

Research Training Partnership
Programmes as an Integral Part of
Institutional Research Capacity
Strengthening

2013

BACKGROUND

AND

GUIDELINES FOR APPLYING
INSTITUTIONS

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BACKGROUND

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 The point of departure

1.1.1 History of Swedish support for research capacity strengthening in low income countries

Research cooperation supported by Sida has evolved over the years. From establishing contacts with scientists in low income countries, the support has evolved to support to instituting researching universities in low income countries. The Swedish investment in research cooperation over the last 37 years has resulted in islands of research capacity that can be targeted for concerted research training with the aim to develop local training in target countries. With these developments, Swedish research cooperation has stepped up to organise bilateral/regional research capacity strengthening cooperation in accordance with normal praxis of research, i.e. open competition for collaboration. This is in line with the Swedish Government's Strategy for Sida's Support for Research Cooperation 2010-2014¹.

1.1.2 The current situation

With the emergence of the knowledge economy also in low income countries,, there is growing recognition of the importance of higher education and research for poverty reduction and sustainable human development. It is now widely recognised that for any nation, global competitiveness and economic success depends on the existence of capacities to create, develop, utilise, package and disseminate knowledge. Capacity for research plays a large role in this endeavour and while such capacities have increased considerably in many low income countries in the last decades they remain woefully weak compared to the countries' needs. The communiqué from the World Conference on Higher Education, held in Paris in July 2009 noted that "... At no time in history has it been more important to invest in higher education as a major force in building an inclusive and diverse knowledge society and to advance research, innovation and creativity"². The conference reaffirmed the need to strengthen institutional, national, regional and international collaboration in order to support the establishment of a high-quality African higher education and research area. These sentiments apply equally to all low income countries.

The urgent need for increased number of well-trained academic personnel at Post-graduate (Masters and PhD) level in most low income countries is due in part to the expansion of the education system that has resulted in a large cohort of young people seeking higher education, and the increased number of universities being established in most countries. At the same time, the countries (independently of the expansion of education) require a cadre of researchers able to provide the country with the competitiveness necessary for development. For example, the first in a series of **African Innovation Outlook**, for 2010³, which is part of Africa's Consolidated Plan of Action for Science Technology and Innovation, provides data on the low number of researchers in 19 pilot countries. South Africa, of all the countries surveyed, has the highest number of human resources available for R&D activities, with a

¹ [Policy for research in Swedish development cooperation and Strategy for Sida's support for research cooperation 2010-2014.](#)

² UNESCO (2009a) *2009 World Conference on Higher Education: The New Dynamics of Higher Education and Research for Societal Change and Development*, Paris, 5–8 July 2009. Final Communiqué.

³ http://www.nepad.org/system/files/June2011_NEPAD_AIO_2010_English.pdf

researcher density of 825 per million inhabitants, followed by Senegal with 635 researchers per million inhabitants. At the lower end of the scale, Mozambique, Uganda and Ghana are reported to have a researcher density of fewer than 25 per million inhabitants. The corresponding figure for Sweden is around 5 200 researchers per million inhabitants, which gives Sweden one of the top ranks in the Global Creativity Index⁴.

The modalities used by Sweden to support “research for development” over the years have been deemed successful. With time the university programmes have evolved well, with enhanced ownership by the target country universities. The time is ripe for the establishment of inter- university partnerships of mutual benefit to both partners. Sida is proposing new modalities, which allows for training of a larger number of people to PhD in a quality assured fashion. The Research Training Partnership Programme as an integral part of institutional research capacity strengthening will contribute to improved quality assurance of local research training in target country institutions.

1.1.3 Swedish Government’s Policy and Strategy for “Research for Development” 2010-2014

The shift in the emphasis/format/modality of supporting research capacity in target country institutions is in line with the Swedish Government’s Policy for research in Swedish Development cooperation and the Swedish Government’s Strategy for Sida’s support for research cooperation 2010-2014 which emphasises **“increasing the number of research graduates in the partner countries, primarily through research training at universities in these countries”**. The policy is based on an understanding that access to scientifically based knowledge is an important condition for poverty-reducing development in low income countries. Such knowledge may be used by governments to implement their policies, by private enterprises to develop their capacity for a sustainable economy, by civil society organisations and popular movements to question and demand accountability from their governments when deemed necessary. The policy recognises that in a knowledge-based society, universities and research institutions represent fora for critical analysis. People with PhDs are needed for doing research, but also to train Masters and PhD students to be lecturers with competencies to improve quality and update curriculum at their institutions of higher learning and instil the principles of research into university students. Interaction between research and education is crucial for development within both areas. Research findings enrich the content of educational programmes and courses, primarily at higher study level. The quality and content of the education offered is in turn a decisive factor in the recruitment of researchers.

