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Nordic Consulting Group A/S

Process evaluation of three donor agencies' responses to the COVID-19 pandemic in Bolivia during the period March–December 2020



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Sida

Process evaluation of three
donor agencies' responses to
the COVID-19 pandemic in
Bolivia during the period
March–December 2020

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Foreword

The COVID-19 pandemic has exposed the world to extreme challenges. Almost overnight, societies closed to an unprecedented extent, while health and social systems were forced to deal with a disease of which little was known at first. Adaptation and improvisation became necessary in all areas.

Despite being far from the epicentres of the pandemic, Bolivia was not spared any of these challenges. By mid-2020, the country reportedly had one of the highest death rates from the infection globally. Moreover, the pandemic coincided with other crises affecting the country at the same time, particularly in the political area, but also in the economical and environmental ones.

Neither could development cooperation programmes escape from the pandemic and its consequences. In a sense, it became a test for the extent to which they were flexible and responsive enough to adapt to the demands raised by the disease and its consequences.

The present evaluation can be said to give the result of this test for the Canadian, Swiss and Swedish development programmes in Bolivia. It does not primarily deal with the outcomes of the development interventions, but with the processes of adaptation and innovation which the three agencies and their partners underwent during the first phase of the pandemic.

By doing so, the evaluation both provides an account of these processes, and raises broader questions related to the agencies' preparedness and ability to respond to unforeseen events. Hence, it is hoped that the lessons learnt in the evaluation will be relevant beyond the particular question of the pandemic response in Bolivia.

Finally, it remains to be noted that the successful performance of this, in many respects atypical, evaluation depended on the commitment and professionalism of the evaluation team. As is evident below, the team has engaged with an enormous amount of material and has continuously developed methods and models to allow its analysis, while not avoiding difficult and sometimes sensitive questions. We are very grateful for their efforts, and hope that the result of their work will serve as an inspiration to others.

Edita Vokral, Ambassador (Switzerland)

Eliane Moser, Counsellor and Head of Cooperation (Canada)

Fredrik Ugglå, Counsellor and Head of Cooperation (Sweden)

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Abbreviations and acronyms

APMT	Autoridad Plurinacional de la Madre Tierra/Plurinational Authority of Mother Earth
CAD	Canadian Dollars
CAF	Development Bank of Latin America
CCISD	Centre de coopération internationale en santé et développement
CECI	Centre d'étude et de coopération internationale
CEDLA	Centro de Estudios para el Desarrollo Laboral y Agrario
CERF	Central Emergency Response Fund
CHF	Swiss Franc
CMC	Crisis Management Centre
CSO	Civil Society Organisation
DPD	International Assistance Operations Bureau
ECLAC	Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean
EUROLATIN	Department for Europe and Latin America
EQ	Evaluation Question
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organisation
FDFA	Federal Department of Foreign Affairs
FIAP	Feminist International Assistance Policy
GBV	Gender-Based Violence
GAC	Global Affairs Canada
GAM	Gobierno Autónomo Municipal / Autonomous Municipal Government
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GIS	Geographic Information System
GoB	Government of Bolivia
GRUS	Group of Partners for Development of Bolivia
HRBA	Human Rights-Based Approach
HQ	Headquarters
IDB	Inter-American Development Bank
IDEA	Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance
IED	Inclusive Economic Development
IHA	International Humanitarian Assistance
IMF	International Monetary Fund
JHU	John Hopkins University
KESB	Business Intelligence and Process
KFM	Partnership for Innovations Branch
LGBT+	Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender
M	Million

ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

MAS	Movimiento al Socialismo / Movement towards Socialism
MEW	Ministerio de Medio Ambiente y Agua / Ministry of Environment and Water
MDPA	Multi-Dimensional Poverty Analysis
MFA	Ministry of Foreign Affairs
MDP	Ministerio de Planificación del Desarrollo / Ministry of Development Planning
MoH	Ministry of Health
NCTE	No Cost Time Extension
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
NPO	National Programme Officer
OECD-DAC	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development - Development Assistance Committee
PAHO	Pan American Health Organisation
POA	Plan Operativo Anual
PPE	Personal Protective Equipment
PROCOSI	Programa de Coordinación en Salud Integral / Integral Health Coordination Programme
PROMYPE	Programa Especial de Apoyo Financiero a la Micro y Pequeña Empresa / Special Financial Support Programme for Micro and Small Businesses
SDC	Swiss Development Cooperation
SEK	Swedish Kronor
SEPDAVI	Plurinational Victim Assistance Service
SEPMUD	Plurinational Women's Service
Sida	Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency
SITREP	Situation Report
SLIM	Servicios Legales Integrales Municipales/Integrated Municipal Legal Services
SOCODEVI	Société de coopération pour le développement international (a Canadian nonprofit corporation)
SRH	Sexual Reproductive Health
SRHR	Sexual Reproductive Health and Rights
TSE	Supreme Electoral Court
UD IU	Department for International Development Cooperation
UD AME	Americas Department, MFA
UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
UN-Habitat	United Nations Human Settlements Programme
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNODC	United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime
WASH	Water, Sanitation and Hygiene
WHO	World Health Organisation
WWF	World Wildlife Fund

Preface

In January 2021, the Swedish Embassy in La Paz, together with the Canadian and Swiss embassies, commissioned Nordic Consulting Group A/S (NCG) to undertake a comparative assessment of the three donor agencies response to the COVID-19 pandemic in Bolivia. Focus has been on the internal procedures of the three donor agencies, as well as on the reprogramming and expansion of their portfolio to address the consequences of the pandemic. The evaluation has also considered the three agencies respective performance as partners in terms of flexibility, support and reliability.

The evaluation was conducted in the period between February and June 2021. It has included extensive review of documentation, communication and correspondences; a large number of virtual interviews with key stakeholders in Headquarters (HQ) and in Bolivia; as well as an online survey to project partners. Fieldwork was not possible due to COVID-19 restrictions.

The evaluation process has been highly participatory and interactive, in line with the strong utilisation-focused intention of the evaluation, and adaptive in terms of the methodology and approach applied. In addition, the evaluation has liaised with the OECD/DAC COVID-19 Global Evaluation Coalition in order to maximize exchange of experiences and learning throughout the implementation process.

The NCG team was composed by Mr. Carsten Schwensen (Team Leader), Ms. Louise Mailloux, Ms. Louise Scheibel Smed, Mr. José Antonio Perez Arenas and Ms. Penny Hawkins (Quality Assurance).

Executive summary

Background

This evaluation is a *process* evaluation concerning the response of three donor agencies (the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida), the Swiss Development Cooperation (SDC), and the Global Affairs Canada (GAC)) to the COVID-19 pandemic in Bolivia. The evaluation covers the period from March 2020, when the first COVID-19 case was discovered in Bolivia, until the end of the year (December 2020), at a time when the second wave of the pandemic was peaking in the country. All three donors have bilateral cooperation with Bolivia with physical presence in La Paz (either embassy (Sida and SDC) or mission (GAC)). The size of the development portfolio and the allocation of human resources for development cooperation work differs across the three embassies/missions. Sida has the largest portfolio and most human resources allocated, followed by SDC and then GAC.

The evaluation includes an assessment of how well the donor agencies, individually and jointly, have responded to the COVID-19 pandemic and what learning can be drawn from that to inform future responses to similar emergencies. The evaluation addresses *internal procedures* of the three donor agencies as well as the *reprogramming process* with their partners in view of the pandemic. Thus, the evaluation considers the adequacy of the framework conditions provided by the respective donor agency Headquarters (HQ)/Ministries of Foreign Affairs (MFA) as well as the donor agencies' (the development cooperation sections within the embassies/missions) respective performance as cooperation partners in Bolivia in terms of flexibility, support and reliability.

The evaluation builds on a review of a large amount of documentation, communication and correspondence during the period as well as on a large number of interviews (70 in total) with key stakeholders (from the three donor agencies' HQs, the embassies/missions in La Paz, government representatives and project partners). An online survey was conducted with all three agencies' implementing partners in Bolivia. For the evaluation *analysis*, the evaluation team has made use of *rubrics* to provide a basis for integrating different data sources to reach holistic and comparative evaluative judgments linked to the evaluation questions.

Key findings from the evaluation - HQ leadership and management:

Provision of supportive and targeted HQ instructions and guidelines to the reprogramming process, together with a high degree of decentralisation and autonomy, has been a strong motivating factor for development cooperation staff at the embassies/missions. It has generated both ownership and commitment which has been of critical importance during a stressed and very work intensive period. All three embassies/missions were requested by their HQ to maintain the strategic focus in the reprogramming process for which they were authorised a high degree of decision-making power (in particular Sida and SDC, but also to some extent GAC through its decentralised delivery channel). The Swedish Embassy received very few requirements

and guidelines from HQ to the reprogramming process which facilitated fast approval processes. On the other hand, both SDC and GAC HQs introduced “fast track” approval of existing or new COVID-19 projects as well as a “SAP COVID-19 Marker”, which became very helpful to identify COVID-19 activities in the projects and for informing decision makers. Sida also introduced COVID-19 tags and advocated for a joint statistical system with OECD/DAC.

Heavy reporting requirements during the first months of the pandemic, particularly from SDC and GAC HQs to the embassies/missions in La Paz, led to inefficiencies at a time when repatriation of national citizens was a huge concern and burden. It is unclear if embassy reporting was used by HQs to support decision-making, as there has been limited dialogue, communication, and feedback to embassies around their reports. In addition, HQs frequent requests to their embassies/missions for COVID-19 situational reporting and analysis was done at a time when focus on monitoring of social accountability issues (duty bearers vs rights holders) in Bolivia was of key importance to inform decision-making on development cooperation.

A tendency in HQs/MFAs to apply “one size fits all” approaches for expatriate staff repatriation conditions in the first months after the outbreak of the pandemic resulted in overly inflexible solutions for expatriate staff at both the Swedish and the Swiss embassies. In both these cases, MFA instructions and procedures for repatriation of expatriate staff caused long disputes and discussions between HQ and the respective embassy. This showed that existing MFA command and decision-making structures did not fit well to the needs of expatriate staff at the development cooperation sections at the embassies in a crisis situation of this magnitude. This also relates to **weaknesses in cross communication and coordination between MFA and Sida/SDC departments in HQ.**

A strong and immediate HQ focus on expatriate staff conditions at the embassies/missions left local staff in uncertain conditions with a feeling of being left on their own. In Bolivia, local staff relied solely on the national health system, which collapsed with no back-up plan, while expatriates were likely to be evacuated in the case of severe illness. In this situation, embassy management was tasked with an important duty of care responsibility.

Key findings from the evaluation - internal embassy/mission management:

It has been possible for the three embassies/missions in La Paz to combine a strong HQ focus on repatriation issues with an active and efficient engagement in the reprogramming process, even within the first months of the pandemic. Thus, the embassies/missions have largely managed to maintain their normal obligations for development cooperation, despite the additional COVID-19 related tasks. While most of the reprogramming has been within existing projects, a few new strategic projects have been added to the portfolios, implemented mainly through United Nations (UN) agencies and Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs).

All three embassy/mission management teams managed to find useful operational solutions to handle the heavy work pressure from both repatriation and reprogramming work during the first months of the pandemic. The strict lockdown in Bolivia, and no additional human resources allocated from HQs to the

embassies/missions to support the additional work of repatriation of national citizens, required fast introduction of new management and leadership structures and mechanisms at the embassies within a virtual reality, in order to balance support to repatriation with reprogramming work. The management teams within the three embassies/missions in La Paz used different approaches for how to divide responsibilities for, respectively, repatriation and reprogramming during the pandemic and for how to implement a “virtual leadership”.

Local staff members, in particular, have been sensitive to the decisions and communication from embassy management and have benefitted from the continuation of routines and openness of new virtual spaces for dialogue. In this situation, the lines of communication and attention to embassy staff needs and concerns were tackled differently at the three embassies/missions. At both the Swiss Embassy and GAC mission in La Paz, the management teams quickly adapted to a virtual management and leadership reality, which also included a strong focus on social initiatives and duty of care, particularly in relation to local staff. GAC management also explicitly addressed issues of staff mental health and work-life balance. In addition, while all three donors adhered to new protective safety and health instructions for the work of their staff, there were differences in how flexibly these instructions were interpreted. This also relates back to differences in organisational cultures and COVID-19 response strategies across the three agencies in general.

Key findings from the evaluation - the reprogramming process with partners:

Despite heavy work pressure on all embassy management and staff, in particular during the first months of the pandemic, the effectiveness of the reprogramming process with partners has been high for all three agencies, albeit with variations. Sida has taken more of a step back approach with a minimal set of guidelines and pressure from HQ and a high degree of receptiveness towards their partners. SDC felt more pressure in the beginning of the pandemic to respond to HQ requests on possibilities for redirection of funds. In this way, SDC became more proactive and “pushy” towards its partners but still maintaining partners’ ownership of this process. In the case of GAC, a different and less decentralised organisational structure resulted in prolonged uncertainty on the status of proposals for new initiatives from partners, contributing to a perception of lack of responsiveness from GAC.

Overall, all three donors managed to reflect in their reprogramming the main needs and priorities through dialogue with their partners and close monitoring of the situation on the ground from the early stages of the response process. The presence of a very experienced development cooperation staff at all three embassies/missions in La Paz has been fundamental to this achievement. Also, it has been key to make the most of the intrinsic capacities of partners to reach the target groups/target population with biosafety supplies, especially the most vulnerable sectors of society to the pandemic.

All three donor agencies have been highly flexible and responsive in their reprogramming processes which were based mainly on reallocation within existing budget frames. Shortly after the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic, all three agencies initiated a very interactive and dynamic consultation process with their project partners. The frameworks for these consultation processes were communicated

from HQs, through the embassies/missions, to the project partners. In particular Sida was very fast to officially communicate that the reprogramming process would focus on partners' requests and include a high degree of flexibility and adaptability. This strongly helped to align expectations early in the process.

Differences in organisational structures and levels of decentralised decision-making within the donor agencies influenced the communication flow with partners during the COVID-19 pandemic and the ability to align expectations.

Sida and SDC have both operated from highly decentralised communication platforms towards their partners, and both have managed very well to align expectations with project partners through close dialogue and continuous engagement during the reprogramming process. In the case of GAC, a lack of coordination between the field and some GAC branches hampered communications with some partners who received information requests from both.

Flexible and adaptive reprogramming processes, with a large degree of involvement and participation of project partners and attendance to their specific needs and requests, have stimulated innovative thinking and focus on opportunities, in some cases with transformational potential.

Some of the best examples are SDC's strong push for development of digitalisation processes for more inclusive insurance and financial products, GAC's support to a number of innovative online practices (e.g., online platforms, telemedicine, virtual training capacity building tools, as well as online campaigns and communication to maintain services during pandemic etc.) and Sida's support to strengthening of networks and hotlines through development of new platforms for communication among the actors (e.g. real-time data tracking and development of municipal vulnerability maps for decision making and United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF)'s Helpline (also supported by GAC)).

All three donors' main reprogramming focus has been on the socio-economic recovery process, although from different perspectives, reflecting differences in scope and composition of their existing project portfolio.

Through these interventions it has been possible also to address COVID-19 emergencies. Both GAC and SDC have explicitly addressed critical food security issues through their well-established municipal platforms. Through mainly Sida's (but also SDC's) strong support to the water and sanitation sector, it has been possible to explicitly address hygiene issues which have been a key concern during the pandemic.

The COVID-19 pandemic has led to additional needs but has also provided new opportunities to focus on gender and vulnerability and the three donor agencies' strong attention to these aspects has come clearly through in the reprogramming process.

All three donor agencies are well-recognised for their strong attention to gender and vulnerability aspects in Bolivia, although through different focuses and approaches, which has also influenced their COVID-19 responses. GAC and Sida are seen as the most vocal advocates for gender equality in Bolivia including during the COVID-19 pandemic. The two agencies' support to the UNICEF Helpline has been important to support children and families affected by domestic violence with psychosocial support and also instrumental in putting mental health on the development agenda. SDC has a strong, integrated vulnerability profile reflected in all its interventions.

While monitoring of project interventions has been particularly challenging during COVID-19, several innovative methods and concepts related to virtual monitoring were introduced by all three donors. In most cases, the projects have managed to adapt their monitoring tools to the new realities and for example, a number of virtual instruments have been introduced. The “virtual project visits” introduced by SDC represent a particularly interesting modality which also allowed for wider participation and interaction in the monitoring process. Other interesting methods introduced include virtual monitoring platforms (through transmission of videos and photos) use of drone and Geographic Information System (GIS) technology (e.g. in water and sanitation projects at municipality level, supported by Sida).

While the vast majority of the reprogramming process has taken place through already existing partner set-ups, some new strategic partnerships have been established during the period, mainly by SDC. SDC has been opportunistic in its search for new partnerships to complement the existing portfolio in the COVID-19 response (and at the same time used this opportunity to prepare their phasing out process towards 2024). Two new projects have been developed with two very different partners, United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the Integral Health Coordination Programme (PROCOSI)¹ (a civil society organisation (CSO) network). Both projects are complementing ongoing SDC interventions very well, and they reach out to important multi-stakeholder platforms, addressing specific COVID-19 needs. Sida has taken advantage of their already well-established partnerships with the two main emergency organisations in Bolivia, namely UNICEF and HELVETAS and relied largely on their assessment of humanitarian response needed during COVID-19. GAC, on the other hand, has relied on their humanitarian response team in Lima who was challenged by the severe crises in Lima and therefore not able to respond as quickly as needed.

In general, all three donor agencies have managed to balance well their attention to the COVID-19 pandemic with their support to other crisis situations in the country (political, social and environmental crises). The fact that all three donors’ COVID-19 reprogramming took place within their existing strategic programme frameworks is in itself a good indication that the agencies have tried to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic without departing from their strategic focus towards other crises in the country.

The level and speed of donor harmonisation and coordination in Bolivia has been too weak in view of the urgency of the COVID-19 pandemic and the current architecture of the donor coordination framework in the country has shown to be inefficient. It has mainly consisted of information sharing through the Group of Partners for Development of Bolivia (GRUS), although some sub-groups have managed to ensure some coordination and informal consultations among donor agencies. Weak and confusing requests and a non-collaborative attitude from the

¹ The abbreviation is derived from the Spanish name: Programa de Coordinación en Salud Integral

Government of Bolivia (GoB) has contributed to this. In the case of Sida, SDC and GAC it has also been difficult to ensure a proper geographical and thematic coordination, although the evaluation team did not come across concrete examples of duplication of efforts.

Key learning from the evaluation process:

This COVID-19 response evaluation has been timely and served as a stress test for the donor agencies' responsiveness. The most significant learning has occurred during the first few months of the COVID-19 pandemic, underlining the importance of harvesting and sharing this information before it gets lost. In this situation, the conducting of an **independent synthesis evaluation has been an important complement to the donor agencies' internal COVID-19 lessons efforts.** Since a return to a pre-COVID “normality” soon appears highly unlikely, **understanding, building, and assessing adaptive capacity will continue to be a core priority for the agencies.**

Field staff and partners have been open for sharing and reflecting on their experiences, even in difficult situations. This, however, has required adaptive, flexible, agile, and emergent interview protocols and interviewers. In addition, since **interviews in the midst of stressful circumstances can be therapeutic, a strong element of both sensitivity and empathy has been needed** in the interview process. Thus, the “human face” behind the COVID-19 response in terms of **family life and working conditions for expatriate and local staff has come through as being very important in this evaluation.**

Recommendations from the evaluation - for the donor agencies' HQ/MFA:

It should be carefully assessed how differences in culture, communication and prioritisation between departments in MFA/HQ and field offices affect development cooperation in emergency situations. The COVID-19 pandemic has clearly revealed that a “one size fits all” approach is not suitable, and that field offices need much more differentiated approaches and provision of flexible solution models. This may require that more decision-making related to development cooperation staff and operations in these situations will be delegated to field offices, following some overall HQ guidance and supervision.

A more thorough assessment of HQs “fit for fragility” preparedness should be conducted. This should include critical aspects related to: i) training of all field staff for crisis/emergency management situations; ii) differentiation and flexibility in HQs support instruments/tools to embassies based on fragility assessments; and iii) the level of experience required among embassy staff to act more independently and with increased responsibility during an emergency situation.

HQs “duty of care” procedures should be reviewed with a particular view to ensure that they properly address particular family and gender related challenges that may occur for expatriate staff during emergency situations as well as a better protection of national staff. This should include a re-examination of medical evacuation plans and coverage for expatriate staff located in duty stations like La Paz as well as attention to national staff (employed by the embassies/missions) who rely on national systems.

HQ request for data, monitoring and situational reporting from the field during emergency situations should be more carefully based on actual needs and potential trade-offs. HQ reporting requests to the three embassies/missions in La Paz have at times been heavy. In a context where social accountability is already a critical issue, it should be more carefully considered how embassy resources for data collection and analysis are being used.

While this evaluation presents interesting experiences from three donor agencies' COVID-19 response in Bolivia, a comparison of one donor agency's response in multiple countries would provide additional value. The Bolivian context has been distinctive, as it was characterised by several ongoing crises already before the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic. Thus, a comparison with donor responses in different contexts would be of high interest.

Recommendations from the evaluation - for the three embassies/missions in La Paz:

Adaptive management principles should become fully rooted in embassy/mission routines and practices. This relates both to programming, organisation, budgeting, financial mechanisms, partner relations, work planning and personnel. While a return to a pre-COVID normality appears highly unlikely, the importance of swift and flexible processes has increased. This brings a focus on decentralised decision-making and adaptive capacity within the embassies/missions in view of the frameworks provided by HQs (structures, guidelines and procedures).

The embassies/missions should strengthen and expand their toolbox for digital and virtual communication, both internally as well as with the projects. As part of this, possibilities for introduction of new digital working methods at the embassies/missions, as well as within the projects, should be further explored.

Gender and vulnerability aspects become even more of a concern in crisis situations. While generic tools have been developed, more contextualised gender/vulnerability analysis and assessment tools should be developed, ideally through joint donor analysis to increase efficiency. Even though many of the project interventions have had an explicit focus on gender and vulnerability aspects, the COVID-19 pandemic has brought acute aspects of vulnerability such as domestic violence.

The embassies/missions should, to a larger extent, become or develop a hub for sharing and exchange of partners' capacities, knowledge and information during a crisis situation. While the partners in general have been heavily involved in the process of reprogramming their own projects, there has been limited space facilitated for interaction with other likeminded partners, to explore common challenges and opportunities.

The pre-COVID-19 toolbox for project monitoring should be re-designed with a view to continue and replicate new, innovative monitoring tools and instruments introduced during the pandemic. This includes, for example, virtual project visits; more extensive use of small video clips and photo material, use of drone technology

and GIS etc. In many cases, the COVID-19 adjusted monitoring processes has led to wider participation of different stakeholder groups and more interactive, lively, and actualised collection of data and evidence.

The preparedness and coordination mechanisms of the donor community in Bolivia should be enhanced to enable a faster and better coordinated response to crises situations in the country. In addition to existing and provisionally established thematic sub-groups under the GRUS, this could include establishment of geographical coordination groups, pooled funding mechanisms etc. (e.g. by making use of good experience from support to the 2020-2021 election process in the country) taking into consideration a reality with a non-collaborative government and a shrinking civic space.

1 Introduction

1.1 OVERALL OBJECTIVES AND SCOPE OF THE EVALUATION

The evaluation is a *process* evaluation concerning the response of the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida), the Swiss Development Cooperation (SDC) and the Global Affairs Canada (GAC) to the COVID-19 pandemic in Bolivia. All three donors have bilateral cooperation with Bolivia with physical presence (embassy/mission) in La Paz.

While the three donors' portfolios in Bolivia differ in size, they are all relatively small donors: in 2020, Sida had an annual budget of Swedish Kronor (SEK) 187 million (equivalent to USD 22.7 million); SDC's annual budget was of Swiss franc (CHF) 15 million (equivalent to USD 16.5 million); and GAC had an annual budget of Canadian Dollars (CAD) 11.5 million (equivalent to USD 9.2 million).²

The human resources allocated to development cooperation work in Bolivia differs across the three donor agencies: the Swedish Embassy is supported by 7 full-time equivalent staff positions (all in La Paz, only minor support from HQ), the Swiss Embassy by 5.5 staff positions (5 in La Paz, 0.5 in HQ) and the Canadian mission by 5 staff position (3 in La Paz, 0.5 in Lima and 1.5 in HQ).³

According to the ToR (see Annex 8), the “*evaluation objects are the internal procedures of the three donor agencies, as well as on the reprogramming and expansion of their portfolios to address the consequences of the pandemic. The evaluation will also consider their respective performance as partners in terms of flexibility, support and reliability.*” Thus, the focus of the evaluation is on assessing the extent to which adequate framework conditions have been provided by the respective donor agencies' - both from Headquarters (HQ)/Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) level and from the embassies/missions – in response to the COVID-19 pandemic; whether the donor agencies have had the necessary flexibility to adapt to the changing needs and challenges; and how this has influenced programming and partners.

The evaluation addresses three different institutional levels: i) the central (HQ/MFA) level; ii) the de-centralised (embassy/mission) level; and iii) the partnership level. The assessment of the three donor agencies will lead to an assessment of how well the

² Using a currency rate for March 2021.

³ Estimates based on information provided by the three donor agencies. Data are not fully comparable, but focusses on staff positions directly involved with development cooperation work.

donors, individually and jointly, have responded to the COVID-19 pandemic and what learning can be drawn from that to inform future responses to similar emergencies.

The scope of the evaluation covers the three donor agencies' responses to the COVID-19 pandemic in Bolivia during the time period from March 2020, when the first case was discovered in Bolivia, until the end of the year (December 2020), at a time when the second wave of the pandemic was peaking.

1.2 STRUCTURE OF THIS REPORT

Following this introduction, Chapter 2 provides a brief overview of the Bolivian context in light of COVID-19. Chapter 3 provides a brief overview of each donor's organisational arrangements and internal procedures in response to the pandemic, including their reprogramming and the embassies communication with their respective HQ/MFA. Chapter 4 describes the methodology and approach, including the methods for data collection and analysis to be applied in the evaluation. In Chapter 5 to 7, the evaluation findings on Sida, SDC and GAC respectively are presented. Chapter 8 includes a comparison of the three donor agencies and Chapter 9 an assessment of donor harmonisation. Chapter 10 presents the conclusions, lessons learned and recommendations from this evaluation.

2 Bolivian COVID-19 context

In the period of the evaluation, Bolivia has been passing through two waves of the COVID-19 pandemic: a first wave between March and November 2020, and a second wave starting from December 2020. The second wave had a greater effect on the number of infections and deaths. The first wave peaked in August 2020 with more than 2,000 daily cases registered while, in the second wave, the highest peak appeared in late January 2021 with nearly 3,000 daily cases registered. While the infection rate per 100,000 inhabitants has been one of the lowest in the region, the case fatality ratio has been ranked as the second largest in the region⁴ and according to Johns Hopkins University (JHU) the second wave of the pandemic in Bolivia saw the 7th highest mortality rate in the world.

Faced with the critical situation of the health sector and pandemic emergencies, the Government of Bolivia (GoB) turned to international cooperation to meet its financial and equipment requirements, supplies, medicines, and other needs. The government requested the collaboration of the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) for procurement processes due to the difficulties of the international context for access to suppliers, availability, costs and delivery periods in view of the increase in demand worldwide.

Technical assistance has been provided by the Pan American Health Organisation (PAHO) and credits channelled from multilateral organisations such as the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB), the World Bank (WB), and the Development Bank of Latin America (CAF), together with donations to introduce specific palliative measures in response to the crisis and the deterioration in living conditions of the population in quarantine. This has included small cash transfers to highly vulnerable groups as well as provisions for reducing electricity costs and making payment of basic services more flexible, among other measures.

The bilateral international cooperation was activated with an attempt to coordinate actions to combat the negative impact from the pandemic, together with national authorities (mainly the Ministry of Development Planning (MDP), the Ministry of Health (MoH) and the Ministry of Economy and Public Finance), primarily through the Group of Partners for Development of Bolivia (GRUS), which is made up of 24

⁴ <https://paho-covid19-response-who.hub.arcgis.com/pages/paho-south-america-covid-19-response>

development cooperation partners (including observers).⁵ Emergency Groups were created to internally coordinate issues related to health, social protection and economic reactivation, within the framework of sharing and making transparent information on donations and financing for the fight against the pandemic.⁶ A group regarding basic services such as Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH) was activated with the participation of international agencies, Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) and more sporadically with participation of the GoB.

