweden's move toward implementing the Busan Outcome Document, which aims to have the full range of information publicly available in one open aid standard.[22]

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15   http://www.openaid.se/about/
16   http://www.publishwhatyoufund.org/updates/by-country/sweden/making-openaid-se/
17   Peterson, Karl. "The making of Openaid.se." Publish What You Fund. September 23, 2014. http://www.publishwhatyoufund.org/updates/by-country/sweden/making-openaid-se/
18   GovLab Interview with Carl Elmstam, Transparency Manager, Sida, October 8, 2015.
19   Östling, Alina. "Independent Reporting Mechanism Sweden: Progress Report 2012-13." Open Government Partnership. 2014. http://www.opengovpartnership.org/country/sweden/progress-report/report
20   Östling, Alina. "Independent Reporting Mechanism Sweden: Progress Report 2012-13." Open Government Partnership. 2014. http://www.opengovpartnership.org/country/sweden/progress-report/report
21   Östling, Alina. "Independent Reporting Mechanism Sweden: Progress Report 2012-13." Open Government Partnership. 2014. http://www.opengovpartnership.org/country/sweden/progress-report/report
22   Östling, Alina. "Independent Reporting Mechanism Sweden: Progress Report 2012-13." Open Government Partnership. 2014. http://www.opengovpartnership.org/country/sweden/progress-report/report
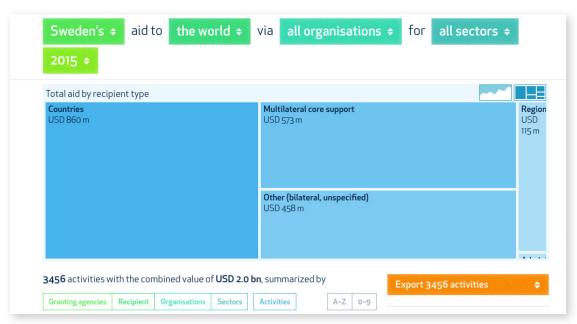
*Figure 1: Sweden's Openaid.se*

Over 80 percent of the data is currently available in a machine-readable format, with fully automated data collection each night.[23] This includes all data provided by the 16 CSOs that have framework agreements with Sida.[24] The first version of the site published over 100,000 documents at the activity level that could be sorted by disbursing agency or implementing partner.[25] Since the launch, there have been over 15 additional updates, and the government has constantly sought to improve the quality of the data – including a focus on publishing results and evaluations data.[26] There has also been a focus on adding new types of data in a form that can be aggregated. By the end of 2015, Sweden aimed to have 95 percent data compatibility with the IATI standard.[27] There is also an ongoing integration between the CSO database and openaid.se that will eventually enable the government to show more detailed data and results for CSO activities funded by Sida.[28]

**Open Format**

Openaid.se is built as an open source WordPress site enabling other aid donors and recipients to make their own aid tracker installations using their own data and themes.[29] This has huge

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23    GovLab interview with Karl Peterson, Project Manager, Aid Transparency, Sida, September 23, 2015.

24    Peterson, Karl. "The making of Openaid.se." Publish What You Fund. September 23, 2014. http://www.publishwhatyoufund.org/updates/by-country/sweden/making-openaid-se/

25    GovLab Interview with Carl Elmstam, Transparency Manager, Sida, October 8, 2015.

26    GovLab Interview. Karl Peterson. September 23, 2015; IRM, Sweden: Östling, Alina. "Independent Reporting Mechanism Sweden: Progress Report 2012-13." Open Government Partnership. 2014. http://www.opengovpartnership.org/country/sweden/progress-report/report

27    Östling, Alina. "Independent Reporting Mechanism Sweden: Progress Report 2012-13." Open Government Partnership. 2014. http://www.opengovpartnership.org/country/sweden/progress-report/report

28    "Open Government Partnership – Sweden's 2012 National Action Plan – Self-Assessment Report." http://www.opengovpartnership.org/sites/default/files/OGP%20Sweden's%20Self-assessment%20Report%20-%20FINAL.pdf; "Sweden's OGP Action Plan 2014-2016." Open Government Partnership. http://www.opengovpartnership.org/es/files/swedens-ogp-action-plan-2014-2016-pdf/download