Research serves the important function to provide a basis for decision-making (evidence based). Domestic analytical capacity and area-specific expertise through research are key components in this context, and are essential if a country is to take part as an equally knowledgeable partner in the international discussion of important issues.

As universities expand in terms of student numbers the maintenance of quality becomes critical and research trained lecturers are then likely to offer the competences for current and relevant teaching and capacity for analysis.

Sida has been supporting research training for decades and Swedish higher education institutions have been key actors in this endeavour. Initially the rate and pace of finalisation of examination tended to be slow in many target countries, however, things are improving and the number of PhDs in place in key areas is increasing. Thus, the time is opportune to address the needed increase in numbers of trained staff through partnerships that endeavour to develop local and innovative modalities of research training. Such partnerships will imply more responsibility for both the target country and Swedish universities.

⁴ Creativity and Prosperity: The Global Creativity Index Martin Prosperity Institute September 2011

Regional and South-South partnerships will also play a key role in research training partnerships.

2 “Research Training Partnership Programme as an integral part of Institutional Research Capacity Strengthening”

2.1 The emphasis

The new Sida funded re-enforced “Research Training Partnership Programme as an integral part of Institutional Research Capacity Strengthening” supports the strengthening of institutional research training capacity at universities in Sweden’s target countries and regions, contributing to increased number of research graduates.

2.2 Expected outcomes

- **Quality assured research training programmes within prioritised areas of national importance established and run in universities of Sida’s target countries**
- **Long-term institution-based postgraduate research training partnerships between universities in Sida’s target countries and Swedish universities established and maintained and are of mutual benefit**
- **Joint integrated research training programmes of high international standards which build on the principles of mutual recognition of studies and qualifications are established**

2.3 Summary of approach

Depending on the situation at the target country university in question, postgraduate research training may aim directly at i) **local PhD training**, or ii) **start/continue with masters training programmes for the recruitment of competent candidates** or iii) continue **sandwich training at Swedish universities coupled with establishment of local courses** until the number of researchers allows the initiation of local research training. Comprehensive partnerships between **individual universities or a consortium of universities** and research institutions which contribute to the development of human resources and the research capacity of higher education institutions in target countries are encouraged to apply. Partnerships should aim for **scaling up of the number of high quality research graduates in prioritised areas**. Twinning of PhD students from target country and Swedish institutions is possible.

Funding of research supporting components that strengthen the conditions for carrying out research and research training, within the target country university (such as research management, library services including electronic scientific journals Information Communication Technology etc.) are also encouraged.

Calls will be made for research training partnership with specific target countries and for other research supporting components.

2.3.1 Time perspective of the partnership

Four-five year renewable funding

2.3.2 Who can apply?

Target countries with which Sida has long term collaboration⁵ can apply. [Applications for research training partnerships will be accepted](#) from the bodies/entities responsible for research training at applying Sida

⁵ Countries with which Sida has long term cooperation as at January 2012 are: Bangladesh, Bolivia, Burkina Faso, Cambodia, Ethiopia, Kenya, Mali, Mozambique, Rwanda, Tanzania, Uganda,

country universities (i.e. the faculty, vice rectorates, directorates for research or Schools etc.) together with their proposed partner Swedish university bodies/entities responsible for research training and with the right for examination in Sweden.

2.3.3 The process

The starting point is the submission of a [concept note](#) from the target country University

The applications emanating from the priorities in the concept notes will go through a two stage process

1. A letter of intent
2. Full proposals for approved letters of intent

2.4 General Principals

2.4.1 Ownership and transparent processes for development of concept note.

In order to address the needs of target countries, Sida will **invite** target country universities to submit concept notes that describe 10 year plans, aimed at implementing their institutional research strategic plans. The concept note should identify and define areas where needs for Masters and PhD trained people lie, as well as areas that need to be supported to provide the conditions for doing research. These areas should in turn address needs and priorities within national strategies on research and higher education.