The pandemic aligned with other crises in Bolivia

The crisis resulting from the pandemic was adding to other already existing crises in the country, in particular a political crisis and a slowdown in the economic growth since 2014. Thus, Bolivia has been witnessing multiple crisis. At this juncture, in addition to the health crisis due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the political, economic, social and environmental crisis converge.

The political crisis

The pandemic hit the country in a context of political and social polarization that is still a reality: failed elections of October 2019; a social and political conflict in October and November 2019; a constitutional succession with a government that was characterized by its fragility and lack of legitimacy and - despite the pandemic - the permanent confrontation between the Plurinational Legislative Assembly and the Executive Branch; the mobilisations of August 2020 demanding the advancement of the elections; holding of the national elections on October 18, 2020; the possession of the new MAS government with broad social legitimacy as a result of the vast majority of the 55% of the votes obtained; and the first 100 days of the Luis Arce government, which faced serious economic difficulties, various social and sectorial demands and a confrontation with doctors and health personnel.

The economic crisis

With the end of the economic boom in Bolivia (2005-2014), due to the fall in international prices of export raw materials (mainly gas and minerals), the fiscal deficit has increased by more than 8%, especially due to excessive public spending and investments in public companies without viability, accompanied by a deficit in the trade balance. With the pandemic and quarantine, the productive apparatus has been severely affected and it is estimated that GDP decreased by 7.3% in 2020,⁷ in addition to closure of companies and an increase in the informal sector, that represents more than 70% of the economy. Added to this is the increase in internal and external debt.

Social crisis

With the COVID-19 pandemic, already high rates of unemployment and underemployment have worsened. Thus, an increase in poverty is expected in the short term, with a significant decline in those social indicators that improved in the period of

⁵ The GRUS is a donor coordination group.

⁶ <http://grus.org.bo/2020/07/06/reaccion-ante-emergencia-del-covid-19/#more-3257>

⁷ <https://www.bancomundial.org/es/country/bolivia/overview>

the economic boom. According to the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC),⁸ it is estimated that extreme poverty in Bolivia will increase to 16.8% of the population during the pandemic, compared to a level of 12.9% in 2019. The most vulnerable families and communities are indigenous people.

As a result of the crisis, there will be downward economic mobility. According to the National Chamber of Industries, unemployment nearly doubled in less than a semester (from 4.8% registered in 2019 to 8.1% as of May 2020). This was mainly attributed to the quarantine with the paralysis of economic activities. According to a recent study by Centro de Estudios para el Desarrollo Laboral y Agrario (CEDLA), while high job insecurity was already prevalent in the country, the combined political crisis and the pandemic has worsened this situation and increased the informal work force from 60% to 70% of the population. An educational gap has also materialised with school year suspended at the end of July 2020 without a clear strategy for virtual learning. This is likely to have a severe long-term influence on especially poor and vulnerable families.

Another critical factor in the social crisis is that domestic and family violence has increased since COVID-19. Between January and June 2020, there were 49 women's deaths registered in the country and nearly 14,000 cases of family and domestic violence were attended. Even before the pandemic (February 2020), a UN study showed that Bolivia was among the countries with the highest rates of violence against women: 7 out of 10 women suffered from violence of all kinds, with physical and psychological violence being the most prevalent.

Environmental crisis

Burning and forest fires in the Amazon and Chiquitania have become recurrent. The expansion of the agricultural frontier and the interests of the sectors linked to agribusiness are the main reasons for these environmental disasters, with irreversible consequences in the loss of fauna, flora and biodiversity. Indigenous communities are the most affected.

⁸ <https://www.paginasiete.bo/economia/2020/7/16/la-cepal-preve-que-en-bolivia-la-pobreza-extrema-llegue-al-168-61512.html#:~:text=M%C3%A1s%20pobreza%20en%20la%20regi%C3%B3n&text=Dentro%20de%20este%20grupo%2C%20el,del%20total%20de%20la%20poblaci%C3%B3n>

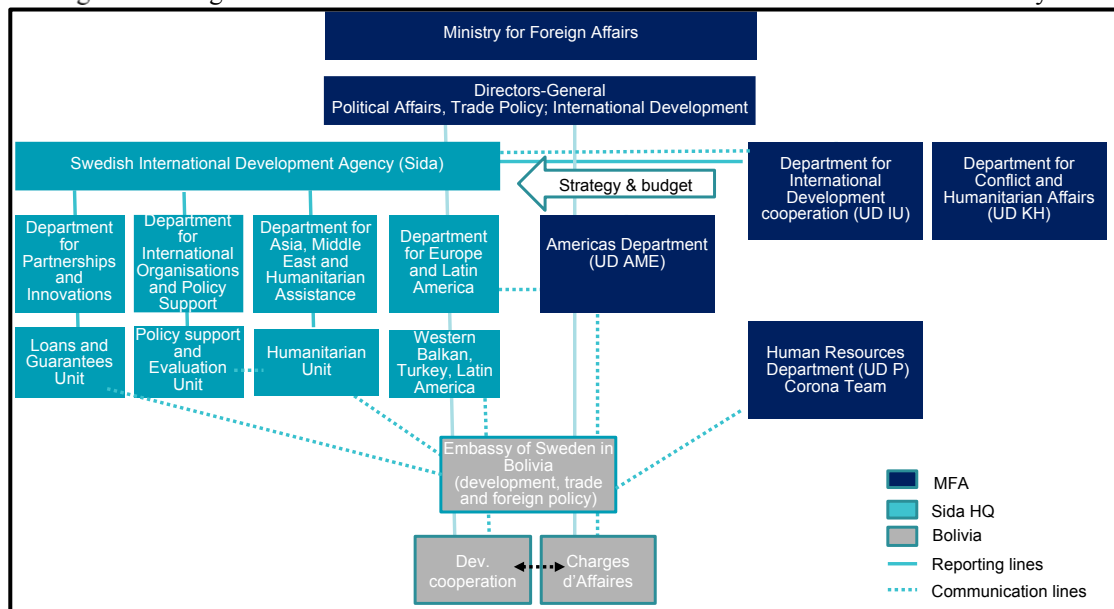
3 The three donors

3.1 SWEDISH INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT AGENCY

3.1.1 Organisational structure

Swedish development cooperation is governed by the MFA which decides on the Swedish strategic approach and then delegates responsibility for implementation to Sida. The Department for International Development Cooperation (UD IU) in MFA leads the strategy development in collaboration with the geographical departments in MFA (in this case the Americas Department (UD AME)) with input from Sida. The organisational structure and communication lines from the Swedish Embassy in La Paz to HQ (MFA and Sida) are illustrated in Figure 1 (only departments relevant for the COVID-19 handling in Bolivia have been included).

Figure 1. Organisational structure and communication lines between the Swedish Embassy and HQ



When a strategy and budget for implementation is developed in MFA, the responsibility is delegated to the head of the geographical departments in Sida. The Head of the Department for Europe and Latin America (EUROLATIN) (in the case of Bolivia) then automatically delegates responsibility to the Head of the Embassy (Chargé d'Affaires) who then delegates budget authority for the bilateral development strategy to the Head of Development Cooperation. The Embassy as an independent

public entity has significant authority to approve projects⁹ as long as they fit within the strategic framework. This means that during the COVID-19 pandemic the Embassy has been able to amend projects as deemed necessary as well as approve new ones as long as they were within the thematic areas and sectors included in the bilateral strategy.

As reflected in Figure 1, the Swedish Embassy reports both to Sida and to MFA. The main communication line between the Embassy and Sida is with the EUROLATIN, whereas the main communication with MFA goes through UD AME.

3.1.2 Cooperation strategy with Bolivia

The 2016-2020 Swedish Development Cooperation Strategy with Bolivia (in the following *the Swedish Strategy*) has come to an end.¹⁰ The Swedish Strategy has provided a total of 750 MSEK (equivalent to 87.9 million USD)¹¹ and was approved with the overall aim to contribute to three strategic areas: i) strengthened democracy and gender equality, and greater respect for human rights; ii) a better environment, reduced climate impact and enhanced resilience to environmental impacts, climate change and natural disasters; and iii) better opportunities and tools to enable poor people to improve their living conditions.

Sub-areas within these three areas emphasize public participation, strengthening of democratic institutions, capacity development of public institutions and CSOs. Gender-based violence (GBV) is a specific priority under strategic area 1 whereas strategic area 2 emphasizes rural areas and a focus on small scale agriculture and sustainable services. Trade and sustainable investments are highlighted under strategic area 3. Besides an explicit focus on poor people across all areas; specific target groups include women, children, and indigenous people. The overarching goal for Swedish development cooperation is poverty reduction and cross-cutting areas are gender equality, environment and climate change, conflict sensitivity and a human rights-based approach (HRBA) to development.

A great deal of Swedish development cooperation in Bolivia is channelled through UN organisations and international NGOs. Sida has little direct cooperation with national authorities except from a few ministries such as the Ministry of Environment and Water (MEW) and the MDP, where cooperation takes place at the vice-ministerial level. The projects with UN organisations have however been oriented to support national institutions indirectly. An emphasis has also been put on establishing partnerships with national NGOs, in particular within the water and sanitation area (such as Aguatuya), with some think tanks (such as CEDLA) as well as the national CSO Fautapo.

⁹ Sida calls it 'contributions' but for consistency, 'projects' will be used here.

¹⁰ A new strategy for 2021-2025 has recently been developed by the MFA.

¹¹ Currency rate in December 2020.

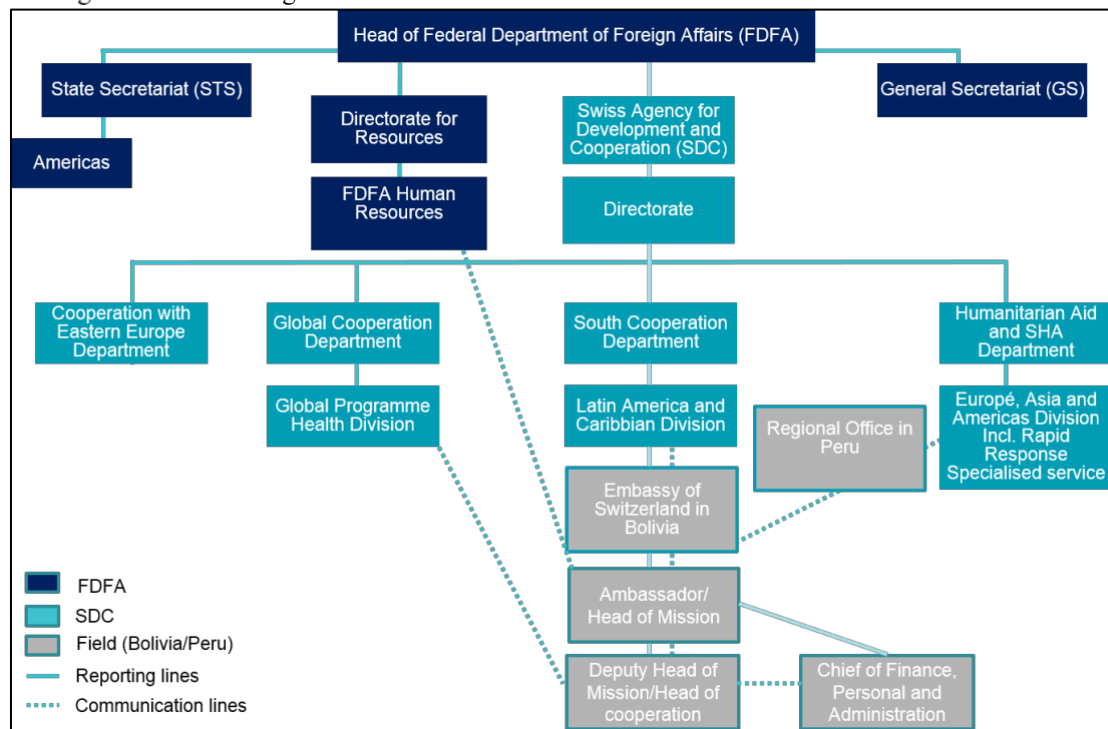
3.2 SWISS DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION

3.2.1 Organisational structure

SDC is a Directorate under the Federal Department of Foreign Affairs (FDFA). It is headed by a Director General and structured into four Departments: Global Cooperation Department, South Cooperation Department, Cooperation with Eastern Europe Department and the Humanitarian and SHA Department as illustrated in Figure 2. The South Cooperation Department is a geographically structured department and the Swiss Cooperation Operations of the Embassy in La Paz reports to the Latin America and Caribbean Division. The Embassy in La Paz reports to the Political Division-Americas of the FDFA. The Swiss Embassy in Lima, Peru encompasses a Regional Hub that coordinates the regional Humanitarian Aid with a focus on Disaster Risk Reduction, including the Rapid Response intervention and SDCs Global programmes on Water and Climate Change in the region.

The Ambassador/Head of Mission at the Swiss Embassy in La Paz also acts as the Head of International Cooperation and the Deputy Head of Mission acts as the Deputy Head of Cooperation of SDC. The Ambassador is in charge of the governance portfolio whereas the Deputy Head of Cooperation is responsible for the environment and economic development portfolios. During the pandemic, the Ambassador had to allocate substantial time for the repatriation process of Swiss citizens as well as on reporting and coordination with the FDFA Human Resources on embassy staff matters and the general COVID-19 situation. Thus, the Deputy Head of Cooperation took over responsibility for the COVID reprogramming efforts (March-July 2020) in close collaboration with the National Programme Officers and the Chief of Finance, Personal and Administration and her team.

Figure 2. SDC’s organisational structure and communication lines



3.2.2 Cooperation Strategy with Bolivia

The Swiss Cooperation Strategy with Bolivia for the period 2018-2021 (“Estrategia de Cooperación para Bolivia 2018-2021”- in the following *the SDC Strategy*) focuses on *three key strategic thematic areas*: i) governance; ii) economic development; and iii) climate change and environment. The Swiss Strategy includes a special focus on inclusion of poor people and vulnerable groups, especially youth and women. Gender, governance, disaster risk reduction and conflict sensitivity are specific cross-cutting themes. SDC’s bilateral development cooperation is complemented by measures from the Secretariat for Economic Affairs (SECO) in the Swiss Ministry of Economic Affairs which focuses on economic cooperation, labour market, trade, export promotion and business development.

The Swiss support is characterized by a strong focus on soft skills (knowledge, experience, exchange and networks), emphasizing in a specific way the role of SDC as a facilitator. During the 2018-2021 strategy period, Switzerland has intended to strengthen its role as a knowledge broker (knowledge agent) and actively improve communication to the external public (see list of projects in Annex 1). Triangular agreements between Bolivia, other Latin American countries and Switzerland were seen to complement and strengthen the cooperation. The next strategy period, 2022-2024, is planned as the last for Swiss bilateral cooperation with Bolivia as well as in the Latin American Region, thus focus will be on the exit process.

Key SDC implementing partners in Bolivia are Swiss NGOs (Swisscontact, HELVETAS, Solidar Suiza), national NGOs and foundations (like Pro Rural, PROFIN, Fundación UNIR and Fautapo), national ministries and decentralised government services (such as Plurinational Women's Service (SEPMUD), Plurinational Victim Assistance Service (SEPDAVI), judiciary and the prosecutor’s office) as well as universities and financial institutions. Only one (new) project is implemented through UN organisations (UNDP), thus UN has been a marginal modality for SDC in Bolivia in the last years.

3.3 GLOBAL AFFAIRS CANADA

3.3.1 Organisational structure

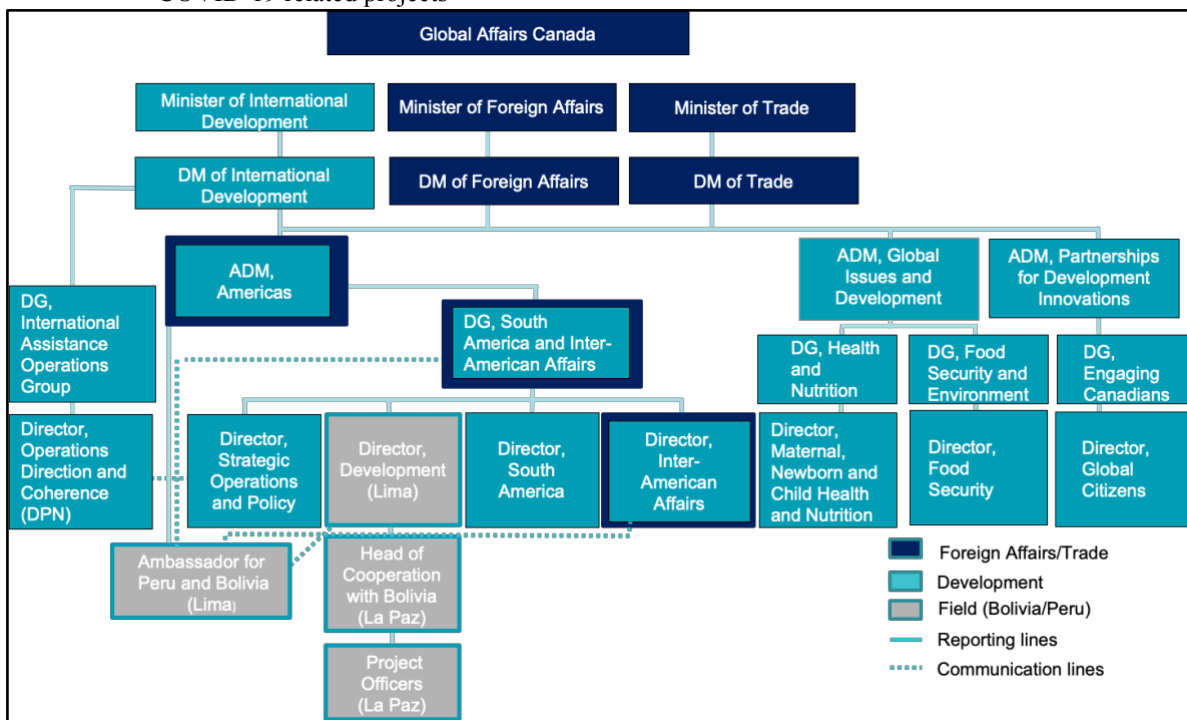
The partial organisational chart in figure 3 focuses on the GAC branches involved in the delivery of Canada’s international assistance in Bolivia: Americas Branch (bilateral programming/country-to-country), Partnership for Development Innovation Branch (programming engaging Canadian organisations), and Global Issues and Development Branch (multilateral programming mainly through multilateral institutions). The development section in the Office of the Embassy of Canada in La Paz (the mission), is managed by the Head of Cooperation, and represents all delivery channels. The Head of Cooperation is also responsible for managing the delivery of the decentralised Bolivia Development Programme (in Americas Branch) reporting to the Director based in Lima.

The International Assistance Operations Group and Operations Direction (DPD) and Coherence (DPN) were responsible for coordinating and communicating guidelines and tools for the amendment of existing projects and approval of new projects to

respond to COVID-19. The “Strategic Operations and Policy” division in the Americas Branch, coordinated with DPD processes and transmitted this information to development programmes in Americas Branch.

The Political Programme of the Embassy managed in Lima runs the Canadian Fund for Local Initiatives. One project responded to the COVID-19 pandemic with a focus on providing personal protective equipment and training on bio-security measures to the Ombudsman office staff as well as supporting the Blood Bank select plasma donors through ELISA tests. Coordination for approving and amending projects funded by the other branches rested directly with these branches.

Figure 3. GAC Organisational structure for the amendment of existing projects and approval of new COVID-19 related projects



3.3.2 Cooperation strategy with Bolivia

The ultimate intended outcome of Canada’s development programme (2019-2024) in Bolivia is: *Reduced poverty, especially among indigenous, vulnerable and marginalized people and increased empowerment of women, adolescents and girls in Bolivia (which includes LGBTQ+, as well as rural and urban migrant populations).* This is to be achieved through two strategic programming directions: i) human dignity - sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR) and gender equality/empowerment of women and girls; and ii) growth that works for everyone.

The first strategic direction focusses on early and unwanted pregnancies that prevent girls from reaching their full educational potential, as well as GBV and empowerment of women and indigenous people. The second direction supports Bolivia’s efforts to innovate, to diversify its economic base, and to encourage women, youth, and indigenous people to participate in the economy. In addition, the political context in Bolivia in 2019 led Canada to pay closer attention to the democratic health of Bolivia,

including the independence and capacity of its key democratic institutions (Supreme Electoral Tribunal) and the respect of the human rights of all its citizens.

During the period under evaluation, geographic programming in Bolivia consisted in strengthening the capacity of government counterparts, e.g. ministries and municipalities, or of local civil society partners, e.g., women's organizations. Projects were implemented by Canadian and international NGOs as well as multilateral agencies (see list of projects in Annex 1).

4 Methodology and approach

4.1 KEY EVALUATION PRINCIPLES AND CONSIDERATIONS

The evaluation has conformed to OECD-DAC principles and quality standards, uses the relevant OECD-DAC evaluation criteria and references the OECD-DAC Guidance for Evaluating Humanitarian Assistance in Complex Emergencies. While the evaluation is primarily characterised as a “process evaluation”, it also links to the paradigm of “formative evaluation” due to its focus on implementation, learning and improvement.

Key features of the evaluation include: i) a presumption of a *high degree of flexibility and adaptation*, and a *focus on emergence*; ii) response functions taking place in a *systemic manner*, across corporate structures, systems, and operations; and iii) the positioning of the evaluation within the wider context of *utilisation-focused evaluation* where learning for management and staff is seen as a critical organisational need going forward. Thus, the evaluation is explicitly geared towards provision of useful evaluative input to support comparative corporate learning as donor agencies’ COVID-19 responses evolve, which could potentially add value at multiple levels across the organisations.

The *evaluation process* encompassed: i) a high level of engagement with management and staff from HQ/MFA and embassy/mission level as appropriate, throughout the data collection and analysis process; ii) an approach of openness, receptiveness and flexibility, and willingness to adapt the evaluation process where needed; and iii) building a high level of ownership and decision-making, in relation to design issues, key findings and recommendations/learning presented by the evaluation team and collectively discussed in feedback events at different stages of the evaluation.

For the evaluation *analysis*, the evaluation team makes use of *rubrics* to provide a basis for integrating different data sources to reach holistic evaluative judgments. The use of rubrics is recommended in this type of evaluation where stakeholders are willing to engage and be reflective about performance and where a diverse range of competing stakeholder priorities, perspectives and values is present.

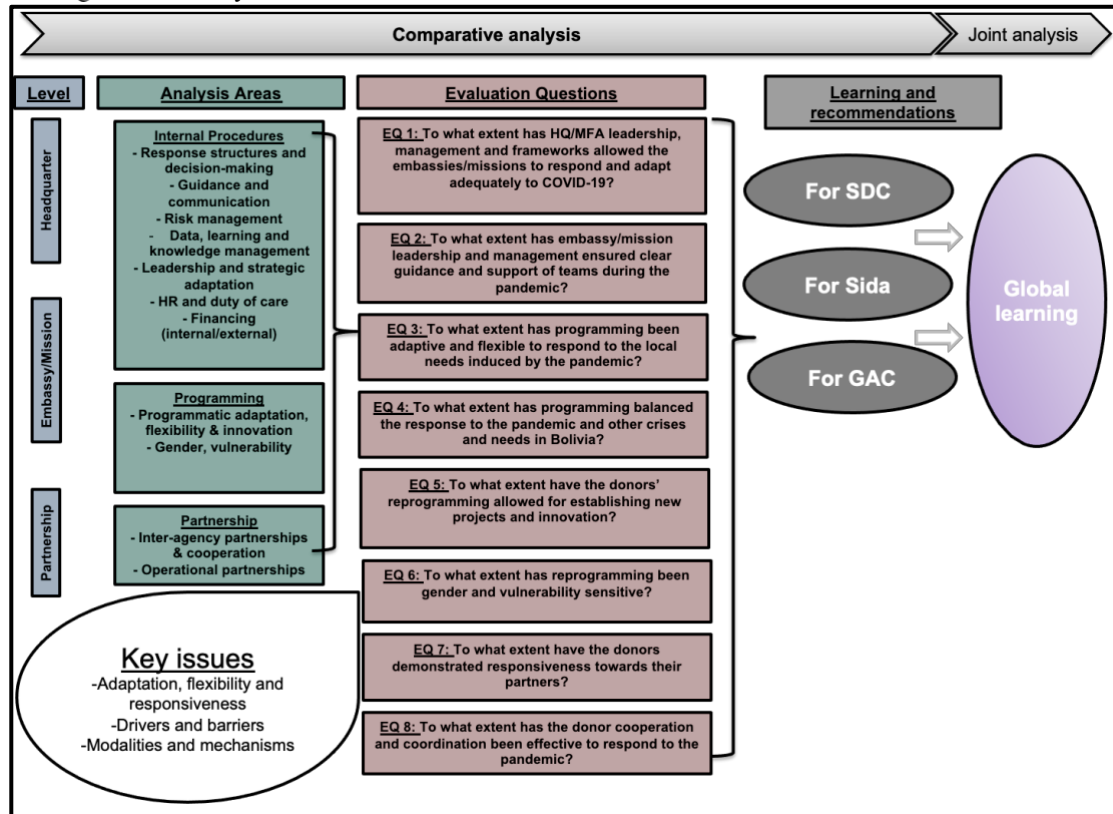
Finally, the evaluation was carried out in a *gender responsive* manner and applied a *HRBA*, both with a view to the donor agencies’ COVID-19 pandemic responses as well as in relation to the evaluation consultation process. This means, that the evaluation took gender and vulnerability considerations into account at all stages and levels of the evaluation. Although interview participants were not selected with a strict view to ensure gender balance, but rather with a view to their strategic position in view of the evaluation purpose. The evaluation however probed for how men and women are differently affected by – and considered in the specific responses to - the COVID-19

pandemic. Thus, gender and vulnerability concerns were mainstreamed into the evaluation framework and key question (see below).

4.2 ANALYTICAL FRAMEWORK

The overall analytical framework for the evaluation is illustrated in Figure 4 below.

Figure 4. Analytical framework



As illustrated in Figure 4 (from the left), the donor agencies' response to the COVID-19 pandemic in Bolivia took place at three different institutional levels as well as in the inter-sections between these: i) HQ/MFA level; ii) embassy/mission level; and iii) partner level. Likewise, the main response elements from the institutional levels can be grouped into three main areas: i) internal procedures; ii) reprogramming; and iii) partnerships. The analysis of the responses related to the different institutional levels and areas is structured around a set of Evaluation Questions (EQs, see below).

Thus, as mentioned above, the evaluation analysis is strongly *process-oriented* and carefully considers the inherent dynamics and interrelationships between the different levels. The key principles and considerations related to the evaluation framework are further explained in Section 4.3, 4.4 and 4.5 below.

Gender and vulnerability

The three above-mentioned institutional levels were used as entry points for analysing the important aspects of gender and vulnerability: At *HQ/MFA level*, it was considered how and to what extent gender and vulnerability aspects were addressed in the COVID-19 instructions, guidelines, and communications from HQ/MFA to the

embassies/missions. Both Sweden and Canada apply a feministic foreign policy, hence the overall framework for working with gender equality is anchored in these declarations. The evaluation also assessed whether Bolivian context-specific concerns (such as the increase in GBV) have influenced the dialogue between HQ and embassies/missions on COVID-19 responses.

At the *embassy/mission* level, the evaluation looked into how specific gender and vulnerability concerns derived from the COVID-19 pandemic have been addressed in the reprogramming process. For instance, have specific gender or vulnerability studies or assessments been commissioned as part of the reprogramming and to what extent have such data and information been used as guidance in the process? At the *partner* level, the evaluation looked into how and to what extent the dialogue with and between project partners has been framed around gender and vulnerability concerns. This included considerations on how responsive the donors have been to partners' requests and demands to these particular topics. Or, in cases where these particular concerns have not been raised by the partners, to what extent the donors may have pushed for inclusion of these topics.

4.3 EVALUATION QUESTIONS AND MATRIX

The 17 EQs proposed in the ToR have been further operationalised, fine-tuned, and structured by the evaluation team. This has resulted in a re-structuring of the proposed EQs into eight main EQ's (see Figure 4), each with one or more sub-questions attached. Each EQ is directly related to one of the three main areas and institutionally they related to the embassies'/mission's interaction with, respectively, HQ/MFA and partners. As mentioned above, gender and vulnerability concerns have been mainstreamed into the three main areas and a specific EQ has been added on this topic (in the area of programming).