29    Peterson, Karl. "The making of Openaid.se." Publish What You Fund. September 23, 2014. http://www.publishwhatyoufund.org/updates/by-country/sweden/making-openaid-se/

potential value in terms of spreading transparency across the aid ecosystem as a whole. Sida has also enhanced the use of the openaid.se open format (API) so that consumers are able to reuse the data for third-party online API collections. Because of Sweden's public access principles, this data belongs to the public domain by default. However, some restrictions are applied to sensitive or classified materials that are filtered out or materials where copyright is owned by someone else. In the case of the latter, the data is still available on openaid.se; however, it may not be republished without permission from the original copyright holder.[30]

# III. IMPACT

Transparency is crucial to drive improvements in the way development cooperation is delivered internationally, especially for generous aid donors like Sweden who allocate 1 percent of their estimated gross national income (GNI) toward development assistance.[31] In terms of impact, Sweden is playing a leading role among major donors through its innovative openaid.se platform which has received wide acclaim for publishing information that goes well beyond traditional reporting to include project documentation, geocoding and aid results data. These efforts have borne fruit – Sweden is one of the highest-ranked countries in the Transparency International's 2014 Corruption Perception Index[32] and is one of the highest-ranked donors in the Publish What You Fund 2014 Aid Transparency Index.[33] Impact can be gauged according to increased donor transparency and accountability with follow-on effects to data quality as well as funding and management efficiencies:

## Increased Transparency and Accountability

By opening access to the chain of aid delivery and expenditures, citizens and other key stakeholders have been able to hold the Swedish government to account and aid processes have become more efficient through improved service delivery, reduced opportunities for diversion and therefore corruption.[34] The increased transparency has also enabled donor recipients to plan and manage the resources coming into their country more effectively in settings where multiple actors are active, thereby decreasing the incentive to provide inferior

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30   "Open Government Partnership – Sweden's 2012 National Action Plan – Self-Assessment Report." http://www.opengov-partnership.org/sites/default/files/OGP%20Sweden's%20Self-assessment%20Report%20-%20FINAL.pdf; "Sweden's OGP Action Plan 2014-2016." Open Government Partnership. http://www.opengovpartnership.org/es/files/swedens-ogp-action-plan-2014-2016-pdf/download

31   "Sweden's OGP Action Plan 2014-2016." Open Government Partnership. http://www.opengovpartnership.org/es/files/swe-dens-ogp-action-plan-2014-2016-pdf/download

32   http://www.transparency.org/cpi2014

33   Sweden was ranked "Very Good" with an indicator score of 83.27 percent, a significant increase over its 2013 ranking. http://ati.publishwhatyoufund.org/donor/sweden/Sweden

34   Faust, Jörg. "Donor Transparency and Aid Allocation." German Development Institute Discussion Paper. December 2011. http://edoc.vifapol.de/opus/volltexte/2012/3552/pdf/DP_12.2011.pdf

services.[35] As such, the openaid.se platform has received strong political and management support and organization involvement at all levels.[36]

By opening aid data to public scrutiny, the demand on the government to improve and maintain high-quality data has also increased. According to Carl Elmstam, the transparency manager at Sida, "The process of implementing transparency and the IATI standard drives quality as it has forced us to take a hard look at our own data and learn from it."[37] According to Hanna Hellquist, former State Secretary for International Development, opening the data also enabled the government to fully understand the underlying problems and challenges that were built into Swedish aid reporting and IT systems.[38] This understanding, coupled with external pressure, has forced Sida to constantly improve reporting processes and ameliorate any data flaws.[39]

This sort of transparency has the potential to radically decrease the incentive structure for corruption by enabling external stakeholders to pinpoint problems and support their demands for reform. It has also enabled aid to be targeted more specifically and in some cases, it has led to funds being earmarked for improving recipient-country governance, including projects that combat corruption.[40]

This would not have been possible without active engagement and strategic communication both internally with employees and externally with the public and recipient countries. Internally, the MFA and Sida started to design the site before any formal decisions had been made. To push the decision through, they held regular meetings with different actors within the government to address objections and link the initiative to broader commitments made in other parts of government, such as the PSI Directive, which calls for public authorities to release their data for reuse at no charge.[41] In doing so, staffs were reminded of the importance of good and reliable data, not only for the organization but also for global development cooperation and partner countries.[42] Externally, Sida worked to increase general awareness of the values of transparency, open data and data quality through communication and facilitation of reporting and data conversion for the CSOs they support.[43] According to Hellquist, the opening of data has facilitated a cultural and attitude shift in the aid administration (MFA and Sida) regarding its relation to the public.[44]