2.4.1.1 Concept notes

Sida sends letters inviting selected target country universities to submit concept notes based on clear terms of reference. Recognising the presence of diverse voices within a university, Sida requires target country universities to develop their concept note in a transparent and participatory way which allows input from a broad base of stakeholders. Consequently, the target country universities are to describe the process used to develop the 10 year plan presented in the concept note. The concept notes should also outline timelines and provide a 5 year perspective of the plan.

In addition, the concept note is expected to outline proposed strategies for diversification of funding for their 10 year plan, through other competitive grants, and local funding from their Governments.

2.4.2 Both Old and New partnerships are possible

Emphasis is placed on a transparent process involving an open call for proposals (letters of intent) followed by independent peer review⁶ for determining areas to be supported and the partnerships that qualify for financial support. This is anticipated to result in both old and new partnerships. Consortia of universities⁷ are welcome.

2.4.3 Mutual benefit and added value in partnerships

The partnerships must represent mutual benefit for both sides. The added value, both in the short term and long term, should be articulated.

⁶ [Sida Research Training and Capacity Development Evaluation Committee](#)

⁷ Consortia of universities in target countries where more than one university has been invited to submit a concept note. Consortia of universities in Sweden refer to all Swedish universities.

2.4.4 Co-funding of target country universities' concept note by other donors/funders of research capacity strengthening

The principles expressed in the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness in 2005 and enhanced by the Accra Agenda for Action in 2008, advocate that donors/funders should align with priorities of countries in which they work, and harmonise their actions and procedures in order to facilitate complementarity among funders and to reduce administrative overload for recipients of funding. Sida continues to aim to work closely with other donors/funders to improve the impact of investments in institutions and people. To this end, the concept notes are to be based on institutional research strategy/national strategy for development and be written in such a way that it may be presented to all potential funders.

2.5 Administration of the programme

Sida will enter into an agreement with the target country university. The directorate⁸ for research cooperation at the target country university will be responsible for the overall coordination of the programme.

The partnership will be responsible for the administration within their respective programmes based on partnership agreements/memorandum of understanding

Sida will commission the International Programme Office⁹ to administer the call and the review process.

⁸ The name/designation of this office may vary between countries and institutions

⁹ <http://www.programkontoret.se/sv/Languages/English/>

GUIDELINES

FOR APPLYING INSTITUTIONS

3 The Application

In order to open for competition for collaboration, this will be an open call. Letters of intent shall clearly define 1) how a true partnership will be developed; 2) how this will ensure quality research training that will result in a critical mass of trained people in areas of national importance as defined in the concept note; 3) how this can be achieved in a cost effective and sustainable way, will be asked to submit full proposals.

3.1 The letter of intent application

Programme level letters of intent for research training are developed by relevant departments/Centres/units in the target country university in collaboration with departments/Centres/Units in Swedish universities. A letter of endorsement from the Rector is required from each of the Swedish Universities' from where partnerships are suggested. This letter of endorsement should state that the Swedish University is willing to work with the target country university to carry out partnership programmes based on the proposals submitted. In cases where the Swedish university is willing to invest both human and economic resources to make the partnership programmes function, this should be clearly indicated.

Programme applications for components that strengthen the conditions for carrying out research and research training are not obliged to have collaborating partners.

The letter of intent application will be assessed by the Sida Research Training and Capacity Development Evaluation Committee.

3.2 Full proposal Application

The full proposal application should take into consideration the feedback from the Sida Research Training and Capacity Development Evaluation Committee

Programme level full proposals

Programme level full proposals for research training are developed by relevant departments/Centres/units in the target country university in collaboration with departments/Centres/Units in Swedish universities. *Programme level full proposals* should include draft agreements/memorandum of understanding (MoU) between the universities included in the proposed partnerships. The Agreement/MoU should state if the Swedish university is willing to invest both human and economic resources to make the Partnership programmes function.