Based on the EQs, an *Evaluation Matrix* was developed (Annex 3) which constituted the overall guiding framework for the evaluation. In addition to the EQs and the sub-questions, the matrix also specifies particular issues, judgement criteria and means of verification related to each EQ. The EQs have also been categorized in accordance with four of the OECD-DAC evaluation criteria (relevance, efficiency, effectiveness, and coherence). While these criteria have not be applied in a strict sense by the evaluation, they are included in the evaluation matrix to illustrate their coherence to the EQs.

4.4 METHODS FOR DATA COLLECTION

In view of the continued COVID-19 travel and mobility restrictions, the following main methods for data collection were applied for this evaluation:

A comprehensive *desk review* of key documents, communications and other relevant materials provided by the three donor agencies was conducted during the inception phase. This included in particular: i) internal administrative documentation and communication material from the three donor agencies; ii) project related documentation; and iii) other documentation of relevance to the context and evaluation focus. During the implementation phase, additional documentation and communication material was reviewed by the team as deemed necessary.

Virtual interviews with key stakeholders constituted a main source of information. During the inception phase, initial scoping interviews were conducted with heads (or vice-heads) of development cooperation at the three embassies/mission in La Paz. In addition, each donor agency provided a list of suggested interviewees divided into five key stakeholder categories. These stakeholders were all invited for an interview and reminded if no replies. In total, 70 interviews were completed.

Table 1 summarizes the number of stakeholders for interviews per stakeholder group by donor agency (Annex 4 provides a full name list of the selected interview persons).

Table 1. Interviews by stakeholder category¹²

Category	GAC	SDC	Sida	All
1. Embassy/Mission in La Paz and Lima (regional)	5	8	6	
2. HQ/MFA	4	5	4	
3. Partners (non-governmental/UN)	10	8	8	
4. Bolivian authorities		4	6	
5. Other donors				2
Total	19	25	24	2
Stakeholder interviews in total	70			

Semi-structured interview guides, based on the Evaluation Matrix (Annex 3), were developed, and translated to Spanish and used to guide the interviews. The interviews were conducted through Zoom, Skype, Teams, WhatsApp or by telephone, as the stakeholders preferred.

Since it was not possible to include all project partners in the interview process, the evaluation team conducted an *online survey* (through Survey Monkey Platform) to elicit feedback from a wider range of partner respondents and to provide some quantitative data to complement the qualitative interviews and strengthen the analysis. The online survey was targeted to representatives from key partner organisations/institutions, including government authorities, identified together with the three donor agencies. The survey was launched *before* the interview process which allowed the team to use the interview process for further nuancing and deeper interpretation of some of the early survey results. Since the questions in the survey had a different form (and used ratings) than those asked during interviews (open questions with focus on explanatory parts and provision of specific examples), all project partners (including those invited for interviews) received an invitation to fill in the survey form.

In order to mitigate the risk for “double counting”, the survey respondents were asked to specify the name of their organisation/institution. In this way, the evaluation team was, on the one hand, able to establish a link between the survey and the interview responses while, on the other hand, able to avoid responses from one particular organisation/institution being more dominant than others in the evaluation analysis.

¹² As reflected in Annex 4 some of the partners are included under more than one donor (e.g. Helvetas and Swisscontact who have been interviewed for both Sida and SDC projects).

Survey responses have been cleaned and only partially completed surveys were taken out. This meant that although 47 persons out of 69 initiated the survey and completed some of it, only 41 were included in the survey results.¹³

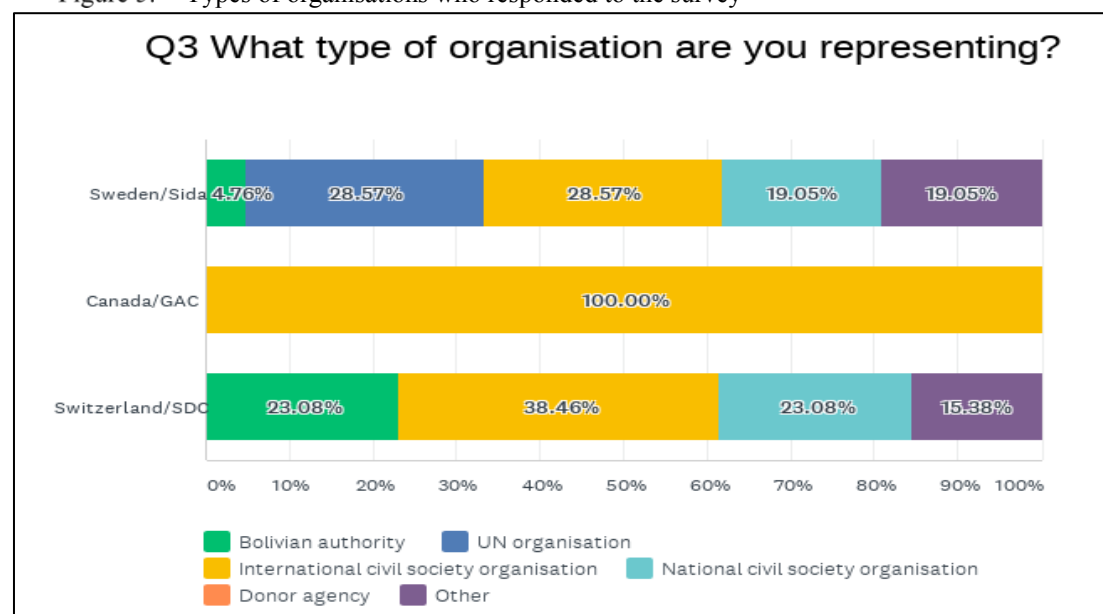
In order to increase the probability for a good response rate, the survey form (Annex 7) was kept short and mainly included closed and relatively simple questions. On average, survey participants spent eight minutes completing the survey. Table 2 provides an overview of partners completing the survey by donor agency, gender (m/f) etc.

Table 2. Survey respondents by donor agency and gender

	Sida		SDC		GAC	
Gender	M	F	M	F	M	F
#	14	7	7	6	2	5
Total	21		13		7	

Figure 5 illustrates the type of organisations the respondents represented per donor agency. Whereas Sida and SDC partners are diverse and represents various types of partner organisations, the GAC partners are exclusively international CSOs. The survey respondents also reflect that SDC has a larger share of government partners than the other two which corresponds to their emphasis on working directly with national authorities.

Figure 5. Types of organisations who responded to the survey



¹³ Five of the responses only included answers to the introductory questions (gender, organisations etc.) but no ratings of donor’s response. Only one incomplete answer was not deleted because only the last question was not answered.

4.5 EVALUATION ANALYSIS

Evaluation analysis – comparative and joint

The structure and logic of the evaluation analysis includes the elements and follow the flow illustrated in the analytical framework in Figure 4 and is based on triangulation of the data and information collected from different sources, mainly the desk review, the virtual interviews, and the online survey.

The evaluation analysis focuses on *a comparative assessment* of the three donor agencies' responses to the COVID-19 situation in Bolivia, taking into consideration their differences in structural and institutional arrangements and capacities.

As mentioned above, in order to strengthen the comparative analytical part of the evaluation, the evaluation makes use of rubrics. This allows the analysis to go beyond the descriptive comparisons and provide a sound basis for integrating different data sources to reach holistic evaluative judgments. Table 3 illustrates a simple rubric that will form the basis for this evaluation rating.

The rating is applied for the first seven of the eight main EQs and based on the evaluation team's overall assessment of the data and information collected. This includes both the *qualitative assessment* (based on the virtual interviews and document review) and the *quantitative assessment* (based on data from the online survey, which was designed to fit into this rating system by making use of a similar scale. Since the survey is focusing on *partner* issues, it only covers EQ3-EQ7).

Table 3. Rubrics based on qualitative and quantitative sources

Rating	Qualitative assessment criteria	Quantitative assessment criteria (survey scale equivalent)
Excellent	Performance is clearly very strong or exemplary in relation to the question. No weaknesses detected.	5
Very good	Very good performance on virtually all aspects. Strong overall but not exemplary. No substantial weaknesses and if minor weaknesses they are managed well.	4
Good	Reasonably good performance overall. Might have a few slight weaknesses but nothing serious.	3
Adequate	Performance is inconsistent in relation to the question. Some gaps or weaknesses but meets minimum expectations.	2
Poor	Clear evidence of unsatisfactory performance in relation to the question. Does not meet minimum expectations / requirements	1

In order to further strengthen the learning aspect from the evaluation, the evaluation includes a number of *good/best practice examples* for each donor agency. To the extent possible, the aim has been to identify one good/best practice example in relation to each of the EQs. These are included in the analysis as case boxes.

Key learning, conclusions and recommendations are provided, based on the individual and comparative analyses. The extracted learning will be of potential relevance to a broader audience of development partners.

5 Sida's response to COVID-19

This section presents findings on Sida's response to the pandemic and is structured around the three analytical levels presented above: HQ, embassy, and partner level. Thus, findings related to HQ and embassy level are first analysed, then the reprogramming process and the level of flexibility and adaptivity towards partners, and finally the overall responsiveness towards partners. Brief conclusions on Sida's response are presented at the end of the section.

5.1 HEADQUARTER'S INSTRUCTIONS AND GUIDANCE

The MFA instruction to repatriate expatriates was perceived as a “one size fits all” model at the Embassy. However, embassy management resisted the instruction and insisted to stay in Bolivia while Swedish and other Nordic citizens were repatriated, and the development cooperation portfolio was reprogrammed. When the pandemic hit Europe in March 2020, as a first step, Sida was tasked by MFA to identify personnel with high risk for severe COVID-19 illness and have them repatriated. The instruction from MFA was clear, requesting all expatriates to return to Stockholm but with people in the high-risk group as a priority. While one staff member at risk was evacuated from Bolivia in April 2020, embassy management resisted the instruction and instead argued the case of staff members who wanted to stay. An intern was also sent home in the beginning of the pandemic as well as two expatriate staff members (during May 2020) who wished to be repatriated. However, embassy management stayed in Bolivia during the first very intense months and their weekly updates to the MFA bear witness to important achievements from their work within a very short time period.

Interviews with Sida HQ indicated that the instruction to return home varied across countries and especially across continents. Sida was instructed by MFA to assess the health system in specific countries as well as the possibilities for evacuation, which led to a decision to repatriate expatriates in Africa first and Latin America a bit later. In particular, after the USA announced that no COVID-19 patients would be allowed to transit the country, the instruction for expatriates in Latin America to return intensified. This ongoing discussion with MFA placed additional pressure on embassy management and staff at a time when they were already overloaded with work.

Differences in institutional setting, the lines of command and the split of roles and responsibilities between MFA and Sida created confusion and uncertainty among embassy staff members and at times challenged the feeling of coherence. Interviews with HQ and embassy management and staff revealed that communication lines between MFA and Sida, as well as between HQ and embassy management, were unclear and that staff were unable to keep track of sometimes divergent messages. At

the same time, it was not always clear whether instructions came directly from HQ or from embassy management.

Operational instructions and guidelines were few but clear, emphasising Sida's focus on poor and vulnerable groups, human rights, gender equality and leaving no one behind. Embassy staff were given a large responsibility in the reprogramming of the project portfolio. Two key letters from MFA and Sida represent the main instructions from HQ to the Embassy. The Director General communicated early to Sida partners (on the 26th of March 2020) to remind them that Sida is a *flexible* partner. The Director General encouraged partners to dialogue with embassies and HQ on the need for amendments in ongoing projects as well as suggesting new ones with an emphasis on new *innovative* ideas.¹⁴ The MFA communication came slightly later (April/May 2020) and emphasised Sweden's priorities for international collaboration, coordinating global efforts, promoting transparency and the right to information, achieving universal health coverage, as well as building back better. Sweden's guiding principles were also highlighted including emphasis on human rights, gender equality, transparency, and evidence-based response.¹⁵

A key message from embassy staff and management during interviews has been that very few instructions were received from HQ. While staff members in general appreciated the large responsibility, they were given for the reprogramming, some staff members would have liked more guidance from HQ. Internal communication shows that programme officers were consulting each other as well as embassy management during this process. One programme officer developed a dialogue tool to ensure gender mainstreaming in COVID-19 related amendments to be applied with partners. This was developed to ensure a structured dialogue with partners on gender mainstreaming and indicates that staff members could have made use of more tailor-made tools to guide the reprogramming process.

While flexibility was given by HQ within the existing strategic cooperation framework, it was at the same time a clear instruction from HQ that the Embassy should not engage in new sectors. Instead Sida's central support would respond to the pandemic. The Humanitarian Unit under the Department for Asia, Middle East and Humanitarian Assistance emphasised the need to continue with long-term development support instead of reprogramming to address COVID-19. As mentioned above, since Sweden is not engaged in the health sector in Bolivia, the approach has been to address the pandemic through the engagement in other sectors, such as water and sanitation. Sida HQ would instead respond directly to health sector demands with funds allocated for other Swedish strategies, including the Humanitarian Strategy.

The Sida COVID-19 Project Unit ensured coordinated communication on operational matters to the embassies. Learning from previous crises management

¹⁴ Letter from Director General Carin Jämtin on 26 March 2020.

¹⁵ Sweden's Global COVID-19 response, Government Offices of Sweden, Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

that informed HQ's approach was to control communication flow, avoid mixed messages and ensure coordination with MFA. In order to mitigate this risk, Sida established a project position within the Director General's office with responsibility for communicating on COVID-19, tracking development around the world and producing briefs and overviews of how Sida responded to the pandemic. These briefs initially relied on manually synthesized data but rather soon a system with COVID-19 tags were established to allow for tracking of new interventions, additional funding, reprogramming as well as a differentiation between direct support (mainly health) or indirect support related to the pandemic. Embassies were asked to start tagging COVID-related projects in June 2020, and in August 2020 the system was up and running. Although, the original purpose of the tagging system was to enhance communication, this has allowed for easily accessible data on Sida's global COVID-19 response.

Good practice: Sida established in June 2020 a COVID-19 tagging system to allow for an organisational overview of projects targeting COVID-19. Sida also advocated for a joint system in OECD-DAC to allow for comparison across donors.

As a legal entity, the Swedish Embassy has wide autonomy and decision-making power which has allowed for a flexible and decentralised reprogramming process.

At the same time, HQ was flexible in terms of deadlines and deliverables (e.g. the deadline for audit reports originally due in April 2020 was extended to August 2020) realising the severe pressure embassy staff was under. Experiences from previous pandemics (such as Ebola and SARS) have shown that there is a risk of other development outcomes deteriorating while attention is focused on a crisis. There is also a risk of rushing into hasty decisions on new projects and therefore HQ emphasised the need to apply the same approval procedures to prevent rapid poor decisions. Hence, no changes were made in administrative and financial procedures to support embassies in fast tracking amendments. However, a requirement for specifying COVID related expenses in audit reports was added.

Reporting from Sida to MFA was intensified during the pandemic, adding to the Embassy's workload. However, the process around the semi-annual reporting to Sida was the result of great team effort that brought staff members closer. MFA requested Sida to prepare a COVID-19 report in July 2020, including the same level of information as an annual report (which was planned for February 2021). Thus, the embassies were requested to report on funds allocated to the COVID-19 response and potential unspent funds. As the Embassy in La Paz was fully capable of using the funds allocated to the bilateral strategy, no funds were reallocated for the Humanitarian Strategy, only funds for emergency responses were released due to some larger project delays.

From April 2020, the EUROLATIN Department required the Embassy to do a financial report on budget follow-up on strategy progress on a monthly basis as well as a

reporting on the strategy with a traffic light assessment.¹⁶ These reporting requirements were normally done quarterly but to meet MFA's requirements they were intensified. Apart from this specific reporting, the Embassy has continued to prepare semi-annual reports to Sida throughout the period as normal procedure. The Embassy also provided weekly situation reports to UD AME MFA focusing on the COVID-19 development, political development, consular aspects, and development cooperation.

5.2 EMBASSY MANAGEMENT AND LEADERSHIP

The management of development cooperation has been well balanced and adaptive; programme officers were allocated great responsibility for reprogramming but with substantial sparring and support from the head of development cooperation. In the development cooperation an adaptive management style supported staff members in taking difficult decisions jointly with partners and allowed room for mistakes and learning along the way. The Embassy quickly commissioned a multidimensional poverty analysis of the COVID-19 impact¹⁷ in order to identify vulnerable groups, and programme officers supplemented with analyses and tools from e.g. UN organisations in their decision-making. Staff members applied an evidence-based approach to the reprogramming and largely thrived under the great responsibility.

Good practice: Allocating responsibility to programme officers and supporting them with sparring, room for mistakes, as well as conducting context analyses to inform decision-making has proven a useful recipe for fast-track reprogramming.

At a time when the workload of embassy staff and management substantially increased during the pandemic, the working mode under a strict quarantine and a collapsed health system challenged the work-life balance and the well-being of staff members. After lifting the strict quarantine, staff members were requested to continue coming to the office. Some staff positions required physical presence since the Embassy was required to stay open and although e.g. staff in the development section could work from home, management decided to request all staff members to come to the office one or two times a week. This created some frustration among national programme officers who were anxious about security concerns or had no care solutions for their children at home. National programme officers felt more at risk since they were fully dependent on the national health system and although the head of development was responsive to programme officers' individual requests the general request did create some frustration. Embassy management did not fully grasp the

¹⁶ The traffic lighting reporting included reporting on 1) the development towards strategy goals and whether it has gone backwards; 2) The relevance of the portfolio and main amendments conducted within existing projects and new ones responding to Covid-19; 3) Main adjustments within existing Contributions, 4) Areas where interventions are terminated or postponed; 5) Payment prognoses and whether payments are reduced; 6) New initiatives of high priorities. Need for revised procedures for managing the Strategy or additional funds.

¹⁷ Cómo afectará la crisis en las desigualdades que generan pobreza en Bolivia, CEDLA, April, 2020.

pressure national team members experienced and few concrete initiatives were taken to ensure staff members well-being.

According to staff members, embassy management changed its perception after two cases of severe COVID-19 illness and allowed more home office work. One of the COVID-19 cases was quite severe and staff members supported the colleague as well as they could through WhatsApp groups and by using their personal and partners networks to access medical equipment, but it was a very stressful time period. This was further challenged by the discontinuity of weekly staff meetings with all embassy staff and the entire management. With the change to remote/online work, these all-staff meetings were discontinued, and only the development section continued weekly meetings with the head of development cooperation. Thus, while management support and teamwork within the development cooperation team was highly appreciated among staff, limited communication and interaction on wider embassy matters created uncertainty among staff members. Not least among national programme officers who are officially employed by MFA but during the pandemic had little contact beyond the development team.

The quarantine was originally only intended for two weeks and therefore only short-term solutions were put in place. The quarantine ended up lasting several months. Since it was perceived to be a temporary thing no long-term solutions for IT, teamwork etc. were introduced. Initially WhatsApp was used for team meetings but only four people could join at the same time. Later, Zoom and Skype for Business was applied, allowing the entire development team to join meetings together.

Repatriation was a huge task for the consular section but had only limited influence on the development section. Sweden took a principle stand of not sending airplanes to Bolivia to evacuate Swedish citizens, instead citizens were sent home on flights from Peru and Chile. Repatriation therefore occurred at a slow pace compared to other European countries.

5.3 FLEXIBLE AND ADAPTIVE REPROGRAMMING

The full Swedish bilateral portfolio from March to December 2020 included 34 projects (see Annex 1).¹⁸ Of these, a total of 25 projects (73% of all projects) have been amended or are new projects developed to respond to the COVID-19 crisis. Several of the projects were only amended in terms of duration and thus had the implementation period extended (Annex 2 provides the full overview of all amended and new projects). Table 4 provides an overview of the most important projects related specifically to addressing the COVID-19 emergency and side effects of the pandemic.

¹⁸ Only actual projects are included and e.g. the audit framework and evaluations of Diakonia and the Swedish Strategy 2016-2020 have not been included as projects.

Table 4. Main Swedish projects responding to COVID-19

Partner	Title	Agreement (million USD)	Nature of response
HELVETAS	Solid Waste-WASH COVID-19 emergency response in Bolivia	New (0.4)	1. Institutional support 2. Support to contain spread of virus 3. Equipment
UNICEF	UNICEF Bolivia COVID-19 response plan (Country programme)	New (0.5) ¹⁹ + extension (1.8), in total 2.3	1. Support to contain spread of virus 2. Social protection 3. Digitalisation platforms
UNICEF	WASH Bolivia, Chiquitania Wildfires Response Plan	Extension (0.4)	1. Support to contain spread of virus 2. Awareness-raising/behaviour change 3. Inst. support
Aguatuya	Support for the environmental sanitation services against COVID-19	Reallocation within existing project	1. Support to contain spread of virus 2. Awareness-raising/behaviour change, 3. Equipment
UNFPA	Support to Sexual Reproductive and Rights in Bolivia	Extension (1.8)	1. SRHR 2. Social protection

The Swedish Embassy responded swiftly and quickly initiated a dialogue with partners on emergency response. Although no additional funds were allocated to the Bilateral Cooperation Strategy, the Embassy managed to release additional funding for emergency response to HELVETAS and UNICEF WASH. Existing contracts were also extended with UNFPA and UNICEF. As mentioned above a key message from HQ was to remain flexible and initiate dialogue with partners on reprogramming and potential new ideas for emergency response. According to the survey results (Table 5), partners rate the Swedish response to the pandemic very well, including when it comes to reallocation within project budgets.

Table 5. Sida's overall response to the pandemic

Question (EQ 3):	Sida
Respond adequately to priority needs in Bolivia induced by the COVID-19 pandemic	3.89
• Respond quickly and adapt project activities in view of the COVID-19 pandemic?	4.05
• Engage local partners in discussions of needs and priorities for redesign of project activities in view of the COVID-19 pandemic?	3.85
• Re-allocate funds within project budgets in view of the COVID-19 pandemic?	4.11
• Ensure smooth and fast approval of adjusted COVID-19 project activities/budgets?	4.00

While the support to HELVETAS is a new project, HELVETAS is a long-term partner of the Embassy within water and sanitation, and it was therefore easy to initiate a dialogue. HELVETAS has a mandate in both development and humanitarian aid and has been a member of the Consortium of Humanitarian Agencies in Bolivia (CAHB)²⁰

¹⁹ The amendment of the country programme included an extension of SEK 19 million in total (SEK 15 million for an overall extension and SEK 4 million for an emergency COVID-19 fund).

²⁰ The Consortium consists of 11 international NGOs and one national NGO and the Consortium has since its origin in 2008 provided humanitarian assistance in Bolivia (droughts, landslides, floods) and has among others executed funds from the European Commission, DfID, United Nations etc.).

since 2017. Since January 2020, HELVETAS has been the lead agency of the Consortium and was therefore well suited to provide emergency response.

The dialogue with HELVETAS before submission of the proposal was centred around the Embassy's need to stay within the water and sanitation sector to address health emergency challenges since the Embassy is not engaged in the health sector. HELVETAS handed in a project proposal by mid-April 2020 and the decision document was signed by the end of the month, indicating a very fast response from the Embassy.

UNICEF's COVID-19 response is also a new project established directly to respond to the emergency. The project allows child protection services to work virtually, including through provision of equipment to shift to online mode as well as hygiene products, training of more than 11,000 frontline workers virtually, and establishing of a helpline to provide professional care in emotional support and psychoeducational counselling and attention to violence cases.

Sida provides core support to UNICEF's country programme and the emergency response has allowed UNICEF to adapt the programme to the new circumstances. According to interviews, UNICEF conducted two meetings with embassy staff, submitted a proposal, then an appraisal was conducted and within a couple of weeks the approval of both the emergency project and the additional funds for the country programme (SEK 19 million) was approved.

The support to Aguatuya was a reallocation of funds within an already existing agreement with the aim to provide two municipalities with biosecurity equipment, prevent the spread of the virus, provide technical assistance to the municipalities, payment of basic services during the pandemic to avoid cut-off of citizen's services, and acquisition of biosecurity materials.

The relevance of the emergency projects is high and balanced between emergency support to the water and sanitation sector in terms of containing the virus, wildfires, and droughts, as well as the side effects of the strict lockdown and an increased number of GBV cases. UNICEF's contract on WASH was extended with SEK 3.1 million to support the Chiquitania Wildfires Response Plan, an integrated response to drought, wildfires, and COVID-19. UNICEF presented a proposal on the support in mid-October 2020 and the agreement was signed by end-November 2020.

The support to the UNFPA country programme was extended with SEK 15 million with the aim to support survivors of GBV and domestic violence and continue providing SRHR services to vulnerable groups. The extension was a response to the COVID-19 pandemic but also to the political and social situation in the country that has endured during the election process in 2019 and has prolonged its effects into 2020. Cases of GBV and domestic violence increased during the strict lockdown and quarantine. UNFPA rapidly reviewed the need to enhance support to women's rights organisations and shelters and continue with SRHR services to vulnerable groups such as LGBT+, indigenous people and adolescents.

5.4 BALANCING COVID-19 WITH OTHER CRISES

Table 6. Survey results on Sida's ability to balance prevailing crises in Bolivia

Question (EQ 4):	Sida
Ability to maintain focus on other prevailing crises in Bolivia at the same time as the COVID-19 pandemic?	3.90
• The political crisis	3.55
• The economic crisis	3.35
• The environmental crisis (incl. forest fires, water scarcity etc.)	3.75
• The social crisis (poverty, unemployment, GBV, lack of social protection, etc.)	3.80

Sida has managed to strike a good balance between responding to the pandemic and other prevailing crises in Bolivia. Especially, Sida's emphasis on social issues such as GBV and social protection and the environmental crisis was praised by partners while responding to the economic crisis is less pronounced. As mentioned above Sida's contributions to UNICEF and UNFPA in terms of social protection has been highlighted by partners, local authorities, and other donors. Sida has played a central role in the gender sub-group of the GRUS and is in general well-recognised for its interventions on social protection. Sida also has a substantial environmental portfolio including support to the water and sanitation sector as reflected in the emergency response projects and has been very active in the GRUS sub-group on water and sanitation. It is also worth noticing that while the COVID-19 pandemic raged, the Embassy approved substantial new contributions that required considerable time input, such as to FAO (to prevent forest fires) and to UNDP (to support the upcoming elections).

While the bilateral portfolio places less attention on economic recovery, there were large expectations to the regional guarantee with the Interamerican Development Bank agreed upon in mid-2020. Funds were originally set aside for loans to sectors prioritized in Guatemala, Colombia, and Bolivia. However, with the COVID-19 pandemic the priorities were changed. A total amount of SEK 450 million over ten years was made available to "support for vulnerable populations affected by Coronavirus" in Bolivia, either by cash transfers to citizens, by support to enterprises, or - potentially - with sector budget support to the health sector.²¹ While this was a promising initiative, by March 2021 there had been no uptake of the guarantee, likely due to limited Bolivian capacity to access these loans.

5.5 ESTABLISHMENT OF NEW PROJECTS AND INNOVATION

Funds were quickly reallocated to several new emergency projects to respond to the pandemic and Sida has been highly responsive to innovative project ideas. Sida's interest in new and innovative project ideas was communicated from HQ and the Embassy from the outset of the pandemic, where partners were invited to approach

²¹ COVID-19 in Bolivia – political measures and implications for the future, draft report, 17 April 2020; <https://www.iadb.org/projects/document/EZSHARE-1489285279-14?project=BO-L1216>

the Embassy. This is also reflected in the survey result in Table 7. Sida made large emphasis on partners' previous experiences and here it was a great advantage that Sida already had partnerships with e.g., HELVETAS and UNICEF who are both well recognised as main humanitarian organisations in Bolivia.

Table 7. Survey results on new projects and innovation

Question (EQ 5):	Sida
Willingness to engage in discussions with partners on new project initiatives in view of the COVID-19 pandemic?	4.05
• Consider COVID-19 specific project amendments for funding?	4.00
• Consider new COVID-19 specific project proposals for funding?	3.87
• Address <i>new opportunities</i> in view of the COVID-19 pandemic?	4.00
• Consider <i>innovative project initiatives</i> as a response to the COVID-19 pandemic?	3.95

While the Embassy was responsive to new and innovative ideas, this was not approved without a critical assessment of the quality of the proposals submitted. While smaller adaptations of projects were easily granted, the Embassy also experienced partners who wanted to enter into new areas to respond to the pandemic. For example, Diakonia which is coordinating and supporting civil society organisations wanted to support vulnerable LGBT+ groups with humanitarian support and food supplies, but the Embassy did not consider this to be within their scope. A project proposal from an UN agency to the donor community was also rejected by the Swedish Embassy due to the poor quality of the proposal.