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35   Rådelius, Elias. "White paper, part 4: Keys to success and the road ahead." Openaid.se Blog. May 28, 2015. http://www.openaid.se/blog/part-4-keys-to-success-and-the-road-ahead/

36   Rådelius, Elias. "White paper, part 4: Keys to success and the road ahead." Openaid.se Blog. May 28, 2015. http://www.openaid.se/blog/part-4-keys-to-success-and-the-road-ahead/

37   Rådelius, Elias. "White paper, part 4: Keys to success and the road ahead." Openaid.se Blog. May 28, 2015. http://www.openaid.se/blog/part-4-keys-to-success-and-the-road-ahead/

38   GovLab interview with Hanna Hellquist, Former Secretary of State, Sweden, September 30, 2015.

39   Rådelius, Elias. "Implementing aid transparency in Sweden – white paper, part 1: Why do we care about aid transparency and IATI?" Openaid.se Blog. May 25, 2015. http://www.openaid.se/blog/implementing-aid-transparency-in-sweden-white-paper-part-1-why-do-we-care-about-aid-transparency-and-iati/

40   GovLab interview with Hanna Hellquist, former State Secretary for International Development, Sweden, September 30, 2015.

41   http://www.government.se/about-the-website/psi-data/

42   GovLab Interview. Carl Elmstam. September 23, 2015. http://www.openaid.se/blog/part-4-keys-to-success-and-the-road-ahead/

43   Rådelius, Elias. "White paper, part 2: How to get started publishing using the IATI standard as a bilateral donor agency" Openaid.se Blog. May 26, 2015. http://www.openaid.se/blog/part-2-how-to-get-started-publishing-using-the-iati-standard-as-a-bilateral-donor-agency/

44   Hanna Hellquist, GovLab interview with author. 30 September 2015.

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# Improved Management Efficiency

The openaid.se platform has also shown substantial impact in terms of having more efficient reporting mechanisms, including improved information management systems and reduced costs for duplicate manual reporting of aid information, particularly at the country office level. These improved reporting mechanisms, in part spurred by the commitment to make their data available in the IATI standard, have enabled the government to save around US$7 million annually. It has also had follow-on benefits in terms of aid effectiveness, as the government has been able to analyze and compare data sets from partner country budget classifications, enabling stakeholders to see where aid is supporting their own priorities and increasing accountability. According to conservative estimates from IATI, approximately US$18 billion in aid is lost annually through corruption. Cost-benefit analyses show that greater aid transparency has the potential to reduce such corruption and improve predictability by US$1.6 billion annually.

# Enabling Collaboration with Beneficiaries

Making aid information open is just the start. For transparency to be transformational, beneficiaries must actually use the aid data. One impact of the newly freed data on the openaid.se platform has been the ability of Sida to tap into the knowledge and creativity of a wide variety of stakeholders in Swedish society to come up with new ideas for tools, activities and functionalities for the site.[45]

It has also facilitated substantial and complex forms of collaboration with CSOs including PWYF, in pursuit of increased aid transparency. This has shifted the power dynamics between NGOs and the government, bringing the practice of the organization nearer to its principles of participation, accountability and empowerment. In this respect, Sida's efforts have also served to improve other donors' and partner countries' development efforts by acting as a model for countries like Denmark, which recently launched a similar platform – Danida Open Aid.[46] While it is difficult to assess whether the idea was explicitly emulated, the fact that openaid.se uses an open source Wordpress site removes the need for other countries to start from scratch when building their own initiatives.

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45   "Guest blog from OpenAid – Sweden embraces the transparency agenda." AidInfo. July, 21, 2010. http://www.aidinfo.org/guest-blog-from-openaid-sweden-embraces-the-transparency-agenda.html
46   http://openaid.um.dk/en/

# IV. CHALLENGES

Sweden has made huge strides toward more open, inclusive, accountable and responsive development through the openaid.se site, driving both political debate and opinion about aid priorities. Development coordination and spending between donors and partner countries have also improved, enabling greater impact with finite resources. Nonetheless, the government still faces numerous challenges in making the data easily comprehensible with the right tools to facilitate understanding, analysis and use by general audiences.[47] If Sweden is to continue along the path to aid transparency on which it has set itself, several areas should be addressed:

## Structural Challenges

Openaid.se is a proprietary system with a funder-centric view.[48] This means that there are often challenges in accessing and aggregating information and activities from recipient systems, given the software was tailor-made for Sweden.[49] Accordingly, it is often difficult to get a true understanding of the impact of development aid and much of the data on the platform hasn't been reused, for example, for building applications.[50] To overcome these structural problems, openaid.se could create novel ways to combine data with other systems through the integration of new tools. Easily comparable data would lead to better impact analyses to understand the effects of aid, to more targeted and efficient innovations, more openness and accountability.[51]