3.3 Applicants

Applications are invited from Sida target country universities and their proposed partner Swedish universities' directorate responsible for research training and with the right for examination in Sweden. Furthermore proposals for research supporting activities, with or without partners, will also be received.

3.3.1 Lead Applicant

The target country university will be the lead applicant

The application will be **based** on suggestions from the faculties as expressed within the 10 year concept note submitted to Sida and advertised on Sida's research home page <http://www.sidaresearch.se>.

3.3.2 Number of participating partners

Within the multidisciplinary or disciplinary research training area, partners can include one Swedish Institution or a consortium of institutions. Where invitations for concept notes has been sent to more than

one target country university (such as in Bolivia), consortia including these institutions are also possible. Consortia may also include universities from other countries with resources from other funding agencies.

3.3.3 Partnerships

The applying institutions (Lead Applicant and Partner Swedish Universities) will be responsible for the administration of the Partnership ensuring services and facilities to the participants in the Partnership including, but not restricted to:

3.3.3.1 Agreements

- Adhering to the agreement between Sida and the lead applicant
- Development of Partnership Agreements between the parties

3.3.3.2 Twinning

- Establishing procedures for strengthening the partnership through for example twinning arrangements

3.3.3.3 Monitoring and evaluation

- Monitoring of progress
- Quality assurance
- Organising and submitting annual audits
- Organising and submitting annual financial reports
- Organising and submitting annual narrative results reports
- Organising annual results meeting and follow up meetings between Partners and with Sida and other funding agencies

3.3.3.4 Personnel welfare related to exchange of personnel

- Assistance for obtaining visa
- Ensuring housing facilities
- Welcoming and hosting students and scholars
- Organising the payment of allowances to students/postdocs and participating staff as agreed upon

4 Instructions for letter of intent (LOI)

Letters of intent programme applications will be accepted for

- Research training partnerships
 - o More than one letter of intent *programme application* may be submitted from one department. However, preference will be given to *Programme level letters of intent* applications that present the most comprehensive, feasible, efficient and cost effective plans for obtaining a critical mass of research trained people as outlined in the target country university's concept note.

Each *programme level letter of intent* should be brief with a **maximum of 10 pages** (font 12).

4.1 The following conditions must be met:

The legal representative for the target country university must provide Sida with a signed list of ALL endorsed Lol that are submitted.

4.1.1 For research training partnerships

1. The LoIs should come from the bodies/entities responsible for research training at applying target country universities (i.e. the faculty, vice rectorates, directorates for research or Schools etc.) together with their proposed partner Swedish university bodies/entities responsible for research training and with the right for examination in Sweden.
2. LoIs must be jointly written by coordinators from both target country university and Swedish university
3. Coordinators must be employed by or officially affiliated¹⁰ with the target country university and partner Swedish universities

4.2 The following should be addressed in the letter of intent:

4.2.1 For research training partnerships

1. Intention to build capacity for research training programmes within partner country (or region).
2. The LoI should outline joint interest in the partnership indicating the benefits and added value for the partnership (in the short and the long term).
3. The LoI should briefly outline the following:
 - The expected outcome and outputs of the selected research training area of focus
 - The relevance of the research area and demand of expertise in the chosen field for the country's development challenges, within the public sector as well as the private and within civil society organisations
 - The risks as regards recruitment and retention of researchers
4. The LoI should clearly define:
 - The expected contribution of each of the partners in the proposed research training programme. [Curriculum vitae and publication list of partners strictly using the outline](#) provided should be annexed to the LoI
 - Management of the partnership programme
 - Administrative resources available
5. The LoI should briefly define and outline:
 - The available and required infrastructure for carrying out the training
 - Academic networks in this area
 - The operational issues of the research training programme that need to be addressed during the full proposal.
6. The LoI should briefly outline the following:
 - capacity development process
 - intellectual property and patent issues
 - staff mobility issues
 - management of career opportunities for participating researchers and research students
7. The LoI should list the potential risks for the research training partnership.

¹⁰ Such as official adjunct positions

4.3 Budgets

The budgets for the LoL will represent draft budgets. For full proposals more stringent budgets will be required.