The strict quarantine and home working modus forced all partners to embrace online tools for project activities and monitoring. While the learning curve has been steep for some partners it has also forced all actors to think out of the box. Examples have been provided for greater use of photos and mobiles for data collection, development of Apps to connect customers with producers, communication on social media (e.g. Swisscontact), online education and training on protocols and guidelines (UNICEF). Fautapo conducted communication campaigns on radio after an assessment of how to best reach rural communities.

Aquatuya developed a virtual monitoring platform during COVID-19 and the acquisition of computers has been important to allow work to be done from the office and quite substantially change working routines. This has improved the communication with governments, partners etc. and zoom meetings allow the organisation to follow up on a more regular basis without having to spend time on transportation. Aquatuya also experimented with use of a drone for monitoring of wastewater plants.

UNICEF's hotline supporting survivors of violence with psychosocial support has been a great innovation that has gradually further advanced in terms of reaching more marginalised population groups such as migrants.²² This is well documented in the

²² External Evaluation of the Swedish Cooperation Strategy with Bolivia 2016-2020 - Sweden's contribution to eradication of gender-based violence, strengthening of democracy, urban planning, climate change and the transition from aid to trade, December, 2020.

“Evaluation of the Swedish Cooperation Strategy with Bolivia 2016-2020” and besides concrete support to survivors of violence it has also spurred a discussion of the need to further develop mechanisms for mental health in Bolivia.

Good practice: Tracking COVID-19 development on municipality maps to identify most at-risk communities for decision-making

An online platform has been launched by UNICEF for municipalities to provide real-time data on several indicators such as COVID-19 cases, deaths, shortage of water and poverty. The map has proved useful for decision-making for both international partners and the GoB. Nevertheless, the collaboration around the map was ended in November 2020 when MAS took over the government.

5.6 GENDER AND VULNERABILITY SENSITIVE REPROGRAMMING

Sida is a vocal actor in emphasising gender equality and reaching the poorest and most marginalised groups. Partners and other development agencies recognise this position. As discussed above, Sida's portfolio has a strong emphasis on vulnerability and inequalities, including a strong focus on gender. Sweden's feminist foreign policy provides the overall framework for working with gender equality as well as well-developed guidelines and tools for gender mainstreaming, including the gender toolbox. Sida also applies a systematic approach for conducting of Multi-Dimensional Poverty Analysis (MDPAs) with a strong emphasis on power dimensions, including between men and women. These guidelines and tools support the Embassy's decision-making and has been widely applied when building the project portfolio in Bolivia.²³ Thus, a substantial focus on poverty, vulnerability and gender equality was already in place when the different crises hit the country, including the COVID-19 pandemic. In addition, a MDPA was conducted at the start of the pandemic by the partner CEDLA to understand the effect of COVID-19 on inequalities in Bolivian society. While this analysis provided an overview of some areas (labour rights, water & sanitation, natural resources etc.)

Gender equality is clearly reflected in the emergency portfolio and its importance is confirmed by the additional allocations to UNICEF's and UNFPA's country programmes with focus on GBV, SRHR and social protection. The organisations' work to strengthen children, youth and women's protection during the pandemic and lockdown and, in particular, a focus on GBV and social protection is reflected. This is highly relevant to the Bolivian context and built further on Sida's engagement within these areas.

²³ External Evaluation of the Swedish Cooperation Strategy with Bolivia 2016-2020 - Sweden's contribution to eradication of gender-based violence, strengthening of democracy, urban planning, climate change and the transition from aid to trade, December, 2020.

The survey results in Table 8 reflect a high score on gender and vulnerability measures and this has also been highlighted in interviews. Sida is an active member of the GRUS gender sub-group which has worked quite well during the pandemic.

Table 8. Survey results on Sida's attention to gender and vulnerability aspects

Question (EQ 6):	Sida
Attention to gender and vulnerability concerns in view of the COVID-19 pandemic?	4.00
• Encourage partners to include specific <i>gender concerns</i> in COVID-19 responses?	4.06
• Encourage partners to include specific <i>poverty and vulnerability</i> concerns in COVID-19 responses?	4.06
• Support specific gender and vulnerability assessments due to the COVID-19 pandemic?	4.00
• Ensure that specific attention to gender and vulnerable groups is included in COVID-19 related project activities?	4.06

While the overall approach to poverty and vulnerability concerns are in place in emergency projects, gender was not systematically mainstreamed in the emergency response projects. There was little focus on gender equality in the HELVETAS emergency project and gender equality was not explicitly mainstreamed into the results framework. Intervention communities were clearly selected based on vulnerability criteria such as poverty level and poor access to services. These criteria were established from the outset which proved important in a context with substantial needs, few humanitarian actors, a highly politicised environment, and high pressure on partners to select communities based on political stands.

According to government authorities, HELVETAS did an excellent job resisting such pressure and instead selected communities based on the vulnerability criteria. According to interviews, UNICEF WASH and HELVETAS did not use criteria for gender equality, at least it was not an explicit priority explained to their counterparts. The only reference to gender mainstreaming in the HELVETAS completion report was that the communication campaign had applied an intercultural, gender and social equity approach. The WASH contingency plan has some reflection of gender, but the situation analysis does not put substantial emphasis on gender equality although the emergency obviously affects women and men, girls, and boys differently.

While Sida's brand is strongly associated with gender equality there is still room for internal improvements in terms of dialogue on gender equality with partners. One programme officer developed a dialogue tool to ensure a structured dialogue with partners. However, the level of actual implementation is unclear. The feminist foreign policy clearly signals gender equality as a key priority of the Swedish government and programme managers are fully aware of this core priority. There are some very good examples of how gender has been mainstreamed into projects e.g. the Inclusive Markets Project where Sida played a key role in introducing gender mainstreaming and GBV to the project as well as Fautapo which is highly focused on

women's economic empowerment.²⁴ However, while gender dialogue with partners has been highly systematised by some programme managers (as reflected in the box), others have not included gender in a systematic dialogue.

Good practice: Ensuring gender mainstreaming in dialogue with partners

A tool was developed by a programme officer to support mainstreaming gender into reprogramming. The tool identifies concrete risks derived from the pandemic within the specific strategic areas and provides suggestions for how to mitigate these. Dialogue with partners around these risks, application of gender disaggregated data, and suggestions to ensure that reprogramming is based on a gender analysis are provided. The tool also considers minority groups at risk such as LGBT+ groups, migrants etc.

5.7 RESPONSIVE PARTNERSHIPS

While collaboration with partners was challenged by the shift to online mode it also brought embassy staff and partners closer to each other as the unpredictable nature of the pandemic required close and regular contact, at least at the beginning of the pandemic. As mentioned above, it was very much up to the individual programme officer how partners should be approached. All interviewed programme officers however, explained that communication with partners had substantially increased. This especially applied while the programmes were being adapted in the intense first months. As reflected in Table 9 the overall responsiveness of Sida is assessed very high, although a lower rating is given to Sida's level of engagement on a regular basis. This indicates that while adaptation of programmes occurred quickly some partners could have used more regular communication when the period of the pandemic extended.

Table 9. Survey results on Sida's responsiveness

Question (EQ 7)	Sida
Responsiveness to the demands and needs of your own organisation/institution during the COVID-19 pandemic?	4.30
• Comply with agreements and promises made with your organisation/institution in relation to the COVID-19 pandemic?	4.32
• Pay attention to the situation within your organisation/institution during the COVID-19 pandemic?	4.25
• Focus on security and health concerns for the project staff within your organisation/institution related to the COVID-19 pandemic?	4.30
• Engage and communicate on a regular basis with your organisation/institution during the COVID-19 pandemic?	3.58

²⁴ External Evaluation of the Swedish Cooperation Strategy with Bolivia 2016-2020 - Sweden's contribution to eradication of gender-based violence, strengthening of democracy, urban planning, climate change and the transition from aid to trade, December, 2020.

Partners rate Sida very well in terms of complying with agreements and promises made and their focus on security and health concerns in relation to the pandemic.

The Embassy largely approved most requests from partners in terms of security and health equipment and allowed partners to reallocate funds for such purposes. Also, the partnerships with HELVETAS, UNICEF and Aquatuya put a lot of emphasis on training of employees at the water utilities to deal with COVID-19 but also having the capacity to respond to potential future emergencies. Protocols were developed by HELVETAS to ensure safety of the workers.

5.8 CONCLUSIONS FOR SIDA

HQ's **instructions and guidelines on reprogramming have been few but clearly communicated.** The need for a flexible and partner responsive approach was clearly communicated by HQ and followed by the Embassy. The decentralised decision-making power has allowed for **fast tracking of reprogramming** although administrative and financial procedures and guidelines have been retained. **Programme officers were allocated a great deal of responsibility** but also supported with sparring, analyses, "room for mistakes" and an adaptive management approach in the development cooperation.

The Embassy quickly managed to reallocate funds for emergency response that **addressed the pandemic from a water and sanitation perspective** and supported local authorities to prevent the spread of the virus while also allocating funds for addressing effects of the quarantine in the form of funds to **GBV and continued SRHR services.** While the overall approach to poverty and vulnerability concerns are in place in emergency projects, gender was not systematically mainstreamed in the emergency response projects. The emergency response has focused on capacity development of national authorities preventing the spread of the virus and tackling similar situations in the future.

Differences in institutional settings, the lines of command and the splitting of roles and responsibilities between MFA and Sida created confusion and uncertainty among embassy staff members. MFA's instruction on repatriation of expatriates to Sweden was perceived as a one-size-fits-all solution and resisted by embassy management.

Although programme officers have been under a high level of pressure, **reprogramming has been conducted fast and, in a partner responsive way.** The Embassy has responded well to emergency needs, but management could have paid more attention to staff members and their well-being within a highly stressful work environment. Nevertheless, management and staff members managed to re-programme the portfolio within a short time period and **adapted the portfolio in a relevant and efficient manner.**

6 SDC's response to COVID-19

This section presents findings on SDC's response to the pandemic and is structured around the three analytical levels presented above: HQ, embassy, and partner level. Thus, findings related to HQ and embassy level are first analysed, then the Embassy's reprogramming process and the level of flexibility and adaptivity towards partners, and finally the overall responsiveness towards partners. Brief conclusions on SDC's response are presented at the end of the section.

6.1 HEADQUARTER'S INSTRUCTIONS AND GUIDANCE

At the beginning of the crisis, HQ strongly encouraged the Heads of Cooperation to identify funds within the annual budget allocations that could flow into the COVID-19 crisis response and to identify relevant and operational interventions where impact could quickly be increased by immediate inflows of additional funds, notably humanitarian and multilateral interventions. This request came at an early stage in the pandemic, following the UN's launch of two major fundraising appeals in late March 2020 and Switzerland's commitment to participate in the international response with an amount that would be determined "very quickly".

The aim of this exercise was to identify projects and activities that would be delayed by the crisis and which absorption in funds therefore would be significantly reduced for the year 2020. The idea of delegating this task to the teams on site was to avoid prejudging the best solutions and, if possible, scale-up/adjust projects adequately. As an estimate, it was assumed by HQ that *at least 10%* of the annual budget could flow into COVID-19 crisis response.

The core development business at the Embassy was secured through provision of generous room for manoeuvre and decentralised decision making on reprogramming. This enabled demand-oriented support to be provided on site through the ongoing projects. The embassies were allowed to commit new funds up to CHF 1 million within the allocated annual budget, the frequency of operational committee meetings was doubled, humanitarian and development committees were mixed (accelerated rhythms and joint committee meetings). An accelerated approval processes introduced at HQ level contributed to a more smooth and swift reprogramming process.

In the situation of the COVID-19 pandemic in Bolivia, embassy management and staff found the existing administrative and financial guidelines for bilateral development projects too inflexible for quick and smooth operational action on the ground. The guidelines were in some cases also limiting the mandate of the Embassy to act rapidly, as the contribution modality was the only possible way to guarantee this speed of response. In particular, the existing rules for procurement

processes and for extension and amendment of existing mandate agreements with partners in some cases limited the appetite of key project partners. A waiver mechanism was missing.

Reporting requirements to embassies were expanded during COVID-19 and felt like a heavy burden on both management and staff at the Embassy. According to embassy interviews, HQ expectations of reporting basically took a “business as usual” point of view and did not recognise that people on site were working in a crisis mode. Situation Reports (SITREP’s) had to be submitted more frequently, together with filled-in questionnaires about the situation in the country, lessons learned, etc. This added further to an already heavy workload at the Embassy. Although the reporting format was standardized, the digital filling-in requirement created problems when the internet was not working properly. The same applied to the SAP reporting. In addition, since embassy staff had to use their private devices, this required upgrades of private internet connections at personal cost.

Concrete initiative was taken by HQ at a very early stage to facilitate room for joint assessment and sharing of experiences between HQ and embassy management/staff of major challenges and critical areas for work and to ensure efficient coordination and harmonisation of priorities, solution approaches, etc. From mid-March 2020 onwards, the responsible Division at Head Office (Latin America and Caribbean) held a virtual meeting every week with the Embassy with five fixed agenda points. Point four of the agenda was to assess the consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic on the cooperation programme and point five was about identifying COVID-19 response through different modalities, including bilateral actions and multilateral initiatives. From the Embassy in La Paz, the Ambassador participated in these meeting and from Bern the Head of the Latin America and Caribbean Division. Minutes of the meetings were prepared by the responsible programme officer at HQ.

The MFA operational COVID-19 instructions and guidance to embassies did not take a differentiated “fit for fragility” perspective but rather presented a “one size fits all” model. This heavily affected the modus operandi at the Embassy in La Paz in the months after the outbreak of the pandemic. The initial MFA response to the pandemic had a very strong focus and concern on evacuation of Swiss citizens. Instructions from Swiss MFA that expatriate staff should remain on site abroad, regardless of the context-specific and personal situation of the employees concerned, provided a feeling of a “one-size fits all” concept, with limited flexibility and consideration of personal/family issues.

It created confusion and insecurity for the Embassy expatriates that HQ would not approve “preventive medical evacuation” in a landlocked context like Bolivia, without really knowing the consequences of living above 3,000 meters altitude with COVID-19 complications and in a context of a very weak and quickly saturated health system. In addition, the criteria were unclear for when medical evacuation would be put in place (when to be evacuated - symptoms or sickness) and the medical evacuation procedures shared by the HQ Crisis Management Centre (CMC) contained a step where HQ (Directorate for Resources) had to agree with the medical assessment done by the attending doctors on site and at the Swiss rescue organisation (REGA).

This created a feeling at the Embassy in La Paz that the MFA did not sufficiently appreciate and understand the critical situation they were facing, within an already political crisis affected country. To this was added a worse connectivity (possibility and frequency of flight connections) for La Paz than for other Latin American capitals.

HQ did not provide clear guidance and support to the Embassy in La Paz in a situation where an expatriate staff member was withdrawn from the post for duty of care reasons. In this situation, no replacement or temporary support function was provided to the Embassy to stabilize the team on site. Basically, embassy management was left to deal with the situation on their own, without any practical suggestions from the MFA on how to solve the situation. This situation was further challenged by limited regional support, since the regional Consular Hub in Lima was basically unable to support the Embassy in La Paz, in particular during the initial phase of the pandemic and the evacuation process of Swiss citizens, where the Embassy in La Paz was mainly left on its own. Likewise, no additional care or concerns for local staff was introduced by HQ in a case where the local health system in Bolivia basically did not function.

Weak coordination of internal roles and responsibilities within HQ, between and across MFA and SDC departments affected the timing and flow of communication to embassies and in some cases led to contradictory and confusing messages. According to both HQ and embassy interviews, a main reason for this was that the internal decision-making and communication processes involved various offices within HQ, without having proper coordination structures and tools in place. This led to ambiguities in decision-making processes (e.g. in relation to the repatriation process of expatriates which involved several departments). In this highly complex situation, personnel decisions in the sense of “duty of care” were not delegated to the operational units, allowing them to interpret general guidelines.

In general, according to interviews with embassy management and staff, the ability of HQ to motivate and encourage during the COVID-19 pandemic has been weak. Instead of introducing rewards and incentives, demotivating orders and messages have been communicated (e.g. the expatriates’ allocations for “Swiss representation tasks” were substantially cut during the crisis and management received instructions to reduce their vacation balance by the end of the year by simply staying at home without recognising that expatriate staff were at the same time asked to stay on site and manage the crisis).

On a positive note, substantial and useful support has been provided by the HQ CMC to the Embassy and also the SDC LAC Department has had a proactive and frequent communication with the Embassy. The CMC has been available to the Embassy for guidance and has managed to exchange experiences across countries. In addition, webinars on “resilience” have been organised and distance psychological support offered to embassy staff, although with the weakness of being distant and without Spanish speaking personnel. This emphasises the need for context and on-site specific solutions in such crisis situations.

6.2 EMBASSY MANAGEMENT AND LEADERSHIP

A clear agreed division of responsibilities between the Ambassador and the Deputy Head of Cooperation facilitated an efficient reprogramming process. Since the Ambassador had to allocate substantial time for the repatriation process of Swiss citizens, as well as SITREP reporting and coordination with the FDFA Human Resources on embassy staff matters, the Deputy Head of Cooperation took over responsibility for the COVID reprogramming efforts (March-July 2020) in close collaboration with the national programme officers and the Chief of Finance, Personal and Administration and her team. This also included the governance project portfolio for which the Ambassador was normally responsible.

The restrictions imposed by COVID-19 on the physical mobility and presence of staff at the Embassy required introduction of a new model for leadership and management of the programme team. At the time of the COVID-19 outbreak, a process for internal crisis management and team building was already ongoing within the Embassy in response to a conflict between the previous embassy management and local staff. This process and the crisis management in relation to the socio-political events during October–November 2019 created a useful starting point for the internal COVID-19 crisis management process at the Embassy. The overall strategy from embassy management was to maintain as many of the routines as possible, by transferring them to virtual platforms. This included regular meetings with all embassy staff with an open and flexible agenda. In addition to this, a number of social and creative initiatives were introduced by management (e.g. ad-hoc virtual coffee's, garden lunch, team building events, etc.). Embassy management was socially engaged and visible in these events which provided an important signal to staff.

Embassy management managed to effectively combine a heavy workload and pressure in the programming team with continuous attention to staff mental and physical well-being and duty of care. In general, the programme officers have felt comfortable with the health and safety measures introduced at the Embassy. The concept of working in two teams, Team A and Team B with only one team at the Embassy at a time, was introduced to prevent many embassy staff becoming infected at the same time. A security mission from HQ in December 2020 confirmed that very good security/health measures were applied at the Embassy, including strict rules and procedures for accessing the Embassy, use of an outside conference room, coffee routes, requirements for wearing of masks, use of social distancing, hygiene routines, frequent disinfections, etc.

These measures contributed to no employee being infected in the course of his or her work at the Embassy and have also made it possible to guarantee work continuity in the event of a group being infected in a busy period of the crisis. Between waves of the pandemic, the model became more flexible, with essential face-to-face meetings being allowed and some members of another team being allowed to work in the office under certain conditions. In addition to this, national programme staff have appreciated embassy management's efforts to assist them with personal and family matters (e.g. support to payment for COVID-19 testing, upgrades of home office IT systems, etc.).

Normal obligations versus crises management

The strong MFA priority for the repatriation process of Swiss citizens (which took a couple of months in Bolivia) drew critical resources over a prolonged period of time from the Embassy's normal modus operandi. Despite the embassy management decision to divide internal responsibilities for, respectively, repatriation and programmatic work, the obligation to “serve” the MFA on these matters over a longer time period was a significant deviation from the normal distribution of resources at the Embassy, where 80% would be focussed on development cooperation and 20% on defence of Swiss interests. As a result, the programme team experienced a very high workload with stress and emotional pressure during the first months of the pandemic.

Embassy management and staff received an early request from HQ to make an initial identification of project funds that could be allocated for the COVID-19 response. This request was first of all motivated by HQ's wish to contribute to UN's launch of two major fundraising appeals in late March 2020. This initial identification process was to be conducted within a short timeframe (less than two weeks) which was considered very challenging by both the embassy programme team and the project partners.

While embassy management and staff invested considerable resources and efforts in responding to HQ's request for collection and analysis of country specific COVID-19 related data and information (mainly through the SITREPs), it is not clear to which extent this information was used to address the situation of the embassy staff in Bolivia. The COVID-related information products that have been shared with HQs, include: i) COVID-19 SITREPs (2-3 per week during the first months of the pandemic); ii) half-year monitoring reports (MERV reports) have been prepared by the Embassy on changes in the development context in Bolivia; and iii) annual report on the programming. In addition, at the project level semi-annual and annual progress reports have been prepared, including COVID-19 related information. Both ii) and iii) are standard reporting and not specific to COVID-19 responses, as well as the semi-annual and annual project progress reports. COVID-19 specific information was however included in these reports. MERV was assessed by the Embassy as a useful tool for a joint internal analysis of the current context and adaptation measures in the portfolio.

While the increased frequency of the SITREP reporting has been understandable in a fragile context like Bolivia, what was perceived by the Embassy as a particularly stressful element in a crisis management situation was the insistence by HQ on meeting deadlines, or only postponing with 2-3 days, for delivery of these reports.

The introduction of a COVID-19 SAP marker already from late March 2020 became instrumental to the financial reporting of the Covid-19 projects (see text box below). The SAP Marker allowed for immediate coding of projects/project components to combat COVID-19 impact. The introduction of the “Covid-19 Marker” led to improved transparency and significantly easier reporting for the Embassy and more generally for SDC as an institution.

Good practice: Fast introduction of a COVID-19 SAP Marker

In late March 2020, HQ opened for immediate use a new SAP feature for coding of COVID-19 combating projects and project components. The marker was not only to be used for new projects, but also in cases where the orientation of existing projects had been changed with a view to combat the COVID-19 crisis (e.g. by opening of a new sub-action in the project).

6.3 FLEXIBLE AND ADAPTIVE REPROGRAMMING

Table 10. Survey results of partners assessment of SDC's flexibility and adaptiveness

Question (EQ 3):	SDC
Respond adequately to priority needs in Bolivia induced by the COVID-19 pandemic	4.23
• Respond quickly and adapt project activities in view of the COVID-19 pandemic?	4.23
• Engage local partners in discussions of needs and priorities for redesign of project activities in view of the COVID-19 pandemic?	4.23
• Re-allocate funds within project budgets in view of the COVID-19 pandemic?	4.38
• Ensure smooth and fast approval of adjusted COVID-19 project activities/budgets?	4.08

Overall, project partners express a very high level of satisfaction with the engagement process with the Embassy during the COVID-19 pandemic. This relates both to the speed of the response process, the communication and interaction, the flexibility and willingness of the Embassy to adapt to new needs and priorities, as well as to the speed of the approval process. This was strongly confirmed by the partner's survey responses (Table 10) and further iterated during follow-up interviews.

In the initial stage of the reprogramming process, partners felt a strong pressure to quickly identify COVID-19 relevant activities in their projects. This information was to be provided within a short deadline, leaving little space for reflection and analysis in this phase. A few partners referred to some Embassy reluctance to discuss possibilities for carrying funds forward to 2021. On this particular issue, the Embassy has been limited by its ongoing phasing-out process and multi-annual budget commitment until 2024.

The Embassy response to COVID-19 has largely been related to the same thematic areas and partnerships in which they were already involved, although with some new interventions in health, mainly in the field of prevention. Overall, the process for reprogramming was based on the framework of the SDC Strategy 2018-2021 in order to maintain as much as possible of what had already been achieved by the projects and, from a contingency perspective, to continue working with the partners, and to remain present with the beneficiaries of these projects that target the most disadvantaged segments of the Bolivian population. A total of approximately 2.2 million CHF (equivalent to USD 2.4 million)²⁵, or 15% of the total 2020 budget, were reprogrammed to deal with the health crisis from the pandemic and its effects. This

²⁵ Currency rate in December 2020.

included urgent adaptation measures as well as measures to contribute to early recovery and economic reactivation.

The SDC project portfolio was reprogrammed, without additional funds, adjusting the financial resources and current portfolio to face COVID-19. The rescheduling strategy included *four main elements*: i) rescheduling without additional credits (or even with a reduction in the resources available to the project); ii) two projects with additional credits (Autonomous Municipal Government (GAM) and Special Financial Support Programme for Micro and Small Businesses (PROMYPE)); iii) small actions with the Integral Health Coordination Programme (PROCOSI) health network; and iv) a new multi-bilateral contribution with UNDP.

The COVID-19 pandemic has provided challenges as well as new opportunities for SDC's strategic intention to become a facilitator of "soft" skills (knowledge, experience, exchange, and networks) and a knowledge broker. The emergence of new, and strengthening of existing, virtual and telecommunication platforms for exchange of information has provided new, forward-looking opportunities for networking and enhancement of participation and involvement of different stakeholder groups. Likewise, different new opportunities for digitalisation have been tested.

Early and timely response has contributed importantly to the GAM, which has gone through a difficult economic income situation. In particular, the projects implemented through HELVETAS and Swisscontact have been instrumental to accommodate and adapt interventions to the specific requests and needs of the municipalities which have suffered strongly from the reduced transfer of resources from the GoB as well as from reduced income.

The project support to universities and research institutions was quickly adapted to include specific COVID-19 calls for proposals. This was timely for the urgent needs of the health sector in Bolivia for research and development of testing and treatment equipment. The COVID-19 research projects have at the same time opened up new opportunities and potentials for strategic research alliances and (financial) partnerships (e.g. with different health sector actors).

In order to contribute to health sector needs and demands in Bolivia, the Embassy was pro-active in exploring different global/regional SDC instruments (in particular in health) to complement the bilateral portfolio, however with limited concrete results. Although the health sector is not a priority for SDC in Bolivia and the Embassy does not have a focal point for health, the Embassy in La Paz was noted as being very active in reaching out to HQ for Bolivia to become part of one of the three global health programmes that were launched from HQs (focusing on, respectively, mental health, health equity and healthy cities). In the end, Bolivia was not included in any of these programmes and the Embassy was not consulted by the UN implementing agencies in the process. In particular, the "Healthy Cities" programme (implemented by the World Health Organization (WHO) and PAHO) may be a lost opportunity for Bolivia, in view of the recently developed urban policy (developed with support from UN Habitat through Sida) and potential synergies with current Swiss funded projects (e.g. the project with GAM on "Resilient Cities").

6.4 ESTABLISHMENT OF NEW PROJECTS AND INNOVATION

Table 11. Survey result on SDC's willingness to discuss new projects and innovation

Question (EQ 5):	SDC
Willingness to engage in discussions with partners on new project initiatives in view of the COVID-19 pandemic?	4.33
• Consider COVID-19 specific project amendments for funding?	4.15
• Consider new COVID-19 specific project proposals for funding?	4.08
• Address <i>new opportunities</i> in view of the COVID-19 pandemic?	4.15
• Consider <i>innovative project initiatives</i> as a response to the COVID-19 pandemic?	3.77

In general, project partners found that the Embassy has been very open-minded and receptive to requests and suggestions for new and innovative project proposals. This was confirmed during interviews and also strongly supported by the survey results (Table 11). Two new COVID-19 projects were signed in the period, one with UNDP and another one with PROCOSI, both becoming new partner modalities for the Embassy. While both these projects are strongly COVID-19 related, the project partners have also been selected with a specific view to SDC's phasing-out process in Bolivia. Two humanitarian aid projects, financed by the Hub in Lima and SECO's Resilient Cities project, also include COVID-19 activities.

The new COVID-19 Economic Recovery project, implemented through UNDP, represents an important new strategic partnership for SDC, both as part of the COVID-19 response but also in view of the ongoing phasing-out process. The implementation process has however been affected by serious delays, mainly procurement related. The project was developed as the result of a joint reflection process and it specifically focusses on the mitigation of negative economic effects from COVID-19. It allows partners and beneficiaries of other SDC-funded projects to access personal protective equipment (PPE) and implement protocols on adequate biosafety. Other projects and alliances are used to support the distribution (e.g. the Municipal Environmental Management project distributes biosafety material through municipalities and local actors). In addition to this, measures to renew business models is promoted by the project, through the use of technology, digitisation and electronic platforms. Thus, UNDP has been selected as an important strategic partner in this process, with a particular view to its convening and absorptive capacity as well as its lead-taking on diagnostic and analytical work on vulnerability aspects in Bolivia.