## Data Privacy

The active and instant nature of publishing aid data has exposed privacy concerns among Sida staff, despite the fact that the information was publicly available before the development of openaid.se.[52] This has raised the need to think about how transparent the site should be and what tools could be implemented to mitigate apprehensions about data privacy, including the use of unofficial notes and comments only available to staff.[53] Staff buy-in is essential for the continued growth of the site. As such, Sida should continue to prioritize communication to staff about the values of transparency and accountability while remaining responsive to their concerns for data privacy.

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47   Rådelius, Elias. "Implementing aid transparency in Sweden – white paper, part 1: Why do we care about aid transparency and IATI?" Openaid.se Blog. May 25, 2015. http://www.openaid.se/blog/implementing-aid-transparency-in-sweden-white-paper-part-1-why-do-we-care-about-aid-transparency-and-iati/

48   Bjelkeman-Pettersson, Thomas. "OpenAid.se, Swedish Development Aid Transparency." Open for Change, April 4, 2011. http://openforchange.info/contant/openaidse-swedish-development-aid-transparency.

49   GovLab Interview with Carl Elmstam, Transparency Manager, Sida, October 8, 2015.

50   Bjelkeman-Pettersson, Thomas. "OpenAid.se, Swedish Development Aid Transparency." Open for Change, April 4, 2011. http://openforchange.info/contant/openaidse-swedish-development-aid-transparency.

51   Dietrich, Daniel. "Open Data in Development Aid." European Public Sector Information Platform Topic Report No. 2012 / 02. March 2012. http://www.epsiplatform.eu/sites/default/files/Final%20TR%20Open%20Aid%20Data.pdf

52   GovLab interview with Karl Peterson, Project Manager, Aid Transparency, Sida, September 23, 2015.

53   GovLab interview with Karl Peterson, Project Manager, Aid Transparency, Sida, September 23, 2015.

# Usability and Citizen Engagement

When Sida first launched openaid.se in 2011, user experience wasn't a key priority. As such, the site offers limited opportunities for citizen engagement or interaction. The only feedback channel is an opinion button which people use for reporting bugs.[54]

Usability is also a concern, and project titles often contain cryptic terms that are interpretable only to those who work internally on projects, making them difficult to understand for a wider audience.[55] As such, there is a need to raise awareness among staff to ensure the accessibility of data with outside users.

# Data Licensing

During the initial development and deployment of openaid.se, Sweden's data policy environment presented numerous challenges. Until May 2015, there were no specific regulations regarding open data and open data sources.[56] The PSI Directive helped to fill this juridical vacuum in relation to the reuse of data within Sweden. Prior to the PSI Directive's introduction, however, openaid.se had neither high-level policy support nor clearly defined licensing guidelines or standards. As Sweden continues to take steps to enshrine the legal right to access and reuse public data, early challenges related to clear, legal data licensing structures for openaid.se data should continue to wane.

# V. LOOKING FORWARD

In order to address the above challenges and continue to expand upon the success of the openaid.se hub in terms of meaningfully increasing transparency, Sweden should consider implementation of more forward-planning data and increase the functionality of the site.

# Usability and functionality

While Sweden has taken significant steps to improve the usability and functionality of the openaid.se platform since its launch in 2011, much of the information is still too complex for lay citizens to digest in a meaningful way. Furthermore, given the funder-centric nature of the site, the opportunities for citizens to engage and interact are limited. To continue to improve

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54   Östling, Alina. "Independent Reporting Mechanism Sweden: Progress Report 2012-13." Open Government Partnership. 2014. http://www.opengovpartnership.org/country/sweden/progress-report/report
55   Rådelius, Elias. "White paper, part 3: Challenges" Openaid.se Blog. May 27, 2015. http://www.openaid.se/blog/part-3-challenges/
56   Månsson, Christer, et al. "From Bureaucracy to Innovation: An introduction to How to Work with Open Data," March 2013. http://luii.lu.se/new-report-on-open-data/

upon the functionality, more intuitive data visualization and storytelling should be employed to present the large amounts of information available in a way that illustrates the impact of aid funding for the public.[57] Tools developed by other organizations could be integrated into the current system to enable better field monitoring and evaluation. For example, tools like Water for People's Field Level Observations Watch (FLOW)[58] or distributed publishing tools like Akvo Really Simple Reporting (RSR)[59] could be extremely effective.[60]