The budgets should present the full cost of the planned activities (direct and indirect costs) and should indicate planned co-funding by the applying and partner universities. Budgets should indicate how funds will be divided between the Partners.

Budgets may include the costs for the following:

4.3.1 Cost of curriculum development

4.3.2 Cost of training

Target country universities are expected to pay the salaries of their staff who qualify for Masters and PhD training. These staff members are expected to receive leave of absence with pay, from their universities to pursue their training¹¹ or through country stipend schemes where they exist¹².

- Funds for competitive stipends to distribute to staff on leave-without-pay and for non-staff applicants may be applied for
- Fees at target country institution (Fee waiver can be budgeted as co-funding)
- Allowances for lecturers involved in postgraduate courses
- Funding for carrying out Masters projects including laboratory equipment and supplies
- Funding for carrying our PhD Projects including laboratory equipment and supplies
- Funding for Postdoctoral projects including laboratory equipment and supplies
- Joint laboratory equipment

4.3.3 Cost related to exchange of personnel

- Compensation for lecturers to alleviate postgraduate and undergraduate degree teaching load of staff PhD candidates through engagement of Swedish teachers (e.g. supervisors, lecturers, Swedish PhD candidates (twinning), etc)

4.3.4 Subsistence allowance/salary

- Subsistence allowance for PhD candidate when in Sweden including cost of housing
- Subsistence allowance for Twinning/ student / exchange lecturers
- Salary of Swedish supervisors (Based on the regulations in the Sweden partner university). Salaries of target country institutions' supervisors is expected to be regulated by the rules in the target university

4.3.5 Cost of Travel

- Airfare
- Insurance
- Visa

Budgeted Co-funding of activities in cash or in kind by partners will be favourably viewed when reviewing the partnership since it indicates commitment and intention for long term sustainability

¹¹ The candidate should be exempt from teaching more than 80% of their time.

¹² Co-funding may include in-cash and in-kind contributions from applying institutions' own resources as well contributions from other funders

5 Instructions for full proposals

Detailed guidelines for full proposals will be provided to those who receive invitations to submit full proposals.

6 Review of Applications

The applications Letters of Intent will be reviewed by an international Research Training and Capacity Development Evaluation Committee, endorsed by the Sida Research Council.