As it was not deemed relevant and in coherence with the SDC Strategy to support provision of health equipment and testing capacity, the Embassy decided to support PROCOSI (a NGO health network) at the level of access to basic health care and prevention services, without engaging in the health sector as such. This project has focused on prevention and containment of the pandemic in communities within three municipalities with a high COVID-19 incidence (El Alto, Montero, and Oruro). The Embassy's engagement with PROCOSI has been fast and dynamic and links well to other municipality-level interventions supported by the Embassy. In addition, the project has revealed wider synergy potentials between PROCOSI and HELVETAS on health sector interventions.

A number of new and innovative practices have been developed during the reprogramming process, some with real transformative potential. Most notably are those new activities that focus on digitalisation and those that link financial institutions and insurance companies to social protection interventions. The “Inclusive Market Project” (funded jointly by SDC and Sida) has been very proactive in identifying new and innovative ways to make use of its multi-stakeholder platform (quite unique in the Bolivian context). In addition, the project supported development of a low-cost *MAMBU respirator* through a contact to the Bolivian Catholic University for the construction of a device that automates mechanical respirators. This device helps in the transport and hospital emergency of patients suffering from respiratory difficulties (as presented in patients with COVID-19) for hospitals or clinics.

In addition, within the “Insurance Inclusive Project” specific *COVID-19 insurance products* have been developed and facilitated (see text box below) and *virtual education strategies* were developed through the “Technical Formation Training Project” to avoid that the centres of training would need to paralyse their activities.

Good practice: Inclusive COVID-19 insurance scheme for vulnerable groups in the “Insurance Inclusive Project” (executed by PROFIN)

Fundación PROFIN has facilitated access to inclusive and innovative financial and insurance products in favor of the most disadvantaged segments of the Bolivian population through the “Insurance Inclusive Project”. This has been done at affordable price, thereby reducing the economic vulnerability of some of the poorest people. Given the emergency of COVID-19, an extension coverage of the current insurance policies was negotiated to also cover claims generated by the pandemic, including subsidising of health emergencies. At the same time, insurance coverage has been extended to also include groups of street workers that were previously not covered by the scheme. This has been essential for continuing activities at marketplaces and economic activities outside the home.

The very strict lockdown in Bolivia made monitoring of project activities a particularly difficult issue as visits to the field became fully or largely restricted for a long period of time. In this situation, different new – and in some cases innovative – remote monitoring practices were introduced. The introduction of virtual project visits (see text box below) was a particular innovate initiative. Faced with the impossibility of conducting missions and field trips, virtual visits were instead carried out, allowing for a direct dialogue and learning process about the reality that was facing local project actors, based on their own testimonies. While it is still too early to assess the longer-term impact on the portfolio from the limitations to monitoring visits, some of the newly introduced practices may be continued also in a post-COVID 19 situation and lead to overall enhancement of monitoring practices.

Good practice: Virtual Project Visits

The Virtual Project Visits have been conducted through Zoom and typically been of 2-2.5 hours duration. In the virtual visits have been included 3-4 sessions, each initiated with a 5-10 minutes video clip followed by 15 minutes discussion and reflection. The video clips have focussed on showing the physical implementation of main activities on the ground and brief testimonies from the target groups.

6.5 BALANCING COVID-19 WITH OTHER CRISES

Table 12. SDC's ability to balance between several crises

Question (EQ 4):	SDC
Ability to maintain focus on other prevailing crises in Bolivia at the same time as the COVID-19 pandemic?	4.00
• The political crisis	3.17
• The economic crisis	3.75
• The environmental crisis (incl. forest fires, water scarcity etc.)	3.83
• The social crisis (poverty, unemployment, gender-based violence and lack of social protection, etc.)	3.69

While the Embassy in general has been managing other prevailing crises in Bolivia during the pandemic, it has been most visible in its support to mitigate the socio-economic and environmental crisis and less so for the political crisis. This finding is to a certain extent also reflecting the project portfolio composition at the Embassy, which is more strongly directed towards these types of initiatives. At the same time, the relatively small budget volume in the project portfolio compared to other agencies, also poses limitations to the level of involvement across multiple areas.

SDCs work through well-established multi-stakeholder platforms and focus on systemic solutions has been particularly powerful in the context of the COVID-19 socio-economic response process. During the months of sanitary emergency in Bolivia, the “Inclusive Markets Project” generated a specific COVID-19 component, and a portfolio of activities was incorporated to support the economic reactivation of Small-Medium Enterprises (SMEs). This was done in the food sectors through support to food supply at the national level (a platform to support food supply with the GoB) and at the local level (solutions for mobile markets, connecting producers with markets, businesses and producers’ associations and linking up with municipal governments). The importance of short food supply chains as a means for enhancing socio-economic development and improving food security has been clearly demonstrated during the COVID-19 pandemic in Bolivia.

Good practice: Establishing of digital platforms for strengthening of short food supply and payments systems.

The Inclusive Markets Project has during COVID-19 facilitated coordinated actions among groups of different market system actors through established multi-stakeholder platforms for engagement. In particular, the project has facilitated and contributed to establishing of digital platforms for payments and operationalisation of short food supply chains which have been important for the linking of rural producers to urban consumers as a means of improving food security during the COVID-19 pandemic.

6.6 GENDER AND VULNERABILITY SENSITIVE REPROGRAMMING

Table 13. SDC's attention to gender and vulnerability

Question (EQ 6):	SDC
Attention to gender and vulnerability concerns in view of the COVID-19 pandemic?	4.15
• Encourage partners to include specific <i>gender concerns</i> in COVID-19 responses?	4.31
• Encourage partners to include specific <i>poverty and vulnerability</i> concerns in COVID-19 responses?	4.31
• Support specific gender and vulnerability assessments due to the COVID-19 pandemic?	4.23
• Ensure that specific attention to gender and vulnerable groups is included in COVID-19 related project activities?	4.15

In general, the attention to gender and vulnerability issues is high in SDC's portfolio and have also been areas of particular concern in the reprogramming process. This is confirmed both by the review of the reprogrammed project documents as well as from interviews and the online survey with partners (Table 13).

The proposal from HELVETAS and Caritas Switzerland on “Sustainability of COVID-19 prevention and response measures in large and densely populated urban areas in Bolivia” includes an analysis of whom the most vulnerable groups are and an assessment of how men and women are differently affected by the pandemic. The HELVETAS project with the SDC regional hub in Lima on the “Rapid Response COVID-19 Shelter Support” targeting Venezuelan migrants also reflects a focus on most vulnerable groups. In addition, Swisscontact established task forces in universities to prevent and protect survivors of GBV through telecommunication. This was initiated in two universities but scaled up to 10 during the COVID-19 pandemic. At the same time, psychological and legal support to survivors of GBV was provided through online sessions and materials for prevention of violence were developed.

Within the framework of the “Life without violence” project, SDC has also been quite active in combating domestic violence, especially during the months of the strict quarantine. Two far-reaching communication campaigns were implemented: *CAMPAIGN #YouAreNotAlone*, which showed channels to make complaints viable and, the *#WithoutVirusWithoutViolence CAMPAIGN* aimed at raising public awareness to combat the virus of violence against women with the same force as that of COVID-19. At the institutional level, an important work was done with universities to produce informative videos and Facebook online programmes, TikTok, etc. All this material was visualised among young people through social networks.

The re-opening of attention of the Integrated Municipal Legal Services (SLIMs), through a WhatsApp group, helped coordinate actions among different actors (police, SLIM, community promoters). The SLIMs, in coordination with the “Life without violence” project, have quickly adjusted their emergency care protocols. New, good practices were made known through a contest and have been replicated in more than 80 municipalities. Finally, a Women's Research on Covid-19 was carried out, documenting the impact of the pandemic on women's lives. The intersection of violence and poverty variables is planned to define new actions with counterparts and eventually the design of local and/or national policies. A horizontal *Virtual Learning Community*

was developed for capacity building of public officials and replicators (universities, SLIMs), as a new way of managing knowledge for scaling up good practices across the country.

The new project established with PROCOSI has the aim of insuring adequate information about the pandemic in Oruro, El Alto and Montero where COVID-19 incidences were high and miscommunication widespread in vulnerable communities. While targets of beneficiaries reflect an intention to reach slightly more women than men there is not much analysis of how this will be done and how the campaign will ensure a gender sensitive approach.

6.7 RESPONSIVE PARTNERSHIPS

Table 14. SDC's responsiveness to partners

Question (EQ 7)	SDC
Responsiveness to the demands and needs of your own organisation/institution during the COVID-19 pandemic?	4.31
• Comply with agreements and promises made with your organisation/institution in relation to the COVID-19 pandemic?	4.23
• Pay attention to the situation within your organisation/institution during the COVID-19 pandemic?	4.15
• Focus on security and health concerns for the project staff within your organisation/institution related to the COVID-19 pandemic?	4.31
• Engage and communicate on a regular basis with your organisation/ institution during the COVID-19 pandemic?	4.08

From the early stages of the pandemic, the Embassy established close contact and frequent communications with its project partners. This included strong attention to the partner's health and working conditions (e.g. through provision of biosecurity equipment). This particular attention by the Embassy also to “softer” issues was strongly appreciated by the partners both in the online survey (see results in table 14 above) as well as during interviews.

The Embassy has maintained frequent contact with project partners during the pandemic and also invited, and encouraged, exchange of experiences and information. In June 2020, a virtual meeting was organised between the Embassy and the main Swiss implementing NGOs in Bolivia. The meeting was an opportunity for the NGOs to provide and share experiences of COVID-19 responses. Through a virtual survey, participants were asked if they had made adjustments in their planning due to COVID-19, whether they were prepared or not for the crisis, or if they had some resilience capacities already developed. The participants stated that they were not prepared to respond in this context. The Embassy presented some ideas on how to communicate responses to COVID-19 and raised the relevance of sharing tools, learning and adaptation in the group. The meeting was concluded with a wish to repeat this type of events for exchange of experiences.

Still, there is a perception among some partners that the Embassy tended to rely too much on the Lima Hub for advice on emergency issues instead of making more use of partner experiences. Some of the Embassy's long-term cooperation partners have extensive experience from humanitarian and emergency work in Bolivia and there

is a feeling among these partners that their knowledge could have been used more and better by the Embassy in the reprogramming process.

6.8 CONCLUSIONS FOR SDC

The relevance and efficiency of the full “package” of support (instructions, guidance, and assistance) provided by HQ to the Embassy’s COVID-19 response has been mixed. In general, SDC’s approach to reprogramming has been useful and relevant, emphasising the focus on decentralised decision-making. The introduction of a **SAP COVID-19 Marker** and a **“fast track” approval process** for new COVID-19 projects at HQ has been particularly supportive initiatives, without compromising on context analysis and quality of project proposal. However, the existing administrative and financial guidelines were found by the Embassy to be too strict and inflexible for the emergency situation on the ground in Bolivia. Likewise, it is not evident how efficiently the HQ requests to the Embassy for more frequent SITREPs, with additional COVID-19 data and analysis of the Bolivian context included, has been in view of specific Embassy needs.

The MFA set-up and support mechanisms have not been fit for efficient handling of specific challenging management and staff situations at the Embassy in view of the serious fragility context in Bolivia. This also relates to weaknesses in cross communication and coordination between MFA and SDC departments in HQ.

A decision by the Embassy to **clearly separate responsibilities in the management team** for support to, respectively, repatriation of Swiss citizens and for the reprogramming process, was important to maintain a strong focus also on development cooperation during the early stage of the pandemic. Likewise, embassy management was able to make a swift shift to a **“virtual leadership”** during the strict lock-down and keep a number of important “spaces” (also social ones) open for all staff. This contributed importantly to **generation of a continued team spirit**, in particular among local staff, and a feeling that embassy management cared for them and their families under sometimes very difficult personal and family circumstances.

Despite a challenging internal working environment at the Embassy, in particular during the first months of the pandemic, **the effectiveness of the reprogramming process with partners has been high.** Partners perceived a high level of flexibility and attention to their demands and suggestions. **Two new partnerships** have been initiated (with UNDP and PROCOSI) both highly relevant to the COVID-19 response package as well as to SDCs ongoing phasing-out process in Bolivia. Through a dynamic and interactive reprogramming process, and by making explicit use of multi-stakeholder platforms established by the projects, it has been possible to support innovative interventions, e.g. to push the **digitalisation** process in the country and support development of new **inclusive COVID-19 insurance and financial products.** As monitoring visits became a particular challenge due to physical restrictions, **virtual project visits and exchanges** were introduced as a new good practice. This even allowed a wider audience to attend.

7 GAC's response to COVID-19

This section presents findings on GAC's response to the pandemic and is structured around the three analytical levels presented above: HQ, mission and partner level. Thus, findings related to HQ and mission level are first analysed, then the reprogramming process and the level of flexibility and adaptivity towards partners and adaptiveness, and finally the overall responsiveness towards partners. Brief conclusions on GAC's response are presented at the end of the section.

7.1 HEADQUARTER'S INSTRUCTIONS AND GUIDANCE

In the early stage of the pandemic, staff in Lima and La Paz were instructed to take on consular duties as the priority was to get Canadians' home. The instructions were clear and the relationship between MFA and the field on needs assessments to reprogramme existing projects and action to be taken worked very well. For about six weeks, mid-March to the end of April 2020, embassy staff were asked to take on consular duties to respond to the emergency repatriation efforts. The Embassy worked under the Emergency Response Team (ERT) structure for several weeks. As the Ambassador for Bolivia is located at the Embassy in Lima, the Head of Cooperation in La Paz took on the role of Incident Commander, a role for which she was trained to take on in times of crisis, reporting back to the Ambassador in Lima.

The Project Team Leader for Peru and Bolivia at HQ participated in numerous operations meetings on new measures to reprogramme, absorbed and triaged the information and passed on the most pertinent messages to the Head of Cooperation and staff at the mission in La Paz. Having a focal point at HQ, allowed La Paz based staff to focus on the evolving situation in Bolivia, security and duty of care issues, as well as engage with project partners.

Good practice: Having a focal point at HQ who would relay questions from staff in Lima and La Paz, gather and communicate the most pertinent information, was a good practice. It streamlined and helped achieve efficiencies in communications.

In terms of strategic direction, the framework of the Feminist International Assistance Policy (FIAP) helped keep a focus on vulnerable populations, with relevant programming. Early on, HQ communicated that programmes should continue to deliver according to the FIAP, which proved flexible enough to respond to the various issues caused by the pandemic. The overall framework of FIAP and flexibility in adapting the response based on challenges and evidence on the ground allowed for projects to re-organize their strategies to work in the new context and did take into consideration the reality in Bolivia. For instance, it was realised early on that the pandemic would have a disproportionate impact on women and some indigenous populations, particularly those in remote areas, in terms of access to health care, increased GBV and economically. FIAP also includes issues such as climate change and food security. However, several HQ and staff in Lima and La Paz noted that the

impact of the pandemic on food security and agriculture could not be addressed due to lack of funding, including for people living in the cities, due to restrictions on mobility and food system disruptions.

Administrative procedures to amend existing or approve new projects, as well as guidelines and tools were developed at HQ and communicated to Lima and La Paz early on. They were clear and the flexibility allowed adjustments to programming to respond to the pandemic. HQ indicated early on that there were no additional funds for bilateral programming in Bolivia. Instructions were to reprogramme existing funds within existing bilateral projects, while maintaining the focus in terms of results to be achieved. Project team leaders were instructed to engage in discussions with project partners on how projects could be adapted in light of the pandemic. The mission in La Paz had proactively canvassed partners.

Processes for project amendments remained as before the pandemic but were simplified and made seamless for partners. The International Assistance Operations Division (DPD) as well as contractual and financial sections at HQ developed guidelines and tools for different options during the pandemic, e.g. no cost extensions, reallocation of funds within a project budget, increased budgets, new projects, and communicated them to the field by the end of March 2020. They were flexible enough to allow for the mission in La Paz to respond to the situation in Bolivia. The guidelines were implemented as soon as they became available. Partners received guidelines on the eligible elements and costs for reprogramming by mid-April 2020. Project amendments were recommended by the Head of Cooperation at the mission and approved by the Programme Director based at the Embassy in Lima and forwarded to HQ later on.

Pursuing regional/multicounty projects helped lessen the burden on staff. Using a grant agreement with multilateral institutions proved effective and efficient and a good practice in the context of emergencies. Initially, the mission in La Paz tried to find mechanisms to support the MoH and respond to food security issues. Quickly, funding was identified at HQ through the Inter-American Program (in Americas Branch) and Multilateral Branch. Particular needs in Bolivia were discussed with the embassy but the approvals and agreements with partners were managed at HQ. Assistance to the MoH was provided through a grant agreement with PAHO for a multi-country response in Latin America and the Caribbean that included Bolivia.

Similarly, for food security, a grant agreement was also signed with the FAO for a multi-country response that included Bolivia. In each of these cases, the response was country specific. It helped avoid each bilateral program having to pursue its own approval and contracting and reduced the burden on the contracting and financial divisions at HQ, overwhelmed by the amount of contractual changes they had to handle due to the pandemic.

Gender equality and vulnerability were taken seriously in Canada's response to the pandemic and communicated early on to staff in Lima and La Paz and project partners through emails and guidelines. All partners agreed that GAC was strong on the issue of gender equality. As one partner said, "I cannot imagine a conversation with GAC where gender equality is not discussed." There was clear messaging from HQ and the embassy that Canada's response to the pandemic in Bolivia would be aligned with Canada's FIAP which recognises the importance of gender equality and the roles

that empowered women and girls play in building better futures for themselves, their communities, their countries and the world at large.

The guidance documents that HQ provided for amended and new projects in the context of the pandemic had a strong focus on gender equality. One of the guidance documents for project team leaders, states that “under the FIAP and the gender-responsive humanitarian action area, Canada has committed to adopting a feminist approach to humanitarian crises like COVID-19, to ensure they attain gender equality results in the rapid response to COVID-19.”

In addition, HQ provided staff and partners with a gender equality guide for COVID-19 related projects. The guide intended to help ensure that gender equality considerations remained sufficiently integrated into programming during the pandemic. The guide provides guiding questions on various issues such as sexual and reproductive health, economic empowerment, gender-based violence, education, women’s organizations, food security, etc. The guide also contains a menu of sample outcomes and activities to implement during the pandemic. Some partners mentioned the analysis guide as a tool to help adopt gender transformative strategies and methodologies.

Good practice: Clearly stated adherence to the gender equality policy and principles, as well as providing detailed guidance and tools based on a gender analysis framework, constitute a good practice and ensured maintaining a strong focus on Canada’s commitments to gender equality in its programming during the pandemic.

7.2 EMBASSY MANAGEMENT AND LEADERSHIP

GAC was very supportive of staff, both at HQ and the missions in Lima and La Paz and took the safety and security of its staff very seriously, including staff mental health and work-life balance. Staff felt that the support received from HQ and management in Lima and La Paz both at the early stage and during the pandemic was excellent. Teleworking was instituted on the 3rd week of March. Having the ability to work from home decreased significantly staff stress activities regarding their exposure to COVID-19.

The results of a survey sent to staff in Lima and La Paz strongly support the statement.²⁶ Overall, staff both in Lima and Peru were very positive about managements leadership on issues such as: effectively communicating essential information to staff; making effective and timely decisions; leading by example in promoting a respectful and

²⁶ Although the responses from staff in La Paz could not be separated from those of the Embassy in Lima due to confidentiality issues (a very small number of staff), the ratings given on the leadership are all 85%+, with an extremely low negative scoring (5% or less). This, combined with the positive views expressed in interviews, allows to be confident that the survey quite accurately represents the views both of staff in La Paz and in Lima.

healthy work dynamic among all staff; supporting a diverse workplace and respecting cultural differences in his/her actions and decisions; as well as supporting work-life balance. On emergency and safety issues, only 10% of staff felt that the support from management was insufficient, and a little over 10% felt the support deficient regarding information and technology issues.

HQ sent four surveys to staff on wellbeing/work conditions during the period. The lessons that HQ generated apply to the mission in La Paz. It notes that increased concern about staff mental health issues were driven by a higher workload, family separation (field staff remaining at mission without their families) which was the case for part of the period for the Head of Cooperation and caregiving responsibilities. The Head of Cooperation in La Paz, who was responsible for consular issues, providing daily information on the situation in Bolivia, overseeing the amendments to projects, and managing human resources in a difficult time, had little relief. This heavy responsibility was alleviated to some degree though a division of labour within the mission and a very strong and experienced team.

Good practice: GAC was quick to repatriate staff to Canada and move to virtual workplace. Assessing the wellbeing and needs of staff regularly through surveys during the pandemic helped senior management understand their situation and provide support.

Normal obligations versus crises management

GAC staff said that the repatriation of a development staff member took a toll on the remaining personnel during the early days of the pandemic. Extraordinary demands were placed on staff at all levels at the beginning of the COVID-19 response, which HQ recognized and documented in a lessons-learned document. The expectation for 24/7 response capacity that requires staff “all hands-on deck” and being “on call” was extremely demanding for staff. For instance, in the first two months of the pandemic, staff had to report daily on the situation on the ground. The frequency of reporting was reduced to three or four times a week around June 2020 and weekly later from August 2020 onward. The number of reporting requests and demand for information continued to be higher than normal and staff continually felt increased pressure to deliver at personal cost. Decisions concerning family accommodation helped maintain the relentless pace and response to the increased demands during the first few months of the pandemic.

7.3 FLEXIBLE AND ADAPTIVE REPROGRAMMING

Table 15. Survey results on GAC's flexible and adaptive reprogramming

Question (EQ 3):	GAC
Respond adequately to priority needs in Bolivia induced by the COVID-19 pandemic	3.86
• Respond quickly and adapt project activities in view of the COVID-19 pandemic?	3.71
• Engage local partners in discussions of needs and priorities for redesign of project activities in view of the COVID-19 pandemic?	4.14
• Re-allocate funds within project budgets in view of the COVID-19 pandemic?	4.00
• Ensure smooth and fast approval of adjusted COVID-19 project activities/budgets?	3.71

Overall, GAC's capacity to respond to the pandemic in a flexible fashion and technology relevant to local needs was very good. The overall perception from HQ, Staff in Lima and La Paz, as well as partners, is that GAC's response was both flexible and relevant to the pandemic in Bolivia. GAC quickly provided flexibility to implementing partners in terms of cost share, direct costs, holdback, reporting and other aspects of contracting instruments. For instance, electronic approval was put in place for lower-risk amendments. This flexibility was valued by partners, as survey data and interviews with partners show. In addition, the Management Statement of Intent (MSI) – an internal document - was removed for new projects during the pandemic to expedite the process.

All partners who answered the survey thought that GAC's response was very good to excellent, with the majority indicating that it was very good. The majority of survey respondents also noted that GAC's capacity to engage local partners in discussions of needs and priorities for redesign of project activities in view of the COVID-19 pandemic was very good. GAC's flexibility to re-allocate funds within project budgets due to the pandemic was rated as either good, very good or excellent. Similarly, most partners thought that GAC responded quickly to adapt project activities in view of the COVID-19 pandemic and ensured a smooth and fast approval of project activities/budgets. Most partners noted in interviews that the time to approve project amendments managed by the mission in La Paz was very fast, ranging from two to four weeks.

The processes instituted during the pandemic were flexible, including proposals to adjust projects. The approval process was also expedited. Guidelines for eligible changes were communicated to partners around mid-April 2020, which partners appreciated. Partners indicated in interviews that GAC was clear in its direction to maintain project activities as much as possible, and that COVID-19 specific activities had to contribute to project results outlined in the contribution agreement.

Partners noted that they shared their analysis on the situation with programme staff and discussed with them strategies to alter their project in light of the pandemic. With regards to the proposals for changes, some partners noted that all they had to provide was an excel sheet with activities and targets linked to planned results, which also was used for reporting. Several projects were easily granted a no-cost extension. Several partners also noted the flexibility for reporting and work planning. For instance, the annual reporting on projects, which is normally due in May-June was postponed to the fall and some partners provided workplans for three or six months easily instead of the whole year, in response to the evolving situation in Bolivia.

At the same time, two partners mentioned that the frequent requests from the embassy for specific information on the situation or how their project addressed needs on the ground in the early months of the pandemic was very stressful, as they were also trying to adapt to strict lockdown, develop new approaches and tools and maintain project activities.

7.4 BALANCING COVID-19 WITH OTHER CRISES

Table 16. GAC's ability to balance prevailing crises

Question (EQ 4):	GAC
Ability to maintain focus on other prevailing crises in Bolivia at the same time as the COVID-19 pandemic?	3.50
• The political crisis	4.00
• The economic crisis	3.40
• The environmental crisis (incl. forest fires, water scarcity etc.)	3.00
• The social crisis (poverty, unemployment, gender-based violence and lack of social protection, etc.)	3.71

Overall, GAC's ability to maintain focus on other prevailing crises in Bolivia (political, social, economic, environmental) at the same time as the COVID-19 pandemic was good. The majority of surveyed NGO partners thought this. In addition, partners mentioned in interviews that staff at the mission in La Paz demonstrated a good knowledge of what was needed in the country. For example, they knew the government weaknesses and had a good handle on the situation for women and indigenous populations, as well as solutions to address the various issues. However, while GAC approved a new project (see Section 7.5) to address the economic impact of the strict lockdown in areas where it had programming, partners noted that a more extensive response would have been beneficial.

More specifically, survey respondents who did not think that GAC juggling of the various crisis was adequate, highlighted GAC's handling of the political and environmental crisis but did not specify why. In relation to the political crisis, some interviewed partners said that they requested the mission's support to dialogue with the transitional government but was not answered. However, one partner mentioned the supportive role of the mission in talks with the MoH. GAC's response to the environmental crisis was not mentioned in interviews. Some of the surveyed NGOs were unclear about how GAC was addressing the humanitarian issues caused by the pandemic.

7.5 ESTABLISHMENT OF NEW PROJECTS AND INNOVATION

Table 17. GAC's willingness to engage in discussions on new projects and innovation

Question (EQ 5):	GAC
Willingness to engage in discussions with partners on new project initiatives in view of the COVID-19 pandemic?	2.83
• Consider COVID-19 specific project amendments for funding?	3.33
• Consider new COVID-19 specific project proposals for funding?	2.00
• Address <i>new opportunities</i> in view of the COVID-19 pandemic?	2.20
• consider <i>innovative project initiatives</i> as a response to the COVID-19 pandemic?	2.20

The new projects approved to address health, food security and the political crisis as well as to fight fires were very relevant to the context in Bolivia. GAC was able to identify additional funding channelled through the Multilateral Branch and the Inter-American Programme. As discussed, funding for new projects were awarded to PAHO to support the MoH to maintain services and respond to the pandemic and to the FAO,

in partnership with SOCODEVI, to assist in the development of emergency plans for vulnerable municipalities and the provision of seeds and food to the most vulnerable farmers and families.

The thematic team on food security in the Multilateral Branch at HQ was very alert and proactive in canvassing the field team for information on the situation in the region. This facilitated the rapid response to food insecurity through the FAO-SOCODEVI project. The Multilateral Branch health team engaged early on in COVAX/ACT discussions which led to a positive result for Bolivia. In addition, the reallocation of funds within existing bilateral programming to address the sanitary crisis proved to be very helpful. The Inter-American Program also managed to get additional funds approved for the health sector through a grant with PAHO.

GAC's response to the GoB declaration of a state of emergency due to uncontrolled forest fires burning in the Bolivian lowlands was also very relevant, as it helped protect the livelihoods of vulnerable populations and biodiversity. Canada provided aerial firefighting assistance to directly support the Bolivian emergency response team. The helitanker completed 14-day operations in Bolivia in October-November 2020. The main areas of operation were located in rural areas of the Santa Cruz province where several local and indigenous communities and wildlife reserves were affected.

During the evaluation period, Canada teamed up with other donors, including Sweden, in a joint effort to rebuild the capacity of the Supreme Electoral Court (TSE) in a time of political crisis. This initiative, implemented by UNDP, was key to ensure that the election cycle in Bolivia ran without major incident or violence, as it strengthened the credibility of the TSE and the departmental electoral tribunals and paved the way for electoral results that were accepted and respected by political leaders and society as a whole.

With regards to innovations, all bilateral projects that reallocated funding to respond to the pandemic introduced innovations to reach their target populations, that were very relevant in the context of the pandemic. As discussed earlier, the transitional government introduced one of the strictest confinements in Latin America, which prevented local partners maintaining their activities as planned. Among the many changes introduced to respond to the situation, the programmes saw the introduction of many innovative practices, as well as new tools and approaches. These included the introduction of telemedicine for consultations with pregnant women; a virtual campaign on COVID-19 in several national and local indigenous languages; virtual project delivery through new platforms that were transferred to local partners; an increased use of radio and internet to reach rural/remote populations; as well as virtual monitoring of projects and virtual visits to projects by senior management. Some partners indicated that this helped save a lot of money and most said that they would likely maintain these tools, as part of a mixt model of in-person and virtual programme delivery and monitoring in the future.