In terms of the distributed publishing and feedback functions, Sida should ensure they remain responsive to the data privacy concerns of staff and potentially launch functionalities to relieve tensions such as unofficial comments and notes that are only internally available.[61]

# Forward-Planning Data

The publication of more and more detailed forward-planning data by Sweden would have a huge impact on recipient countries.[62] This could include links to project documents as well as results and conditions data for all planned activities in IATI files to promote access and use by others.[63] This would enable greater local ownership over development results and have follow-on effects for increased accountability and governance. In its Open Government Partnership Action Plan, Sweden posits that this aid transparency will also enable full use of the available financial resources for poverty eradication and facilitate better division of labor.[64] According to Samantha Custer of AidData, "Equipping CSOs and government ministries to use this in program planning, advocacy and research is also essential to sustaining practice."[65]

Openaid.se should also improve the publication and use of monitoring and performance data. Currently this data is only available in PDF format. In the future, having this data available in the IATI standard would enable the information to be integrated into an ecosystem of tools for field monitoring and evaluation, leading to a more streamlined flow.[66]

57   Heacock, Rebekah and David Sasaki, "ICT4 Transparency in Sub-Saharan Africa. In Increasing Transparency and Fighting Corruption through ICT Empowering People and Communities," The Swedish Program for ICT in Developing Regions (SPIDER) ICT4D Series No. 3, 2010. Stockholm: Stockholm University. IRM, Sweden: Progress Report 2012-13. http://spidercenter.org/polopoly_fs/1.163640.1390315885!/menu/standard/file/Spider%20ICT4D%20series%203%20Increasing%20transparency%20and%20fighting%20corruption%20through%20ICT.pdf
58   FLOW is a "system to collect, manage, analyze, and display geographically-referenced monitoring and evaluation data," mainly used for water points to date. https://www.waterforpeople.org/what-we-do
59   Akvo Really Simple Reporting is a "web and Android-based system that makes it easy for development aid teams to bring complex networks of projects online and instantly share progress with everyone involved and interested." http://akvo.org/products/rsr/
60   Bjelkeman-Pettersson, Thomas. "OpenAid.se, Swedish Development Aid Transparency." Open for Change, April 4, 2011. http://openforchange.info/contant/openaidse-swedish-development-aid-transparency.
61   GovLab Interview with Carl Elmstam, Transparency Manager, Sida, October 8, 2015.
62   GovLab Interview with Carl Elmstam, Transparency Manager, Sida, October 8, 2015.
63   http://ati.publishwhatyoufund.org/donor/sweden/
64   "Sweden's OGP Action Plan 2014-2016." Open Government Partnership. http://www.opengovpartnership.org/es/files/swedens-ogp-action-plan-2014-2016-pdf/download
65   "Why Transparency Matters Part 5: Where Do We Go Next?" InterAction. January 10, 2014. http://www.interaction.org/blog/why-transparency-matters-part-5-where-do-we-go-next
66   GovLab interview with Karl Peterson, Project Manager, Aid Transparency, Sida, September 23, 2015.

# Collaboration with Other Partners

Greater collaboration with other donors and local partnerships in recipient countries for the development and rollout of the openaid.se platform would be hugely beneficial and overcome some of the structural challenges the site currently faces. To that end, Sweden could work with organizations in developing countries to combine with other recipient systems for contextualized applications to enhance transparency and accountability – i.e., applications to increase citizen access to governmental aid budgets and recipients.[67]

The Swedish legal barriers to reuse the data must also be addressed to create greater impacts. Reuse has the potential to enable interested citizens to create innovative new means of combining, displaying and otherwise reusing data, which has a huge potential for rethinking and reconfiguring the way aid is currently implemented.[68] Efforts at various levels must harmonize their efforts in order to avoid fragmentation.[69] In order to avoid fragmentation, though, it is necessary for actors at various levels – from grassroots to ministries – to harmonize their efforts while not cutting off creative potential.

Sweden's efforts to open aid data to the public have made major strides toward increasing transparency and accountability in the field. Given the fact that much of this effort occurred during a time when Sweden lacked the type of high-level policy commitments toward enabling the reuse of open data such as those found in many other countries is particularly notable. By focusing on the usability of the aid data hub, deploying more forward-thinking data and better collaborating with partnering stakeholders, openaid.se's impacts should continue to grow and broaden in the coming years.

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