Individual full proposals will be reassessed by a subset of the Committee

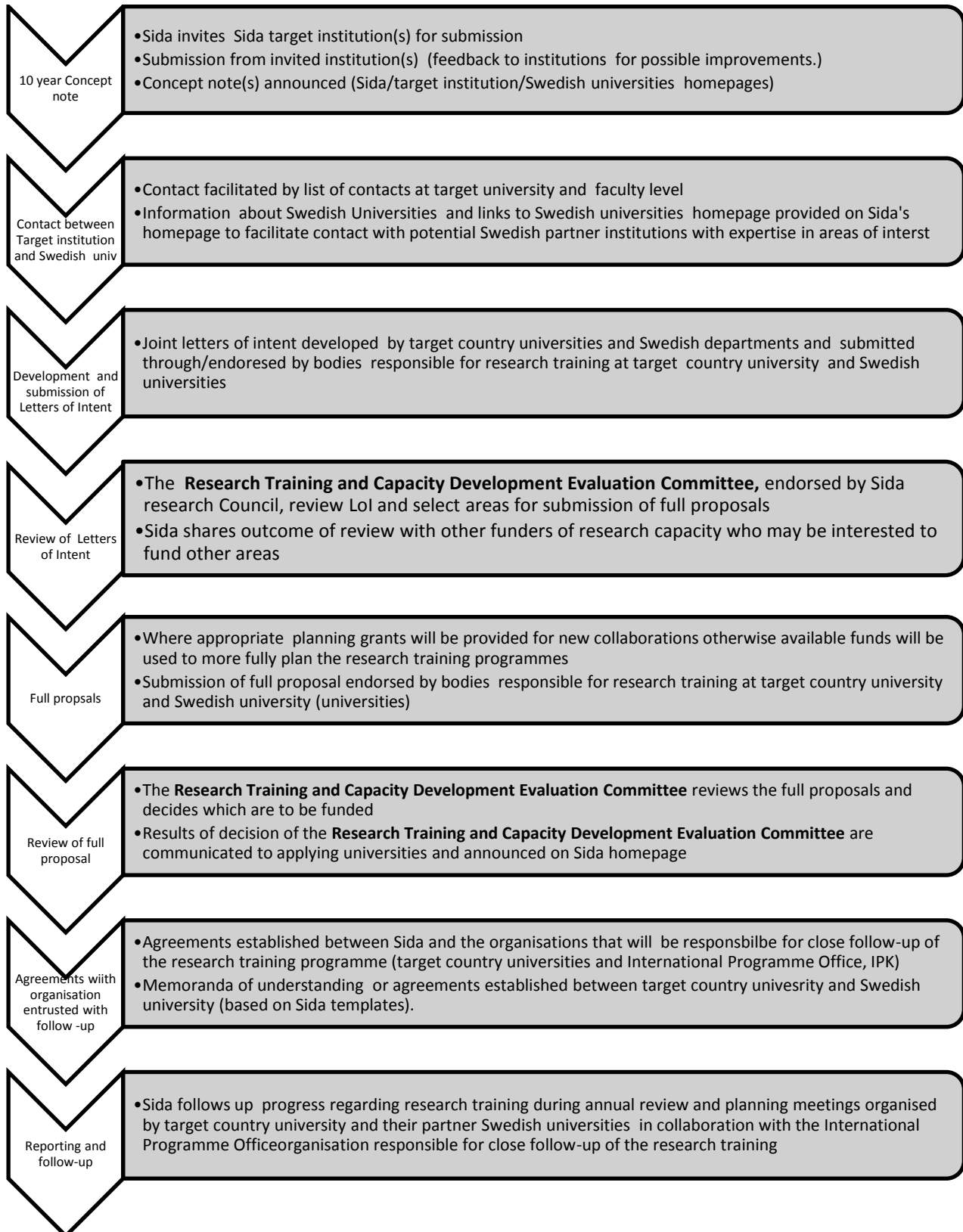
6.1 Sida Research Training and Capacity Development Evaluation Committee

The International Committee is made up of people with expertise in the areas of health, natural resources and environment, natural science and technology, innovation, social sciences and humanities. Other expertise and experiences include quality assurance of research training, management in research university environment and the development of research capacity in resource poor settings.

6.2 Sida Research Council

The Swedish government appointed Sida Research Council will assess the process used for selection of areas for support and advice Sida regarding approval the process.

7 The Application Process (Outline)



8 Curriculum Vitae and Publication List

Curriculum Vitae and list of publications should be presented as indicated below.

8.1 Curriculum Vitae

CV should be a maximum of **two A4 pages per cv (font size 12)**.

Specify under the following numbered headlines, in this order:

1. Higher education degree(s) (year, subject area)
2. Doctoral degree (year, discipline/subject area, dissertation title, and supervisor).
3. Postdoctoral work (year and placement).
4. Qualifications as research fellow/associate professor (year).
5. Specialist certification or equivalent (year, discipline/subject area)
6. Current position, period of appointment, share of time spent in research.
7. Previous positions and periods of appointment (specify type of position).
8. Interruptions in research. Indicate if active research time has been interrupted to the extent that it affected the opportunity to acquire qualifications, e.g. by parental leave, illness, clinical internship/residency, positions of trust in trade union organisations and student organisations, or other similar reasons. Specify the reason(s) and give the time and dates of the interruption.
9. Individuals who have completed their doctoral degree under your supervision (name, year of PhD thesis defence) or postdoctoral period under your main supervision.
10. Pedagogic experience. List 5 most important Master/PhD training courses you have been involved in organising. Specify your role and the year(s)
11. Other information of importance to the application

Items that do not apply should be left blank.

8.2 Publication list

Attach a list of your publications for the past **10 years**, marking the five most important publications with an asterisk (*).

Categorise the publications under the numbered headings, in the following order:

1. Peer-reviewed articles (Include only articles (or equivalent) that have been published or accepted for publication)
2. Peer-reviewed conference contributions (the results of which are not presented in other publications)
3. Review articles, book chapters, books
4. Patents (give date and registration)
5. Open access computer programs that you have developed
6. Popular science articles/presentations