For example, all partners moved their activities to virtual mode for communication with local partners and provided other supports online to their local partners to enable them to continue implementing programmed and COVID-19 specific activities. For some partners, this involved adopting and/or developing new virtual platforms and tools.

OXFAM, for instance, helped develop and implement an online campaign to show municipalities how to care about issues of violence against women called “You Are Not Alone” and bought a call line for municipalities to allow women to call to obtain support.

UNICEF and Save the Children were able to reach a much larger population by offering training/education online. For UNICEF this “revolutionised” teacher training, making it more accessible to a much wider population than providing face-to-face training, which is logistically more complex and more costly. As a result of this, the project was able to reach 400,000 teachers. The asynchronistic training modules allowed women to fit the training into their schedule.

SOCODEVI supported municipalities’ use of social media, WhatsApp and radio to maintain contact with families and provide information to the population on how they were managing the pandemics, including food distribution among other things. PAHO provided online training to the MoH and helped translate COVID-19 related materials into culturally appropriate indigenous languages for vulnerable indigenous groups. The project also led to new alliances with organizations that work with indigenous populations in remote areas. The Centre d'étude et de Coopération Internationale (CECI) helped the municipality of La Paz develop a platform for youth employment capacity building and to collect information on barriers to youth employment, particularly young women. CECI also helped partners in Torotoro (Norte de Potosi) to get certification as a bio-secure destination from an international organisation, based in Spain.

GAC was less effective in communicating its response through regional and multilateral channels to their partners. The approval of regional and multilateral projects was not communicated to partners, which could explain in part the low rating they gave GAC on the issues of addressing new opportunities and considering innovative project initiatives as a response to the COVID-19 pandemic in the survey. Several NGO partners interviewed lamented that there was no extra funding available to extend their response beyond their target population or through new projects. Only 50% of survey respondents thought that GAC did a good to excellent job in that regard. More specifically, between 50% and 60% of respondents thought that GAC’s openness to consider new COVID-19 specific project proposals, address new opportunities or consider innovative project initiatives was deficient or merely adequate. GAC explained that it had received COVID-19 specific proposals from partners despite the fact that no additional funding was available and looked for options to fund their projects through other delivery channels but to no avail, which created frustration among partners.

7.6 GENDER AND VULNERABILITY SENSITIVE REPROGRAMMING

Table 18. Survey results on GAC's gender and vulnerability

Question (EQ 6):	GAC
Attention to gender and vulnerability concerns in view of the COVID-19 pandemic?	4.71
• Encourage partners to include specific <i>gender concerns</i> in COVID-19 responses?	4.67
• Encourage partners to include specific <i>poverty and vulnerability</i> concerns in COVID-19 responses?	4.57
• Support specific gender and vulnerability assessments due to the COVID-19 pandemic?	4.33
• Ensure that specific attention to gender and vulnerable groups is included in COVID-19 related project activities?	4.29

GAC was effective in taking into account gender equality and vulnerability in light of the pandemic in Bolivia and this is the strongest element of its response. As mentioned previously, FIAP was the main policy framework of Canada's programming prior and during the COVID-19 pandemic, which proved flexible in adapting to the circumstances on the ground, along with guidelines and analytical tools it provided to staff and partners. Programming before and during the pandemic included LGTB+, indigenous populations and most vulnerable municipalities, and several projects focused on issues such as sexual and reproductive health (SRH), including neonatal health, as well as preventing and addressing violence against women and girls.

Gender equality is also where GAC scored highest in the partner survey. Almost all surveyed partners rated GAC as very good or excellent in relation to encouraging partners to include specific gender concerns in COVID-19 responses; encouraging partners to include specific poverty and vulnerability concerns; supporting specific gender and vulnerability assessments; and ensuring that specific attention to gender and vulnerable groups was included in COVID-19 related project activities.

Support to local partners through reprogramming of funds allowed them to continue providing services to these populations and responding with more specific actions, e.g., providing PPE to local partner organizations (all partners), conducting an online violence against women and girls prevention campaign (OXFAM) and, establishing a country-wide helpline for children struggling with violence at home (UNICEF and Save the Children). In the context of the adaptation of the project with UNICEF and Save the Children to the COVID-19 reality, the project helped the MoH to develop norms and protocols to attention to SRH and violence against women and girls during emergencies.

UNICEF also partnered with the Canadian Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons in order to offer a virtual simulation called the Facilitated – Acute Critical Events Simulation (F-ACES) course to help fight the pandemic at hand. A total of 28 emergency doctors throughout the country were chosen as well as three trainers to enable continued delivery of the course. This allows sharing of best practices developed by physicians in Canada with their counterparts in Bolivia.

FAO-SOCODEVI supported the development of municipal contingency plans by local authorities and supported the provision of emergency seeds supplies for farmers and food baskets for the most vulnerable families. The contingency plans were shared across the Department and recommendations were also communicated to territorial governments.

The provision of PPE and the development of virtual platforms and tools as well as support to access internet and communication (e.g. radio) was key to the continuity of services during the pandemic. While there were challenges, the reallocation of funding allowed for local partners to continue their child protection work, e.g. attending to emergencies and protection of child rights; the continuation of teacher training and maintaining schooling for children and adolescents through distance education; providing SRH and neonatal health services; as well as supporting violence prevention and attention to victims.

In the case of PAHO, which supported the MoH's response, a lot of emphasis was put on gender, indigenous rights to health, old people and pregnant women's access to services during the pandemic. The funding also allowed the MoH to reach out to the most vulnerable indigenous populations such as the Guaranis and Yuquis in the Departments of Chaco and Cochabamba. PAHO complemented the Canadian funding with other sources.

In the case of Canada's aerial firefighting support, the Bolivia's National Incident Command prioritized operational sites with a view to protecting local communities, saving lives, and safeguarding Bolivia's biodiversity and relevant protected areas. In the final stage of operations, the Chinook travelled to the Kaa-Iya protected area in the Chaco region, one of the biggest protected areas in Bolivia.

7.7 RESPONSIVE PARTNERSHIPS

Table 19. Survey results on GAC as a responsive partner

Question (EQ 7)	GAC
Responsiveness to the demands and needs of your own organisation/institution during the COVID-19 pandemic?	3.71
• Comply with agreements and promises made with your organisation/institution in relation to the COVID-19 pandemic?	4.29
• Pay attention to the situation within your organisation/institution during the COVID-19 pandemic?	4.29
• Focus on security and health concerns for the project staff within your organisation/institution related to the COVID-19 pandemic?	4.29
• Engage and communicate on a regular basis with your organisation/ Institution during the COVID-19 pandemic?	3.57

Overall, the mission in La Paz did a very good job maintaining contact with partners and sharing concerns and communicating its response to address needs generated by the pandemic. Communications were characterised as fluid and open. Some partners also added transparent, constructive, practical and dynamic. Staff noted that it had good two-way communication with partners, which was established prior to the pandemic to respond to the political crisis in the country. Partners and embassy staff noted that the monthly virtual meetings to discuss and analyse the situation and share information were useful.

In addition, interactions between NGO partners and the mission through the Coordinadora de Organizaciones de la Sociedad Civil Canadiense en Bolivia (COCAB) was deemed useful. The COCAB provided a forum to keep one another informed of the situation in Bolivia and for the mission to share information. From the staff's perspective, these interactions helped to make decisions quickly.

7.8 CONCLUSIONS FOR GAC

The **responsibilities** between the foreign affairs and development arms of GAC and **guidelines** to manage repatriation efforts, as well as addressing issues caused by the pandemic in Bolivia through the development program, were **clear and effective**. **Adherence to the FIAP proved flexible enough** to address health, economic and environmental issues and helped maintain a strong focus on gender equality and vulnerability, already part of the programming pre-pandemic.

The package of **guidelines and simplified processes** developed and communicated early on to staff and partners **provided enough autonomy** to adapt programming swiftly to the needs identified. **Having a focal point to triage and communicate relevant information on development processes to and from the field also proved effective and an efficient use of resources**.

The **leadership and management at the mission in La Paz were effective** and seriously addressed the wellbeing of staff, which provided them with a sense of safety despite the pandemic. Measures such as additional time to take care of children and rotation of reporting among staff helped prevent burnout. Consultations with partners in Bolivia on the situation early on in the pandemic was vital to help staff in La Paz and in Lima make quick decisions on reprogramming existing initiatives and identifying new projects. While communication with partners was overall very good, **more dialogue with partners on the additional programming through multilateral organisations might have helped alleviate the perception that GAC was not sufficiently open to new initiatives**.

The adoption and development of **virtual platforms** and tools allowed the continuation of essential services to targeted populations and, in some cases, outreach to a larger audience through measures such as telemedicine, online training, country-wide helplines for child protection, and a national campaign to prevent violence against women and girls. **Virtual monitoring** was instituted and proved effective under the circumstances. The combination of virtual and in-person programme delivery and monitoring is likely to become standard practice after the pandemic.

8 Comparative assessment of the donor agencies' responses

Overall, each agency scored well with some specific strengths and areas for improvement identified which varied across the three agencies. This assessment provides an opportunity for collective learning to inform ongoing improvements and future surges of the pandemic in Bolivia.

The evidence-based assessment of the individual agency responses, resulted in the following indicative scores (1-5 scale, where 5 is exemplary, see methodology section). The rating is based on a combination of both a qualitative (mainly interviews and a review of documents) and quantitative (partner survey) analysis (see methodology section).

Table 20. Rubrics scoring

EQ	Sida	SDC	GAC
1 HQ – embassy/mission relations	3,5	3	4
2 Embassy, internal management	3,5	4	4
3 Adaptivity and flexibility	4,5	4,5	4
4 Responses to different crises	4	4	3,5
5 New projects and innovation	4	4	3
6 Gender and vulnerability	4,5	4	4,5
7 Responsiveness towards partners	4,5	4,5	4

The text below, provides a brief justification of the scores, with a particular view to highlighting good practices.

HQ-embassy/mission: For Sida and SDC in particular, the reprogramming process has been highly decentralised and the embassies have been granted a high level of autonomy and decision-making power. This has been a strong motivating factor for programme staff at the embassies and has generated both ownership and commitment which has been of critical importance during a stressed and very work intensive period. In particular, the Swedish Embassy received very few requirements and guidelines from HQ to the reprogramming process, only priority sectors could not be changed. Also, SDC and GAC experienced a lot of autonomy and both of their HQ's introduced "fast track" approval of existing or new COVID-19 projects. SDC and GAC HQ's also introduced a "SAP COVID-19 Marker", which became very helpful to identify COVID-19 activities in the projects and for informing decision makers.

Compared to both Sida and SDC, GAC experienced less friction between its HQ and the mission in La Paz in relation to the repatriation instructions and communications in the first months after the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic. The fact that GAC nominated a focal point at HQ to relay questions from the mission in La Paz, and gather and communicate to the field the most pertinent information became a good way to

focus and “filter” the information and not overload and confuse mission management and staff.

Embassy/mission internal: All three embassy/mission management teams managed to find operational solutions to handle the simultaneous repatriation and reprogramming process during the first months of the pandemic. However, the lines of communication and attention to staff needs and concerns were tackled differently by the management teams. At both the Swiss Embassy and the GAC mission in La Paz, the management team quickly adapted to a virtual management and leadership reality, which also included a strong focus on social initiatives and duty of care, particularly in relation to local staff. GAC management also explicitly addressed issues of staff mental health and work-life balance.

In addition, while all three donors adhered to new protective safety and health instructions for the work of their staff, there were differences in how flexibly these instructions were interpreted. The Swiss Embassy imposed the largest variety of safety measures and protocols, including division of work in two teams (Team A and Team B). These efforts were very positively assessed by a HQ security mission. In comparison to this, the staff at the Swedish Embassy and Canadian mission worked with more flexible restrictions, although still with due attention to basic safety and hygiene requirements. This also relates back to differences in organizational culture and COVID-19 response strategies across the three countries in general.

Relevance of reprogramming: All three donors have managed to reflect in their reprogramming the main needs and priorities through dialogue with their partners and close monitoring of the situation on the ground from the early stages of the response. The requests from the GoB have been diverse and uncoordinated, and difficult to respond to bilaterally. However, all three agencies have been very open to wishes and requests from the GoB and for what could be accommodated within their programming.

Flexibility and responsiveness in reprogramming: All three donor agencies managed to re-programme effectively through reallocation within existing budget frames, without additional funds. The three donors initiated shortly after the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic, a very interactive and dynamic consultation process with their project partners. The frameworks for these consultation processes were communicated from HQs, through the embassies/missions, to the project partners. In particular Sida was fast to send out this official communication, which helped to align expectations early in the process. It was clearly communicated that the reprogramming process would focus on partners’ requests and include a high degree of flexibility and adaptability.

The three donors have focussed their reprogramming on the socio-economic recovery process (in particular SDC) and environmental aspects (in particular Sida), areas where they already had the majority of their project interventions, while GAC maintained a strong health and gender equality focus. Through these interventions it has been possible to address COVID-19 emergencies from different perspectives. Both GAC and SDC addressed food security issues. SDC’s close work with the GAM and the established multi-stakeholder platforms were fundamental for food security (short supply chains) during the first months of the pandemic. GAC supported emergency food assistance and municipal emergency planning through existing and new projects.

Likewise, through Sida's strong support to the water and sanitation sector, it was possible to explicitly address hygiene issues which have been a key concern during the pandemic. SDC also addressed this issue through its two projects with HELVETAS.

While monitoring of project interventions has been particularly challenging, innovative methods and concepts related to virtual monitoring were introduced by all three donors. The "Virtual project visits" introduced by SDC represent a particular interesting modality which also allowed for wider participation and interaction in the monitoring process. Other interesting methods introduced (e.g. through Sida's water and sanitation projects) are related to transmission of videos and photos to a monitoring platform that different users and stakeholders can access.

Innovation and Partnerships: The large degree of autonomy and flexibility in the reprogramming process for all three donors has generated a focus on opportunities more than on limitations, and resulted in development of new innovative practices that could potentially lead to more transformative change processes. Some of the best examples are SDC's push for the digitalisation process and support to development of more inclusive insurance and financial products. GAC saw a number of innovative online practices from its partners (e.g., online platforms, telemedicine, virtual training and capacity building tools, as well as online campaigns and communication to maintain services during the pandemic etc.). Sida has supported strengthening of networks and hotlines (e.g. for GBV) through development of new platforms for communication among the actors.

SDC has been opportunistic in its search for new partnerships to complement the existing portfolio in the COVID-19 response and at the same time used the opportunity to prepare their phasing out process. Two new projects have been developed with two very different partners, UNDP and PROCOSI (UN vs. CSO network). Both projects are complementing ongoing SDC interventions very well, and they reach out to important stakeholder platforms, addressing specific COVID-19 needs.

Gender and vulnerability: All three donor agencies are well-recognised for their strong attention to gender and vulnerability aspects in Bolivia, although with some different focuses and approaches, which has also influenced their COVID-19 responses. Prior to COVID-19, GAC was already the leading voice among donor agencies on gender equality and its response has been focused on maintaining the services local authorities and other local partners were already providing (e.g. SRH, GBV prevention, teacher training and schooling, mobile health units for pregnant women, MoH plans for emergencies, etc.). Sida, which also has a very robust gender profile, has had a strong focus on development of concrete tools for dialogue and decision-making on reprogramming and has explicitly taken into consideration issues such as MDPA, gender and vulnerability analysis, as well as partners' capacity to reach marginalised groups. SDC has a strong, integrated vulnerability profile reflected in all its interventions.

Other crises in Bolivia: In general, all three donor agencies have managed to balance well their attention to the COVID-19 pandemic with the other crises in the country (political, social and environmental). The fact that all three donors' COVID-19 reprogramming has taken place within their existing strategic programme frameworks is in itself a good indication that the agencies have tried to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic without departing from their strategic focus towards the other crises in the

country. At the same time, differences in human and financial resources and capacities at the three embassies/missions makes direct comparison difficult here.

The table below presents a summary of the justification for each agency's rating for each of the EQs.

Table 21. Comparative assessment of donors per EQs

EQ	Sida	SDC	GAC
1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Operational instructions few but clear - Decentralised authority - Management resisted instruction from MFA to return home - Communication lines between MFA and Sida created confusion - Admin. guidelines & approval processes were maintained - HQ flexible on deadlines 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Focus on repatriation before staff concerns - Instruction to stay on deck, no consideration of fragility level - Unclear medical evacuation plan - Little motivation and encouragement from HQ - Cut in representation cost - Substantial positive and proactive support from CMC - Decentralised decision-making but pressure to release funds 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Operational instructions clear from MFA and Development stream - Focal point helped manage information flow from HQ - Some strain on La Paz staff due to repatriation but manageable - Reliance on FIAP as framework for intervention and clear and flexible guidelines and tools, including gender analysis helped keep focus - Flexibility on programme reporting timelines - Umbrella agreements with multilateral partners and handles through emergency funding channel effective and efficient
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Adaptive management in dev. cooperation - Staff had large responsibility but room for mistakes - Increased workload and challenged work-life balance, not fully addressed by management - Management not fully adapted to new virtual reality 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Clear division of responsibility facilitated an efficient reprogramming process - New leadership model introduced with focus on social initiatives - Continuous attention to staff's duty of care - Working in teams to reduce risk of too many staff being infected at the same time 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Staff mental health and work-life balance addressed by management (HQ and La Paz) - Telework instituted immediately helped relieve fear of contagion - Effectively communicated essential information to staff; made effective and timely decisions; lead by example in promoting a respectful and healthy work dynamic among all staff; supported a diverse workplace and respected cultural differences
3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Add. funds allowed for emergency projects - Approach through water and sanitation not health but highly relevant - Flexible and adaptive towards partners - Substantial involvement of partners - MDPA + analytical tools guided decision-making 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Overall, the response stayed within same sectors, but one project was added within health - Reprogramming occurred without additional funds - Pursued opportunities to become facilitator of "soft skills" and a knowledge broker - Implementation through GAM has ensured proper alignment with municipalities' needs - Established multi-stakeholder partner platforms have been useful during the pandemic 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Additional funds through multilateral organisations and reallocation through existing geographic programming - Reallocation approval expedited through simplified processes, seamless for partners - Partners engaged in discussion over priorities in the context of the pandemic - Frequent requests for information through all delivery channels stressful for partners dealing with many changes/adaptations at the same time
4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Well-balanced between crises 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Mostly visible in its support to mitigate the socio-economic and 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Good balance in managing various crises

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Focus on emergency response, WASH, environment, GBV - Less focus on economic recovery 	<p>environmental crisis and less so for the political crisis</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Emergency food security project implemented in vulnerable municipalities - Increased attention to GBV - Less attention to environmental issues but supported government in forest fire fighting initiative
5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Sida HQ invited to innovative projects and monitoring - Partners rated Sida well in this regard - Maintained a high standard - Online working mode forced partners to enhance digitalisation - Online training, helpline, radio outreach, Apps - Monitoring: more frequent meetings, photo documentation, WhatsApp, drones, online platforms 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Open-minded and receptive to suggestions for new innovative projects - New modalities introduced (UN & CSO), also in view of phasing out - Strong pressure on partners to reprogramme, re-budget and deliver reports provided little space for reflection and analysis in the first months of the pandemic. - During the lockdown remote, innovative monitoring practices were introduced 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - New projects in health, food security very relevant to pandemic context. - Proactive stance on food security but overall impact underestimated. - Developed innovative online practices (e.g., online platforms, tools for training, capacity building, campaign, communication and to maintain services during pandemic) - Online monitoring instituted - However, partners invited to submit innovative proposals but not funded
6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Strong focus on gender and vulnerable groups in the overall portfolio - Decision-making based on MDPA, gender & vulnerability - Partners based on capacity to reach marginalised groups - Concrete tool for dialogue developed but not fully implemented 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The attention to gender and vulnerability issues is high - Support to task forces at universities to prevent and protect survivors of GBV was scaled from 2 to 10 groups. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Very strong focus on GE and vulnerability and already part of pre-pandemic programming - Response focused on maintaining services (e.g., SRH, GBV prevention, teacher training and schooling, mobile health units for pregnant women, emergency plans for MoH, support for internet access) - Emergency food security intervention in vulnerable municipalities and support for contingency municipal plans
7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Very responsive, flexible and reliable - High focus on security - Closer relationship to partners due to increased interaction 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - A solid and proactive partner network was essential to quickly identify and respond to emerging needs and priorities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Responsive, fluid, transparent communications - Kept partners well informed though regular communication

9 Donor harmonisation

In the Bolivian context, with multiple conflicts going on simultaneously and with a government that has not for a long time demonstrated a proactive and collaborative attitude towards the donor agencies, the current architecture of the donor coordination framework has not been very effective. In April 2020, the Consortium for Humanitarian Action Bolivia (led by HELVETAS) sent an open letter to GRUS on their perspective on how to respond to the pandemic. The structures put in place by the government were very weak and there was a need for the international organisations to take over the coordination. This did not happen, thus the donor response to the COVID-19 pandemic has been characterised by separated rather than by coordinated actions.

In this context, GRUS has continued to serve mainly as a forum for exchange of information, and there is little evidence of any joint programming initiatives in the donor group. Even in the case of the three likeminded donor agencies (Sida, SDC and GAC) it has been difficult to ensure a proper geographical and thematic coordination to avoid duplication of efforts. The limited number of joint-donor responses and initiatives developed also need to be seen as a result of the heavy workload at the embassies during the first months after the COVID-19 outbreak.

The COVID-19 pandemic in Bolivia has demonstrated a need for donor cooperation to become more strategic and seek to have a larger impact. Currently, the donor support is characterised mostly as a “patchwork” with many, relatively smaller and uncoordinated projects, and only few, larger joint programme interventions. While this to some extent may reflect the current composition of the donor group in Bolivia, interviews with donor representatives indicate that there is a large unused potential for harmonising of interventions.

According to interviews, both Sida, SDC and GAC are among the most vocal donors in GRUS. They are in particular driving the agenda on gender and are leading in the gender sub-group. Also, the sub-group on water and sanitation is strongly influenced by Sida, in particular. Sida has advocated for a coordinated approach and was one of the first donors to support the basket fund on water and sanitation the GoB suggested. However, this basket fund never materialised due to limited interest.

In the the Comité Interagencial sobre Asuntos de Genero (CIAG), which Canada chaired in 2020, **efforts were made to prepare a joint document identifying how donors were responding to prevention and attention to GBV.** Based on a joint consolidated analysis, key policy dialogue messages were developed and handed to the GRUS for each member to use as appropriate based on their orientation. The work started in the second half of the year. Sida and ON Women were the co-leaders of the group.

The COVID-19 pandemic provided a push towards more multilateralism, also in the Bolivian context, which may in the end challenge the civic space. While interviewees tend to agree that UN agencies should take the lead in joint programming and pooled funding initiatives, which may be good and useful solutions in crisis situations (e.g. the UN lead on the election project in Bolivia), there is at the same time a fear that this may lead to a deviation away from supporting weaker local organisations, and in the end also the social accountability. Sida has emphasized support to local NGOs and SDC also supported the health network PROCOSI in line with its commitment to support CSOs in Bolivia. While such support may require more resources from the embassies, they also provide an opportunity to support civil society in Bolivia which is increasingly under pressure.

The GRUS emergency sub-group (chaired by UNICEF and HELVETAS) opened up to non-humanitarian partners which has created an opportunity for new partnerships for the COVID-19 response. However, according to interviews with members of this sub-group, the involvement of partners with no mandate in humanitarian aid has complicated the emergency response process and created inefficiencies in the response mechanism. This has weakened the effectiveness of this group but on the other hand ensured that non-humanitarian actors have benefitted from more experienced organisations and to some extent enabled a coordinated effort. The online platform monitoring the pandemic at the municipal level has been essential to ensure some level of coordination and at least some awareness of different initiatives implemented.

In addition to this emergency group, three other temporary crisis groups within GRUS (*Grupos de Emergencia Temporales*) have been set up: *health, economic reactivation* and *social protection*. According to interviews with different development partners, this task force structure has led to more operationalisation of the work within GRUS, however still with limited concrete results in the short term.

10 Conclusions, learning and recommendations

10.1 MAIN CONCLUSIONS

This COVID-19 response evaluation has been timely and served as a stress test for the donor agencies' responsiveness. The most significant learning has occurred during the first few months of the COVID-19 pandemic, underlining the importance of harvesting and sharing this information before it gets lost.

The relevance and efficiency of the support from HQs to the reprogramming process (instructions, guidance and assistance) has been high. A high level of flexibility and decentralised decision-making has been delegated to the embassies/missions in La Paz for the reprogramming process (more for Sida and SDC than for GAC). While the Swedish Embassy has had full decision-making power for new project approvals, the introduction of “fast track” approval processes by the HQs in Canada and Switzerland (for GAC and SDC respectively) for new COVID-19 projects were important adjustments from normal procedures. In terms of planning, it is important to note, that in the beginning most people expected the pandemic to be of a more short-term nature. The introduction of **COVID-19 project markers** facilitated the reporting process. On the other hand, it is **not evident that HQs request to the embassies/missions in La Paz for additional data and analysis of the Bolivian context has been efficient** from a development cooperation perspective.

For both Sida and SDC, MFA instructions and procedures for repatriation of expatriate staff from the embassies caused long disputes and discussions between HQ and the respective embassies. In these cases, the **MFAs command and decision-making structures were not fit for efficient management** of these situations. This also relates to **weaknesses in cross communication and coordination between MFA and Sida/SDC departments in HQs.**

Embassy/mission management within the three agencies have used different approaches for how to divide responsibilities for, respectively, repatriation and reprogramming, during the pandemic and for how to implement a “**virtual leadership**”. In particular, **local staff has been sensitive to these decisions and the communication from embassy management** and have benefitted from the continuation of routines and openness of new virtual spaces for dialogue. GAC was lauded for its attention to work-life balance and mental health.

Despite heavy work pressure on all embassy management and staff, in particular during the first months of the pandemic, **the effectiveness of the reprogramming process with partners has been high.** Partners noted a high level of flexibility and attention to their requests and suggestions. The reprogramming process has been dynamic and interactive, and a number of innovative interventions have been developed as a result. Likewise, the three donor agencies' **strong attention to gender and vulnerability**

aspects have come clearly through in the reprogramming process. The presence of a very experienced development cooperation staff at all three embassies/missions in La Paz is seen as fundamental to these achievements. Also, it has been key to make the most of the intrinsic capacities of partners to reach the target groups/target population with biosafety supplies, especially the most vulnerable sectors of society to the pandemic.

In the **comparison of the three donor agencies' work with their partners**. Sida has taken more of a step back approach with a minimal set of guidelines and pressure from HQ and a high degree of receptiveness towards their partners. SDC felt more pressure in the beginning of the pandemic to respond to HQ requests on possibilities for redirection of funds. In this way, SDC became more proactive and “pushy” towards its partners but still maintaining partners' ownership of this process. In the case of GAC, a different and less decentralised organisational structure resulted in prolonged uncertainty on the status of proposals for new initiatives from partners, contribution to a perception of lack of responsiveness from GAC.

Overall, all three donor agencies have managed to balance well their attention to the COVID-19 pandemic with their **support to other crisis situations in the country** (political, social and environmental crises). The fact that all three donors' COVID-19 reprogramming took place within their existing strategic programme frameworks is in itself a good indication that the agencies have tried to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic without departing from their strategic focus towards the other crises in the country.

New, innovative implementing and monitoring tools and instruments have been introduced by all three donor agencies to compensate for the imposed restrictions on physical movement. This includes development and operationalisation of a number of virtual platforms and online tools for the projects, some of which may be useful to continue also after the pandemic.

The level and speed of donor harmonisation and coordination in Bolivia has been too weak in view of the urgency of the COVID-19 pandemic and the current architecture of the donor coordination framework in the country has shown to be inefficient. It has mainly consisted of information sharing through the GRUS, (although some sub-groups have managed to effect some coordination) and informal consultations among donor agencies. Weak and confusing requests and a non-collaborative attitude from the GoB has contributed to this.

10.2 KEY LEARNING

From the three donor agencies COVID-19 response:

HQ-embassy/mission relations:

A strong focus on “one size fits all” approaches within HQ (MFA) bears the inherent risk that solutions and support may become inflexible and insufficient when staff members in the field are facing particular precarious situations within fragile contexts. This leads to frustration, demotivation, fatigue, and lack of trust between HQ and embassy/mission management and staff. While this may not affect short term results, it could create longer-term institutional challenges.

A centralised (MFA) decision-making and communication process does not fit well with a development cooperation context during a crisis of this magnitude. It may be necessary to engage operational units/levels more to facilitate differentiated and pragmatic decisions for the development cooperation work and avoid confusing and contradicting messages being communicated across departments and units.

Heavy reporting requirements from HQ during crisis may lead to inefficiencies at a time when field staff is already affected by heavy workloads. In these cases, communication and feedback from HQ around the reporting becomes of more importance.

A reprogramming process based on a high degree of decentralisation creates ownership and commitment to the process among both embassy staff and partners. Provision of few but targeted and facilitating HQ instructions and guidelines may be important to support the process.

Embassies/mission in La Paz (internal):

The COVID-19 crisis situation required introduction of new management and leadership structures and mechanisms at the embassies/missions to reflect a virtual reality and to balance support to repatriation with reprogramming work. These change management processes and internal re-defining of roles and responsibilities may challenge the working environment and culture at the embassies.

A strong and immediate HQ focus on expatriate staff conditions bears the risk that local staff will be left in uncertain conditions with a feeling of being left on their own. In this situation, embassy management has an important duty of care responsibility.

Reprogramming and partners:

It has been possible for the embassies/missions to combine a strong HQ focus on repatriation issues with an active and efficient engagement in the reprogramming process, even within the first months of the pandemic. Thus, the embassies have largely managed to maintain their normal obligations for development cooperation, despite the additional COVID-19 related tasks.

Differences in organisational structures and levels of decentralised decision-making within the donor agencies influence the communication flow with partners and the ability to align expectations during crisis. While both Sida and SDC have highly decentralised communication platform towards their partners, lack of coordination between the field and some GAC branches hampered communications between GAC and their partners.

Flexible and adaptive reprogramming processes, with a large degree of involvement and participation of project partners and attendance to their specific needs and requests, stimulates innovative thinking and focus on opportunities. In some cases, these innovations include transformational potentials that go beyond the original project scope.

The reprogramming process has provided additional needs and opportunities for an even more explicit focus on gender and vulnerability issues in the Bolivian

development context. While particular concerns and frameworks for these issues are already an integrated part of all three donors approaches to programming, more contextualised tools may be needed.

Project monitoring becomes a particular challenge when restrictions are imposed on mobility, however, it is still early to conclude on the long-term consequences of this. In most cases, the projects have managed to adapt their monitoring tools to the new realities and for example, a number of virtual instruments have been introduced.

Donor Coordination:

Joint-programming and planning is time consuming and in a crisis situation it becomes an even larger challenge. Donors also have different procedures, policies and administrative mechanisms that are difficult to harmonise. This gets further complicated in a country like Bolivia, with multiple conflicts going on simultaneously and with a government that has not for a long time demonstrated a proactive and collaborative attitude towards the donor agencies.

From the evaluation process:

This COVID-19 response evaluation has been timely, and a key learning is to not wait until the pandemic is over. The document review and interview process revealed that the most significant learning has occurred during the first few months of the COVID-19 pandemic. It has allowed harvesting and sharing this information before it gets lost!

This type of independent synthesis evaluation is important to complement information from different internal COVID-19 lessons efforts within the agencies. While a number of internal learning and review exercises regarding the COVID-19 response have now been produced or are underway within the donor agencies, an external and independent COVID-19 evaluation presents an opportunity to synthesise, bring forward and make available important cross-cutting lessons and insights to improve donors' response to other wide-ranging and devastating events.

Evaluating adaptive capacity is a central focus of the donor agencies' response to the pandemic. Since a return to a pre-COVID "normality" soon appears highly unlikely, *understanding, building, and evaluating adaptive capacity will most likely become a core challenge for the foreseeable future.*

Field staff and partners are open to share and reflect on their experiences, even in difficult situations. The evaluation team found field staff and partners eager to have their experiences reflected and "stories" heard. Interviews that were scheduled for 45 minutes in many cases extended to more than an hour. This has required *an adaptive approach to interviewing*, following the lead of the interviewees about what was on their mind and what they wanted to share. This has required adaptive, flexible, agile, and emergent interview protocols and interviewers.

Interviews in the midst of stressful circumstances can be therapeutic, and both sensitivity and empathy are needed. Expatriate and local staff at the three embassies/missions in Bolivia worked under very stressful conditions within a highly conflicted country context over a longer period of time. While Bolivia was already in

a crisis mode before the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic, the travel bans, quarantines, collapse of the health system, virtual schooling lasting for more than one year and restricted social interactions have further worsened this situation. Thus, the “human face” behind the COVID-19 response in terms of **family life and working conditions for expatriate and local staff has come through as being really important.**

10.3 RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendations for HQs:

It should be carefully assessed how differences in culture, communication and prioritisation between departments in MFAs/HQs and field offices affect development cooperation in emergency situations. The COVID-19 pandemic has clearly revealed that a “one size fits all” approach is not suitable, and that field offices need much more differentiated approaches and provision of flexible solution models. This may require that more decision-making related to development cooperation staff and operations in these situations will be delegated to field offices, following some overall HQ guidance and supervision.

A more thorough assessment of HQs “fit for fragility” preparedness should be conducted. This should include critical aspects related to: i) training of all field staff for crisis/emergency management situations; ii) differentiation and flexibility in HQs support instruments/tools to embassies based on fragility assessments; and iii) the level of experience required among embassy staff to act more independently and with increased responsibility during an emergency situation.

HQs “duty of care” procedures should be reviewed with a particular view to ensuring they properly address particular family and gender related challenges that may occur for expatriate staff during emergency situations as well as a better protection of national staff. This should include a re-examination of medical evacuation plans and coverage for expatriate staff located in duty stations like La Paz as well as attention to national staff (employed by the embassies/missions) who rely on national systems. In a crisis situation like the COVID-19, where the health system collapsed in Bolivia, there is no central mechanism in place to ensure their security and wellbeing.

HQs request for data, monitoring and situational reporting from the field during emergency situations should be more carefully based on actual needs and potential trade-offs. HQs reporting requests to the three embassies/missions in La Paz have at times been heavy, and in a context where social accountability is already a critical issue, how embassy resources for data collection and analysis are being used should be more carefully considered.

While this evaluation presents interesting experiences from three donor agencies’ COVID-19 response in Bolivia, a comparison of one donor agency’s response in multiple countries would provide real additional value. The Bolivian context has been distinctive, as it was characterised by several ongoing crises already before the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic. Thus, a comparison with donor responses in different contexts would be of high interest.

Recommendations for the three embassies/missions in La Paz:

Adaptive management principles should become fully rooted in embassy/mission routines and practices. This relates both to programming, organisation, budgeting, financial mechanisms, partner relations, work planning and personnel. While a return to a pre-COVID normality appears highly unlikely, the importance of swift and flexible processes has increased. This brings a focus on decentralised decision-making and adaptive capacity within the embassies/missions in view of the frameworks provided by HQs (structures, guidelines and procedures).

The embassies/missions should strengthen and expand their toolbox for digital and virtual communication, both internally as well as with the projects. As part of this, possibilities for introduction of new digital working methods at the embassies/missions, as well as within the projects, should be further explored. The combination of virtual and in-person programme delivery and communication practices is likely to become standard practice after the pandemic.

Gender and vulnerability aspects become even more of a concern in crisis situations. While generic tools have been developed, more contextualised gender/vulnerability analysis and assessment tools should be developed, ideally through joint donor analysis to increase efficiency. Even though many of the project interventions have had an explicit focus on gender and vulnerability aspects, the COVID-19 pandemic has brought acute aspects of vulnerability such as domestic violence.

The embassies should, to a larger extent, become or develop a hub for sharing and exchange of partner's capacities, knowledge and information during a crisis situation. While the partners in general have been heavily involved in the process of reprogramming their own projects, there has been limited space facilitated for interaction with other likeminded partners, to explore common challenges and opportunities.

The pre-COVID 19 toolbox for project monitoring should be re-designed with a view to continue and replicate new, innovative monitoring tools and instruments introduced during the pandemic. This includes, for example, virtual project visits; more extensive use of small video clips and photo material, use of drone technology and GIS etc. In many cases, the COVID-19 adjusted monitoring processes has led to wider participation of different stakeholder groups and more interactive, lively and actualised collection of data and evidence.

The preparedness and coordination mechanisms of the donor community in Bolivia should be enhanced to enable a faster and better coordinated response to crises situations in the country. In addition to existing and provisionally established thematic sub-groups under the GRUS, this could include establishment of geographical coordination groups, pooled funding mechanisms etc. (e.g. by making use of good experience from support to the 2020-2021 election process) taking into consideration a reality with a non-collaborative government and a shrinking civic space.

Specific recommendations for the three embassies/missions:**Recommendations for Swedish Embassy in La Paz:**

The **adaptive management** with a focus on responsibility, sparring and learning mechanisms, which has been present in the development section, should be further institutionalised to include the entire Embassy. At the same time **concrete initiatives to ensure the well-being of staff members after years of crises modes should be taken.**

Communication between MFA and Sida needs to be further systematised and ensured at the Embassy to avoid insecurity among staff members. Especially in times of emergencies enhanced communication is essential to avoid mixed messages. Not least since national programme officers are employed by MFA and not the development department (Sida) with whom they collaborated more closely during the pandemic.

Concrete initiatives to develop practical tools should be supported and further implemented in the Embassy. While Sida has a large toolbox developed for different purposes, practical context specific tools can offer practical solutions to support implementation in specific situations such as the pandemic and ensure e.g. gender mainstreaming also in emergency response.

Development of virtual/online platforms, trainings and mechanisms should be further explored as it offers an opportunity to develop Sida's focus on ICT, effectively reach a larger target group and at the same time take advantage of lessons learned during the pandemic.

Recommendations for Swiss Embassy in La Paz:

The Embassy should explore how conditions and possibilities for staff's home working as well as digital and virtual communication technologies (at the Embassy and within projects) could be enhanced. The nature and duration of the COVID-19 pandemic has demonstrated a strong need for introduction of more flexible and functional remote and online working practices.

The Embassy should expand its role as a hub for sharing and exchange of partner's capacities, knowledge and information. This was requested by the partners, who found that there had been limited space for interaction with other likeminded partners during the COVID-19 pandemic, to explore common challenges and opportunities.

The multi-stakeholder platforms established through SDC's project support over the last years proved to be very effective in the COVID-19 emergency situation. Thus, in a post-COVID-19 and SDC phasing-out (2024) perspective, **it will be important for the Embassy to take the necessary steps to ensure that the established platforms will be able to continue also without SDC support.** This will include identification of strategic partners who will be in position to capitalize from and further develop the platforms.

The COVID-19 reprogramming process has created opportunities for new potential partnerships and alliances, which potentials should be further explored by the Embassy. This includes e.g. the COVID-19 research projects supported by SDC (potential new partnerships in health sector) and the “Inclusive Markets” project activities related to the insurance and financial sector, including banking, where the issue of digitalisation is of particular interest.

The value-added of different innovative monitoring tools and instruments introduced during the pandemic (such as virtual monitoring visits, dynamic online monitoring platforms, more use of social media, videos, GIS technologies etc.) should be further explored with a view to continuing and further upscaling of these practices. In particular, it should be assessed how and to what extent the new tools and instruments may have facilitated interaction and participation of a larger and more diverse group of key stakeholders in monitoring processes.

Recommendations for the Canadian mission in La Paz:

The mission should aim to ensure that **communications and dialogue with partners** includes information on **all the initiatives that GAC has undertaken to respond to the crisis to avoid the perception of not being sufficiently responsive to the different crisis in the country**, e.g. political, social and environmental.

In the same vein, **avoid prolonged waiting periods for an answer to new initiatives** proposed by NGOs to prevent frustrations and perceptions of lack of responsiveness.

Continue **developing new partnerships, especially among NGOs and UN agencies** in the health and economic sectors, that could contribute to a strengthened response to current and future challenges in the country.

Continue **exploring with partners, including from the Partnerships for Innovations Branch and other donors**, opportunities to **adopt innovative tools and mechanisms** for programme implementation and monitoring, **with a view to increasing reach.**

Annex 1 – List of projects per donor

ANNEX 1 – LIST OF PROJECTS PER DONOR

#	Title of project/programme	Main implementing partner	Sector	Total budget	Start date	Completion date (est.)	Amendments (between March-Dec 2020)
GAC*							
1	Improving Living Conditions and Health in Rural and Indigenous Communities in Chuquisaca	Socodevi & Centre for International Cooperation in Health and Development (CCISD)	Economic growth, food security	CAD 11,500,000	10/2016	12/2022	No
2	Achieving Reproductive Rights in Bolivian Adolescents, Reducing Maternal and Newborn Mortality	Plan Canada International	Sexual reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR)	CAD 10,100,000	03/2018	12/2023	Yes
3	Empowering Adolescents to Prevent Unwanted Pregnancies	UNICEF / Save the Children	Sexual reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR)	CAD 9,200,000	02/2018	03/2023	yes
4	Together Against Violence, Women of Bolivia: Your Rights, Your Budget	Oxfam Quebec	Prevention of Gender-based violence	CAD 7,500,000	01/2019	01/2024	No
5	Culture of Peace and Strengthening of the Plurinational Electoral Body	UNDP	Human rights and democracy	CAD1,000,000	07/2020	06/2021	No

ANNEX 1 – LIST OF PROJECTS PER DONOR

6	Enhancing resilience of family farming of native indigenous peasant people with a gender and generational approach for COVID-19 recovery	FAO/SOCODEVI	Agriculture / food security	CAD 22,350,000 (of which \$ 2,750,000 for Bolivia)	02/2021 Developed during 2020	07/2022	No (as new project)
7	COVID-19 Response Support to Latin America and the Caribbean via PAHO (Crisis Pool)	Pan American Health Organization (PAHO)	Health	CAD 7,500,000 for the region (of which \$325,500 for Bolivia)	05/2020	03/2021	No (as new project)
8	Volunteer Cooperation 2020-2027 – Women’s Economic Empowerment	Centre for International Studies and Cooperation (CECI)	Deployment of volunteers	CAD 50,000,000 for all countries (of which \$ 7,000,000 for Bolivia)	04/2020	12/2026	No (as new project)
9	Strengthening support systems for victims of violence to prevent COVID-19 transmission among service providers in La Paz and El Alto	Samaritan’s Purse/ Blood Bank	Gender equality, GBV, COVID-19	CAD 70,000 (Canadian Fund for Local Initiatives)	07/202	04/2021	No (as new project)
10	Rights from the start	Action Canada for Sexual Health and Rights	SRHR	CAD 2,700,000	2020	2024	TBC
11	Volunteer Cooperation – Equality in Action	OXFAM-Québec	Gender equality	CAD 2,500,000	2020	2026	Yes
12	Volunteer Cooperation – Women’s Economic Empowerment	CESO	Economic Development	CAD 1,800,000	2020	2026	Yes

ANNEX 1 – LIST. OF PROJECTS. PER DONOR

13	Volunteer Cooperation – Agricultural Innovation	UPA International Development	Economic Development	CAD 500,000	2020	2026	Yes
14	IYIP Internships – Formal and Informal Education for Children and Youth	L’AMIE	Human dignity	CAD 800,000	2018	2021	Yes
15	IAYI Internships – Enhancing Indigenous Cultures	L’AMIE	Human dignity	CAD 1,000,000	2018	2022	Yes
16	IYIP Internships – Information and Communication Technology for Social Change	Alternatives	Economic Development	CAD 100,000	2018	2021	Yes
17	Forest Carbon Partnership Facility – Readiness Fund	Forest Carbon Partnership Facility (World Bank)	Environment & Climate change	CAD 800,000	2011	2022	No
18	Partnerships for Municipal Innovation in Local Economic Development	Federation of Canadian Municipalities	Economic Development	CAD 2,800,000	2016	2021	TBC
Sida							
1	UNICEF Country Programme 2018-2020	UNICEF	Human Rights (children’s rights)	SEK 79,000,000	01/2018	30/06/2022	Yes
2	Diakonia HR and Gender	Diakonia	Human rights and democracy	SEK 40,500,000	08/2017	30/03/2021	Yes
3	WWF Local Urban Development Programme	WWF	Urbanisation	SEK 24,000,000	02/2018	12/2021	Yes
4	UNIR conflict management	UNIR	Human rights and democracy	SEK 8,350,000	12/2016	30/4/2021	Yes
5	Inclusive rural markets	Swisscontact	Rural development/private sector	SEK 55,325,898	10/2017	12/2021	No

ANNEX 1 – LIST. OF PROJECTS. PER DONOR

6	National Urban Policy Bolivia 2017-2020	UN-Habitat	Urbanisation	SEK 63,000,000	12/2017	30/04/2022	Yes
7	SI Leadership for sustainable business	Swedish Institute	Private sector		05/2018		Yes
8	Masculinities and Gender equality in Bolivia	Promundo	Human rights and democracy		10/2017		Yes
9	One United Nation- Bolivia		Human rights and democracy		10/2017		No
10	CEDLA, Enhanced knowledge for action: MDPA + sustainable use of natural resources	CEDLA	Environment, natural resources	SEK 20,000,000	01/2018	22/02/2022	Yes
11	HR Ombudsman 2017-2018		Human rights and democracy		11/2017		No
12	SEI Water Programme Bolivia 2018-2021 (WATCH)	SEI	Environment, water and sanitation	SEK 45,000,000	08/2018		Yes
13	Decentralized Sanitation Models Program	Aguatuya Foundation	Environment, water and sanitation	SEK 61,300,000	03/2018	09/2021	Yes
14	UNICEF Bolivia WASH 2018-2022	UNICEF	Environment, water and sanitation	SEK 42,100,000	04/2018	30/06/2022	Yes
15	Masculinity in Energy sector	Promundo**	Human rights and democracy		09/2018		Yes
16	IDEA: Democracy, gender and youth	IDEA	Human rights and democracy	SEK 20,000,000	11/2018	28/2/2021	Yes
17	CIUDADANIA: 20 years of political culture and democracy in Bolivia	UNDP	Human rights and democracy	SEK 24,000,000	11/2018	12/2021	Yes
18	FAUTAPO 2020-23 Women's Economic Empowerment & market access	FAUTAPO	Economic development/private sector	SEK 35,000,000	01/2020	30/12/2023	Yes

ANNEX 1 – LIST. OF PROJECTS. PER DONOR

19	Solid waste management Bolivia-zero waste 2019-2022	HELVETAS	Environment	SEK 49,140,000	12/2019	30/06/2023	Yes
20	New support to the Bolivia electoral authority 2020		Human rights and democracy		12/2019		No
21	Val Revision OAS Bolivia	OAS	Human rights and democracy		11/2019		No
22	Support to Office of the UNHCR	UNHCR**	Human rights and democracy	SEK 7,050,000	03/2021	31/12/2021	Yes
23	Culture of Peace and Strengthening of the Plurinational Electoral Body	UNDP	Human rights and democracy	SEK 20,000,000	01/2020	31/10/2020	Yes
24	Risk prevention and management in Chiquitania FAO	FAO	Rural development	SEK 4,000,000	05/2020	(under negotiation to extend)	No (new)
25	Helvetas-Solid Waste-WASH COVID-19 emergency response in Bolivia	HELVETAS	Environment, water and sanitation	SEK 3,000,000	04/2020	30/04/2023	No (new)
26	Support to UN Women/Gender equality in financial systems	UN Women	Human rights and democracy		06/2020		No (new)
27	Financial Inclusion and technical assistance guarantee	PROFIN	Economic development	SEK 5,991,917	11/2020	01/04/2026	No (new)
28	Updating the Nationally Determined Contributions of Bolivia	Conservation Strategy Fund (CSF)	Environment	SEK 1,500,000	10/2020	31/12/2021 (to be further extended to 30/06/2022)	Yes
29	National River Basin Plan II 2013-2020	Ministry for Development Planning	Environment, water and sanitation	SEK 20,000,000	10/2013	01/2021	Yes
30	PROAGRO 3 Bolivia	GIZ	Rural development		07/2016	Finalised	No

ANNEX 1 – LIST. OF PROJECTS. PER DONOR

31	UNODC Institutional Transparency	UNODC	Human rights and democracy	SEK 19,000,000	05/2017	31/05//2021	Yes
32	SRHR/UNFPA 2017-2020	UNFPA**	SRHR	SEK 75,000,000	11/2017	31/12/2021	Yes
33	UNDP Indigenous People 2016-2020	UNDP	Human rights and democracy		12/2016		No
34	SIS - TA to Bolivian IBNORCA	IBNORCA	Private sector	SEK 20,000,000	12/2017	30/09/2021	No
SDC							
1	Comprehensive Water Management	HELVETAS	Water and Sanitation	CHF 3,800,000 (\$ 143,833)	01/2019	31/12/2022	No
2	Project Bioculture	Autoridad Plurinacional de la Madre Tierra (APMT)/PRO Rural	Climate Change and environment	CHF 3,300,000	04/2020	31/10/2023	No
3	Applied Climate Change Research	Universidad Mayor de San Simon and Universidad Mayor de San Andrés.	Climate Change and environment	CHF 1,800,000	11/2019	30/06/2023	No
4	Municipal Environmental Management	HELVETAS	Climate Change and environment	CHF 4,900,000	04/2019	31/03/2023	Yes
5	Promotion of Micro securities/Micro-insurance	Foundation PROFIN	Economic Development	CHF 3,070,000	11/2012	30/10/2020	No
6	Inclusive Insurances	Foundation PROFIN	Economic Development	CHF 820,000	08/2020	13/08/2022	No
7	Inclusive rural markets	Swisscontact/PROFIN	Rural development/private sector	CHF 2,852,000	01/2018	30/11/2023	No
8	Special Financial Support Programme for Micro and Small Businesses (PROMYPE)	Ministry for Productive Development	Economic Development	CHF 4,800,000	05/2020	30/11/2023	Yes

ANNEX 1 – LIST. OF PROJECTS. PER DONOR

9	Technical Professional 'Formation'	Swisscontact, FAUTAPO, CEMSE, CEPB, GIZ	Economic Development	CHF 14,000,000	06/2018	31/12/2022	No
10	Certification of Competencies in Productive Development	Ministry of Education	Economic Development	CHF 1,500,000	11/2018	31/05/2022	No
11	Dialogue and collaborative support	Solidar Suiza		CHF 4,100,000 (\$ 4,521,441)	07/2019	31/12/2023	No
12	Life without violence	Solidar Suiza	Human rights and Democracy	CHF2,250,000	06/2020	30/06/2022	No
13	Support election process	Fundación para el periodismo/Fundación Jubileo/IDEA internacional	Human rights and Democracy	CHF 500,000	03/2020	31/03/2021	No
14	Access to Justice	PIU	Human rights and Democracy	CHF 5,230,000	05/2018	30/04/2022	Yes
15	Various small projects			CHF 1,460,000	07/2017	31/12/2024	No
16	Small Project	PROCOSI		CHF 190,000 (\$ 209,525)	06/2020	31/12/2021	New Project
17	Economic Recovery COVID	UNDP	Economic Development	CHF 800,000 (\$ 882,317)	08/2020	31/12/2021	New Project
18	Promoting Social Entrepreneurship			CHF 8,986	11/2018	31/12/2023	No

* GAC has provided figures concerning Bolivia.

Annex 2 – List of all amended and new Swedish supported projects

#	Impl. Partner	Title	Agreement			Level of COVID-19 response*	Nature of COVID-19 response**
			New	Extension	Reallocation		
1	UNICEF	UNICEF Bolivia COVID-19 response plan	No	4 MSEK		H	1. Support to contain spread of virus 2. Social protection 3. Digitalisation platforms
2	UNICEF	WASH Bolivia	No	3.1 MSEK		H	1. Support to contain spread of virus 2. awareness-raising/behaviour change 3. inst. support
3	Aguatuya	Bolivian Decentralised Sanitation Models Program, support for the environmental sanitation services against COVID-19	No		Yes	H	1. Support to contain spread of virus 2. Awareness-raising/behaviour change, 3. Equipment
4	HELVETAS	Strengthening environmental sanitation services in the framework of the COVID-19 health emergency	Yes	3 MSEK (New)		H	1. Inst. Support 2. Support to contain spread of virus 3. Equipment
5	CEDLA	Enhanced Knowledge for Action: MDPA and the Sustainable Use of Natural resources	No	No cost extension	Yes	M	1. Studies/research
6	UN Habitat	National Urban Policy Bolivia 2017-2020	No		Yes	M	1. Inst. Support 2. Studies/research
7	UNIR	Prevention of tensions and conflicts in Sida's projects in Bolivia	No	No cost extension		M	1. Studies/research 2. Awareness-raising/behaviour change
8	Swisscontact	Inclusive rural markets	No		Yes	M	1. Food security/markets 2. inst. Support 3. Awareness-raising/behaviour change
9	UNFPA	Support to Sexual Reproductive and Rights in Bolivia	No	15 MSEK*		M	1. SRHR 2. Social protection
10	UNHCR	Support to UNHCR	No	Yes*		M	
11	IDEA	Democracy, Gender and Youth	No	No cost extension		L	

ANNEX 2 – LIST OF ALL AMENDED AND NEW SWEDISH SUPPORTED PROJECTS

12	UNODC	Institutional Transparency and Citizen Participation for Municipal Governance	No	No cost extension		L	
13	Fautapo	Women's Economic Empowerment & market access	No	No cost extension*		M	
14	Swedish Institute	Swedish Institute Management Programme Bolivia (SIMP)	No	No cost extension		L	
15	Swedish Institute for Standards (SIS)	Support to increased capacity in standardisation and implementation of standards in Bolivia	No	No cost extension		L	
16	WWF Bolivia	Local Urban Development Programme	No	No cost extension		L	
17	Diakonia	Support to civil society and gender	No	No cost extension		L	
18	Conservation Strategy Fund	Updating the Nationally Determined Contributions of Bolivia	No	No cost extension		L*	
19	HELVETAS	Solid waste management Bolivia-zero waste 2019-2022	No		Yes	L ²⁷	1. Support to contain spread of virus
20	UNDP	Culture of Peace and Strengthening of the Plurinational Electoral Body	No	No cost extension		L ²⁸	
21	SEI	SEI Water Programme Bolivia 2018-2021 (WATCH)	No		Yes	L	
22	FAO	Risk prevention and management in Chiquitania	No			L	
23	Ministry for Development Planning	National River Basin Plan 2013-2020	No	No cost extension		L	
24	Promundo	Masculinity in Energy sector	No	No cost extension		L	
25	Promundo	Masculinities and Gender equality in Bolivia	No	No cost extension		L	

²⁷ The Zero Waste project has amended its inception phase as a reflection of COVID-19. No emergency response is included in this project but an additional project with same actors have been approved to address these challenges.

²⁸ The project has been delayed due to pandemic. UNDP requested the Embassy to buy medical equipment but this was not approved

Annex 3 – Evaluation matrix

Evaluation Questions	Sub-Questions	Criteria	Key Issue	Judgement Criteria	Means of Verification (source/method)
Internal procedures (HQs/MFAs and embassy level)					
<i>EQ 1: To what extent has HQ/MFA leaderships, management and frameworks allowed the embassies / missions to respond and adapt adequately to COVID-19?</i>	<i>To what extent have the instructions from HQs/MFAs during COVID-19 been relevant to the respective embassies/missions in La Paz?</i>	<i>Relevance</i>	<i>Context alignment (country)</i>	<i>Extent to which instructions to the embassies/missions in La Paz have been based on context specific information from Bolivia</i>	<i>Desk review Interviews with HQs/MFAs and embassies/missions</i>
			<i>Security and crisis management</i>	<i>Extent to which the security/crisis solutions and options provided by HQs/MFAs have been adequate in view of the needs at the embassies/missions in La Paz</i>	
			<i>Gender and vulnerability</i>	<i>Extent to which instructions have included priority of gender and vulnerability aspects</i>	
			<i>Embassy consultations</i>	<i>Extent to which the embassies have been consulted and their views reflected in the instructions</i>	

Evaluation Questions	Sub-Questions	Criteria	Key Issue	Judgement Criteria	Means of Verification (source/method)
	<i>To what extent have the administrative systems - linking HQs/MFAs with embassy level - been supportive during the pandemic?</i>	<i>Effectiveness / efficiency</i>	<i>Appropriateness of monitoring and reporting systems</i>	<i>Critical data and information have been collected, analysed, and used for adaptive planning and learning</i>	<i>Desk review Interviews (HQs/MFAs, embassies)</i>
			<i>Appropriateness of response structure and communication lines</i>	<i>Feedback and learning have been regularly shared and disseminated</i>	
<i>EQ 2: To what extent has Embassy/Mission leadership and management ensured clear guidance and support of teams during the pandemic?</i>	<i>Has leadership ensured a clear strategic direction and guidance of the respective teams?</i>	<i>Effectiveness / efficiency</i>	<i>Strategic guidance</i>	<i>Extent to which team members express a clear understanding of their role and contribution</i>	<i>Desk review Interviews with embassy/mission staff</i>
	<i>How well have the embassies/missions managed their respective teams in view of the pandemic?</i>		<i>Human resource management</i>	<i>Extent to which team members' personal and family concerns have been taking into account</i>	
	<i>To what extent have the embassies/missions managed to perform their normal obligations (contribution management, reporting, strategy work) as planned during the pandemic?</i>		<i>Fulfilment of normal obligations</i>	<i>Extent to which normal working tasks have been implemented without unusual delays or postponement</i>	<i>Desk review Interviews with embassy/mission staff and project partners</i>
Programming (embassy and partner level)					
<i>EQ 3: To what extent has programming been adaptive and flexible to respond to the</i>	<i>To what extent have donors' procedures for identification and approval of projects/contributions been</i>	<i>Relevance</i>	<i>Participation and ownership of the identification process</i>	<i>Extent to which the donors' procedures for identification are ensuring local ownership and participation</i>	<i>Desk review Interviews (HQs/MFAs, embassies, Bolivian</i>

Evaluation Questions	Sub-Questions	Criteria	Key Issue	Judgement Criteria	Means of Verification (source/method)
local needs induced by the pandemic?	<i>relevant to respond to the needs caused by the pandemic?</i>		<i>Duration and flexibility of the approval process</i>	<i>Extent to which the donors' procedures for approval have been smooth and flexible</i>	<i>Government, project partners) Online survey</i>
	<i>To what extent was reprogramming relevant to local needs?</i>	<i>Relevance</i>	<i>Alignment to and use of needs assessments</i>	<i>Extent to which developed diagnosis and available local data are reflected in the reprogramming</i>	<i>Desk review Interviews (Embassies, Bolivian Government, project partners) Online survey</i>
	<i>How flexible have the donors been towards their partners during the pandemic?</i>	<i>Effectiveness</i>	<i>Flexibility</i>	<i>Extent to which it has been possible for partners to introduce changes and adjustments</i>	<i>Desk review Interviews (Embassies, project partners) Online survey</i>
EQ 4: To what extent has reprogramming balanced the response to the pandemic and other crises and needs in Bolivia?	<i>To what extent have donors' response to the crisis by reprogramming and providing additional support been relevant to local demands from authorities and other actors?</i>	<i>Relevance</i>	<i>Response to demands</i>	<i>Extent to which reprogramming is aligned with local demands</i>	<i>Desk review Interviews (Embassies, Bolivian Government, project partners) Online survey</i>
	<i>Did the donors devote sufficient attention to the pandemic-induced crisis and its consequences?</i>	<i>Effectiveness / efficiency</i>	<i>Ability to focus and direct attention on emerging issues</i>	<i>Level of resources and time allocated to attend to pandemic-related issues</i>	<i>Desk review Interviews (Embassies, Bolivian Government, Project partners)</i>

Evaluation Questions	Sub-Questions	Criteria	Key Issue	Judgement Criteria	Means of Verification (source/method)
					Online survey
	<i>Were the donors able to effectively address other priorities in Bolivia during the pandemic?</i>	<i>Effectiveness / efficiency</i>	<i>Ability to prioritise among different needs and demands</i>	<i>Extent to which support to other priority issues has been continued and adjusted in accordance to changing needs and demands during the period</i>	<i>Desk review Interviews (Embassies, Bolivian Government, project partners) Online survey</i>
EQ 5: To what extent has the donors reprogramming allowed for establishing new projects and innovation?	<i>Was new funding approved to respond to partner's funding requests related to the pandemic?</i>	<i>Relevance</i>	<i>Funding</i>	<i>Extent to which approval of partners funding requests is pandemic-related</i>	<i>Desk review</i>
	<i>Have donors been innovative in reprogramming and in monitoring projects in a context of pandemic?</i>	<i>Effectiveness</i>	<i>Innovation</i>	<i>New reprogramming and/or monitoring elements introduced</i>	<i>Desk review Interviews (Embassies, Bolivian Government, project partners) Online survey</i>
EQ 6: To what extent has reprogramming been gender and vulnerability sensitive?	<i>Have gender equality and vulnerable groups been explicitly considered as part of reprogramming in dialogue with partners?</i>	<i>Relevance/ effectiveness</i>	<i>Gender and vulnerability</i>	<i>Extent to which specific gender and vulnerability analysis and targets are included in new and COVID-19-amended interventions</i>	<i>Desk review Interviews (Embassies, project partners) Online survey</i>
Partnerships					

ANNEX 3 – EVALUATION MATRIX

Evaluation Questions	Sub-Questions	Criteria	Key Issue	Judgement Criteria	Means of Verification (source/method)
EQ 7: To what extent have the donors demonstrated responsiveness towards their partners?	<i>How reliable and responsive partners have the donors been during the pandemic?</i>	<i>Effectiveness</i>	<i>Reliability</i>	<i>Extent to which the donors have complied with agreements and promises</i>	<i>Desk review Interviews (Embassies, Bolivian Government, project partners) Online survey</i>
	<i>How concerned and involved have the donor agencies been with regard to the situation in partner organisations during the pandemic?</i>	<i>Efficiency</i>	<i>Human resource and institutional support</i>	<i>Extent of non-project related support and interaction with partner organisations</i>	
	<i>How consistent have the donors been in their work and communications during its pandemic, both with regard to their initial strategy and reprogramming decisions?</i>	<i>Effectiveness</i>	<i>Consistency in relationship</i>	<i>Frequency and level of interaction and communication with partner organisations</i>	
	<i>To what extent have gender and vulnerability been included in dialogue with partners?</i>	<i>Effectiveness</i>	<i>Gender and vulnerability</i>	<i>Extent to which instructions have included priority of gender and vulnerability aspects</i>	
EQ 8: To what extent has the donor cooperation and coordination been effective to respond to the pandemic?	<i>How has communication within the donor agencies and within the larger donor community functioned during the pandemic?</i>	<i>Effectiveness / coherence</i>	<i>Donor harmonisation</i>	<i>Extent to which joint-donor responses and initiatives have been developed</i>	<i>Desk review Interviews (Embassies, Bolivian Government)</i>

Annex 4 – List of people interviewed

	Name	Position, Institution	e-mail address	
	GAC			
	Global Affairs Canada – Field team in Bolivia (LAPAZ) and Peru (LIMA)			Status
1	Eliane Moser	Counsellor and Head of Cooperation, Office of the Embassy of Canada in Bolivia, LAPAZ	Eliane.moser@international.gc.ca	Completed 13/4/2021, 7/5/2021
2	Melissa Cardinal	First Secretary, Development, Office of the Embassy of Canada in Bolivia, LAPAZ Repatriated to Canada in March and integrated the NLA team in September	Melissa.cardinal@international.gc.ca	Completed 14/4/2021
3	Maria Loayza	Programme official, Office of the Embassy of Canada in Bolivia, LAPAZ	Maria.loayza@international.gc.ca	Completed 14/4/2021
4	Ralph Jansen	Ambassador, Peru and Bolivia, Embassy of Canada in Lima	Ralph.jansen@international.gc.ca	Completed 17/4/2021
5	Chantal Labelle	Director, Development programs in Peru and Bolivia, Embassy of Canada in Peru, LIMA	Chantal.labelle@international.gc.ca	Completed 16/4/2021
	Global Affairs Canada – HQ based staff			
6	Brett Maitland	B. Maitland since August 2020. Deputy Director, Strategic Planning, Operations and Policy Division, Latin America and the Caribbean, NDS:	Brett.maitland@international.gc.ca	Completed 20/4/2021
7	Jennifer Bloom	J. Bloom until August 2020, Deputy Director, Strategic Planning, Operations and Policy Division, Latin America and the Caribbean, NDS:		Completed 20/4/2021
8	Alexandre Guimond	Deputy Director, Inter-American Affairs, NLG	Alexandre.guimond@international.gc.ca	Completed 22/4/2021
9	Nikita Erickson-Hamel	Deputy Director, Food Security, Multilateral, MSF	Nikita.ericksonhamel@international.gc.ca	Completed 28/4/2021

ANNEX 4 – LIST OF PEOPLE INTERVIEWED

	Name	Position, Institution	e-mail address	
Contacts for Implementing partners				
10	Lourdes Montero	Oficial de Programa Justicia y Genero, Oxfam Bolivie, (Will be promoted soon to lead the organisation in Bolivia)	lourdes.montero@oxfam.org	Completed 21/4/2021
11	Julie Perrault	Chargée de programmes, Amérique latine, Oxfam Québec	Julie.Perreault@oxfam.org	Completed 22/4/2021
12	Lina Beltran	Education, UNICEF	lbeltran@unicef.org	Completed 15/4/2021
13	J Villalobos	Save the Children	jaime.villalobos@savethechildren.org	Completed 23/4/2021
14	Tatiana Romero	Plan Canada	TRomero@plancanada.ca	Completed 15/4/2021
15	Daniel Rojas	Oficial de Programa, Plan International	Daniel.Rojas@plan-international.org	Completed 22/4/2021
16	Marcelo Velasquez	Assistant Director, SOCODEVI in Bolivia	m.velasquez@socodevi.org	Completed 16/4/2021
17	Marcela Vallejos	Director, CECI Bolivia	marcelav@ceci.ca	Completed 19/4/2021
18	Dr. Alfonso Tenorio & Dr Hugo Rivera	Representative (interim) PAHO	tenorioa@paho.org	Completed 21/4/2021
19	Rosse Noda	Rep (interim) FAO	Rosse.Noda@fao.org	Completed 22/04/2021
Sida				
Relevant persons at Headquarter level related to the Embassy work in Bolivia				Status
20	Carolina Wennerholm	Head of support team, Eurolatin Department, Sida	carolina.wennerholm@sida.se	Completed 16/4/2021
21	Lisa Fredriksson	Director, Eurolatin Department, Sida	lisa.fredriksson@sida.se	Completed 20/4/2021
22	Pia Engstrand	Responsible for COVID-19	pia.engstrand@sida.se	Completed 19/4/2021
23	Helen Holm	Responsible for COVID-19		Completed 19/4/2021
Relevant management/staff from the Embassy in La Paz				
24	Guido Meruvia	Program officer	guido.meruvia.schween@gov.se	Completed 13/4/2021
25	Rebeca Borda	Program officer	rebeca.borda@gov.se	Completed 13/4/2021
26	Frida Rodhe	Program officer	frida.rodhe@gov.se	Completed 13/4/2021
27	Annika Johansson	Controller (until August, now in Turkey)	annika.a.johansson@gov.se	Completed 9/4/2021
28	Fredrik Ugglå	Head of development cooperation	Fredrik.uggla@gov.se	Completed 23/2/2021 and 7/5/2021
29	Jörgen Persson	Chargé d'affaires	jorgen.persson@gov.se	Completed 9/4/2021
Key persons from implementing/cooperating partners				
30	Sandra Nisttahusz, Sara Pauli	Swisscontact	sandra.nisttahusz@swisscontact.org	completed 21/4
31	Mirko Terrazas, Edwin Vargas	Fundacion Profin	mterrazas@fundacion-profin.org ; evargas@fundacion-profin.org	Completed 19/4/2021

ANNEX 4 – LIST OF PEOPLE INTERVIEWED

	Name	Position, Institution	e-mail address	
32	Renato Montoya	Aquatuya	rmontoya@aguatuya.org	Completed
33	Riccardo Riccardi	Helvetas	Riccardo.Riccardi@helvetas.org	Completed
34	Andreas Preisig	Fautapo	andreas.preisig@fundacionautapo.org	Completed 14/4/2021
35	Maria Elena Ubeda	UNICEF	meubeda@unicef.org	Completed 14/4/2021
	Ingrid Carolina Linares Vera	UNICEF	ilinares@unicef.org	Completed 14/4/2021
36	Alejandro Melandri	Representant for the IDB office in Bolivia	ALEJANDROME@iadb.org	Completed 7/5/2021
Relevant persons from the Bolivian Government				
37	Viviana Mariscal	Secretaria de Planificación GAM	cel. 71303659	Completed 15/4/2021
38	Victor Hugo Ortuño	Gerente Cooperativa COSMOL Montero	victorortunobarba@gmail.com	Completed 13/4/2021
39	Claudia Mendoza	Secretario Municipal Gestión Ambiental GAMLP	ronald.pereira@lapaz.bo	Completed 13/4/2021
40	Patricia Ribera	Responsable Unidad de Gestión de Riesgos, Riberalta	73108392	Completed 13/4/2021
41	Felix Rea Terán	Responsable Unidad de Gestión de Riesgos, GUAYARAMERIN	76885838	Completed 12/4/2021
42	Leida Cuellar	Responsable Unidad de Gestión de Riesgos, COBIJA	76104843	Completed 14/4/2021
Other donors				
43	Carolina Pericón	Coordinator of GRUS	gruscoordinacion@gmail.com	Completed 22/4/2021
44	Susana Sottoli	UN resident coordinator in Bolivia	maria.sottoli@un.org	Completed 5/5/2021
SDC				
Relevant persons at Headquarter level related to the Embassy work in Bolivia				Status
45	Peter Hafner	Regional Coordinator South America, Federal Department of Foreign Affairs FDFA, Directorate of Political Affairs DP, Americas Division	peter.hafner@eda.admin.ch	Completed 21/4/2021
46	Thomas Gass	Ambassador, Head of Regional Cooperation, SDC	thomas.gass@eda.admin.ch	Completed 29/4/2021
47	Diepak Elmer	Deputy Head of Department Latin America y Caribbean, SDC	diepak.elmer@eda.admin.ch	Completed 23/4/2021
48	Erika Placella	Deputy of the Global Programme Health, SDC	enrichetta.placella@eda.admin.ch	Completed 22/4/2021
49	Ruth Blaser	Security, Federal Department of Foreign Affairs FDFA, State Secretariat	ruth.blaser@eda.admin.ch	Completed 16/4/2021
Relevant management/staff from the Embassy in La Paz/Regional office in Lima				
50	Edita Vokral	Embajadora, Jefa de Misión y Jefa de Cooperación Internacional, Embassy in La Paz	edita.vokral@eda.admin.ch	Completed 16/4/2021
51	Sophie Delessert	Jefa de Misión Adjunta y Jefa de Cooperación Adjunta, Embassy in La Paz	sophie.delessert@eda.admin.ch	Completed 1/3/2021 and 8/5/2021

ANNEX 4 – LIST OF PEOPLE INTERVIEWED

	Name	Position, Institution	e-mail address	
52	Therese Baum	Jefa de Gestión (Finanzas, RRHH y Administración), Embassy in La Paz	therese.baum@eda.admin.ch	Completed 16/4/2021
53	José Luis Pereira	Oficial Nacional de Programa, Embassy in La Paz	joseluis.pereira@eda.admin.ch	Completed 13/4/2021
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ANNEX 5 – LIST OF PEOPLE TO SURVEY

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Annex 7 – Online survey

For Partners including national authorities:

Background

1. What is your gender? (man, woman, other)
2. Which embassy/donor agency is your project funded by? (Sweden/Sida, Canada/GAC, Switzerland/SDC)
3. What type of organisation are you representing? (Bolivian authority, UN partner, international civil society organisation, national civil society organisation, donor agency, other)
4. Name of organisation/institution

Programming (EQ 3) – relevance, adaptivity and flexibility

5. On a scale from 1 to 5 (where 1 = poor, 2 = adequate, 3 = good, 4 = very good, 5 = excellent, “don’t know”), **how will you overall rate the embassy’s ability to respond adequately to priority needs in Bolivia induced by the COVID-19 pandemic?**
6. On a scale from 1 to 5 (where 1 = poor, 2 = adequate, 3 = good, 4 = very good and 5 = excellent, don’t know), how will you rate the embassy’s ability to:
 - *respond quickly and adapt project activities in view of the COVID-19 pandemic?*
 - *engage local partners in discussions of needs and priorities for redesign of project activities in view of the COVID-19 pandemic?*
 - *re-allocate funds within project budgets in view of the COVID-19 pandemic?*
 - *ensure smooth and fast approval of adjusted COVID-19 project activities/budgets?*

Programming (EQ 4) – balancing with other crisis

7. On a scale from 1 to 5 (where 1 = poor, 2 = adequate, 3 = good, 4 = very good, 5 = excellent, “don’t know”), **how will you rate the embassy’s ability to maintain focus on other prevailing crisis in Bolivia at the same time as the COVID-19 pandemic?**
8. On a scale from 1 to 5 (where 1 = poor, 2 = adequate, 3 = good, 4 = very good and 5 = excellent, don’t know), how will you rate the embassy’s ability to maintain focus on the following crisis in Bolivia:
 - the political crisis
 - the economic crisis
 - the environmental crisis (incl. forest fires, water scarcity etc.)

- the social crisis (poverty, unemployment, gender-based violence and lack of social protection, etc.)

Programming (EQ 5) – Partner requests for additional funding and new initiatives

9. On a scale from 1 to 5 (where 1 = poor, 2 = adequate, 3 = good, 4 = very good, 5 = excellent, “don’t know”), **how will you rate the embassy’s willingness to engage in discussions with partners on new project initiatives in view of the COVID-19 pandemic?**
10. On a scale from 1 to 5 (where 1 = poor, 2 = adequate, 3 = good, 4 = very good and 5 = excellent, “don’t know”), how will you rate the embassy’s willingness to:
- consider COVID-19 specific project amendments for funding?
 - consider new COVID-19 specific project proposals for funding?
 - address *new opportunities* in view of the COVID-19 pandemic?
 - consider *innovative project initiatives* as a response to the COVID-19 pandemic?

Programming (EQ 6) – Gender and vulnerability

11. On a scale from 1 to 5 (where 1 = poor, 2 = adequate, 3 = good, 4 = very good and 5 = excellent, don’t know), **how will you overall rate the embassy’s attention to gender and vulnerability concerns in view of the COVID-19 pandemic?**
12. On a scale from 1 to 5 (where 1 = poor, 2 = adequate, 3 = good, 4 = very good and 5 = excellent, don’t know), how will you rate the embassy’s ability to:
- encourage partners to include specific *gender concerns* in COVID-19 responses?
 - encourage partners to include specific *poverty and vulnerability* concerns in COVID-19 responses?
 - support specific gender and vulnerability assessments due to the COVID-19 pandemic?
 - ensure that specific attention to gender and vulnerable groups is included in COVID-19 related project activities?

Partnerships (EQ 7) – donor responsiveness towards partners

13. On a scale from 1 to 5 (where 1 = poor, 2 = adequate, 3 = good, 4 = very good and 5 = excellent, don’t know), **how will you overall rate the embassy’s responsiveness to the demands and needs of your own organisation/institution during the COVID-19 pandemic?**
14. On a scale from 1 to 5 (where 1 = poor, 2 = adequate, 3 = good, 4 = very good and 5 = excellent, don’t know), how will you rate the embassy’s ability to:

- comply with agreements and promises made with your organisation/institution in relation to the COVID-19 pandemic?
- pay attention to the situation within your organisation/institution during the COVID-19 pandemic?
- focus on security and health concerns for the project staff within your organisation/institution related to the COVID-19 pandemic?
- engage and communicate on a regular basis with your organisation/institution during the COVID-19 pandemic?

Annex 8 – Terms of reference

Terms of reference for a process evaluation of three donor agencies' responses to the Covid-19 pandemic in Bolivia during the period March-October 2020:

Date: December 2020.

1. General information

1.1 Introduction

The following terms of reference refer to the performance of a process evaluation regarding the responses of Swiss (SDC), Canadian and Swedish (Sida) development cooperation to the Covid-19 pandemic in Bolivia.

1.2 Evaluation object: Intervention to be evaluated

The evaluation objects are the internal procedures of the three donor agencies, as well as on the reprogramming and expansion of their portfolios to address the consequences of the pandemic. The evaluation will also consider their respective performance as partners in terms of flexibility, support and reliability. The period to be considered is March – October 2020.

1.3 Intervention context

The Covid-19 pandemic hit Bolivia in early March 2020, and the country initially went into a very stringent lock-down period. The pandemic-induced crisis happened as Bolivia was facing multiple other challenges (political, ecological, economic) which considerably complicated the outlook.

By mid-2020, the pandemic escalated in Bolivia, and the situation was worsened by the inadequate health system in the country. In parallel, conflicts related to the political situation affected the handling of the pandemic negatively. From October 2020, the pandemic seems to have gone into a lull, although it is fully possible that Bolivia will be hit hard by a second wave of infections over the coming months.

During the time-period concerned, the Canadian embassy, Sida and SDC, each having a bilateral cooperation program in the country (the annual worth of which amount to approximately 11.5 million CAD, 187 million SEK, and 15 million CHF respectively) applied internal measures of control (primarily different forms of isolation combined with repatriation in certain cases) to ensure continuity in their work and to protect their staff from exposure, while at the same time

attempting to respond to the crisis and other priorities in the country through reprogramming and additional contributions. The process of responding to the pandemic is the focus of the current evaluation.

2. The assignment

2.1 Evaluation purpose: Intended use and intended users

The purpose of the evaluation is to generate lessons learnt and recommendations for the future work of the three donor agencies (including, possibly, their response to a second wave of infections).

The primary intended users of the evaluation are the three donor agencies and their staff in Bolivia, and it is hoped that the evaluation can provide lessons that may enhance their future responses to similar crises. At a broader level, these Bolivian case-studies may serve to generate lessons and discussions in the global donor community, particularly within the Covid-19 Global Evaluation Coalition.

The evaluation is to be designed, conducted and reported to meet the needs of the intended users and tenderers shall elaborate in the tender how this will be ensured during the evaluation process. Other stakeholders that should be kept informed about the evaluation include the counterparts of the three agencies, their respective headquarters, and embassies in La Paz.

During the inception phase, the evaluator and the users will agree on who will be responsible for keeping the various stakeholders informed about the evaluation.

2.2 Evaluation scope

The evaluation scope is limited to the actions of the three agencies during the period March – October 2020.

If needed, the scope of the evaluation may be further elaborated by the evaluator in the inception report.

2.3 Evaluation objective: Criteria and questions

The evaluation questions are:

Concerning the donors' internal procedures:

- Views on local relevance of instructions from HQ:s and MFA:s.
- Views on functionality of agencies' and their respective embassies' administrative systems during the pandemic.
- To what extent had donors' procedures for identification and approval of contributions been relevant to respond to the needs caused by the pandemic?
- Views on leadership in terms of strategic direction of the team during the pandemic.

- Views on of the management of the respective teams during the pandemic.
- To what extent have the donors managed to perform their normal obligations (contribution management, reporting, strategy work) as planned during the pandemic?

Concerning the donors' response:

- Did the donors' devote sufficient attention to the pandemic-induced crisis and its consequences?
- Were the donors' able to effectively address other priorities in Bolivia during the pandemic?

Concerning the donors' performance as funders and partners during the pandemic:

- Was new funding approved to respond to partner's funding requests related to the pandemic?
- To what extent have donors' responses to the crisis by reprogramming and providing additional support been relevant to local demands from authorities and other actors?
- To what extent was this reprogramming relevant to local needs?
- Have donors been innovative in reprogramming and in monitoring projects in a context of pandemic?
- How flexible have the donors been towards their partners during the pandemic?
- How reliable and responsive partners have the donors been during the pandemic?
- How consistent have the donors been in their work and communications during its pandemic, both with regard to their initial strategy and reprogramming decisions?
- How has communication within the donor agencies and within the larger donor community functioned during the pandemic?
- How concerned and involved have the donor agencies been with regard to the situation in partner organisations during the pandemic?

Recommendations:

- For all of the above questions, the evaluators are supposed to provide recommendations on how the donors' work could be enhanced if a similar situation occurs in the future (i.e., during a possible second wave of the pandemic).

Questions are expected to be developed in the tender by the tenderer and further refined during the inception phase of the evaluation.

2.4 Evaluation approach and methods

The evaluators are supposed to interview staff members of each donor agency in Bolivia, along with other relevant embassy staff, and representatives from their respective HQ:s. Interviews should also be conducted with representatives from all

of the three donors' direct counterparts (both public, international and non-governmental) in Bolivia, including implementing partners when applicable.

Documents/records of communication between the donors' and their counterparts can be used to corroborate interview accounts. The donors will supply accounts of reorientations/reprogramming/additional contributions approved during the pandemic, as well as any other document putting into perspective the lessons learnt at this stage, to be used for the same purpose.

Interviews for the evaluation can be performed either in person or digitally.

The evaluation is expected to be undertaken in a comparative fashion, allowing for the juxtaposition of similarities and differences between the three donor agencies. Conclusions and recommendations from the evaluation can both be presented in a joint fashion when they apply to all three countries involved, or be directed towards individual donor agencies when applicable.

It is expected that the evaluator describes and justifies an appropriate evaluation approach/methodology and methods for data collection in the tender. The evaluation design and methods for data collection and analysis are expected to be fully developed and presented in the inception report. Given the situation with Covid-19, innovative and flexible approaches/methodologies and methods for remote data collection should be suggested when appropriate and the risk of doing harm managed.

The evaluator is to suggest an approach/methodology that provides credible answers (evidence) to the evaluation questions. Limitations to the chosen approach/methodology and methods shall be made explicit by the evaluator and the consequences of these limitations discussed in the tender. The evaluator shall to the extent possible present mitigation measures to address them.

A *gender-responsive* approach/methodology, methods, tools and data analysis techniques should be used.²⁹

The evaluation should be *utilization-focused*, which means the evaluator should facilitate the *entire evaluation process* with careful consideration of how everything that is done will affect the use of the evaluation. It is therefore expected that the evaluators, in their tender, present i) how intended users are to participate in and contribute to the evaluation process and ii) methodology and methods for data collection that create space for reflection, discussion and learning between the intended users of the evaluation.

In cases where sensitive or confidential issues are to be addressed in the evaluation, evaluators should ensure an evaluation design that do not put informants and stakeholders at risk during the data collection phase or the dissemination phase.

²⁹ See for example UNEG United Nations Evaluation Group (2014) Integrating Human Rights and Gender Equality in Evaluations <http://uneval.org/document/detail/1616>

2.5 Organisation of evaluation management

This evaluation is commissioned by the Embassy of Sweden in La Paz. The intended users are the Canadian, Swiss and Swedish donor cooperation agencies in Bolivia. The intended users of the evaluation form a steering group, which has contributed to and agreed on the ToR for this evaluation. The steering group is a decision-making body. It will approve the inception report and the final report of the evaluation. The steering group will participate in the start-up meeting of the evaluation, as well as in the debriefing/validation workshop where preliminary findings and conclusions are discussed.

2.6 Evaluation quality

The evaluation shall conform to OECD/DAC's Quality Standards for Development Evaluation³⁰ and use the OECD/DAC Guidance for Evaluating Humanitarian Assistance in Complex Emergencies³¹. When applicable, the evaluators shall use the Sida OECD/DAC Glossary of Key Terms in Evaluation³² and the OECD/DAC Better Criteria for Better Evaluation³³. The evaluators shall specify how quality assurance will be handled by them during the evaluation process.

2.7 Time schedule and deliverables

The evaluation shall be carried out during January and February of 2021. The timing of any field visits, surveys and interviews need to be settled by the evaluator in dialogue with the main stakeholders during the inception phase.

The table below lists key deliverables for the evaluation process. Alternative deadlines for deliverables may be suggested by the consultant and negotiated during the inception phase.

Deliverables	Participants	Deadlines
1. Start-up meeting	CH, CA, SE	Mid-January 2021.
2. Inception report	Evaluators	January 2021.
3. Inception meeting	CA, CH, SE	January 2021.
4. Data collection, analysis, report writing and quality assurance	Evaluators	January-February 2021.
5. Debriefing/validation workshop (meeting)	CA, CH, SE	Optional, tentative.
6. Draft evaluation report	Evaluators	Tentative February 22.
7. Comments from intended users to evaluators	CA, CH, SE	Tentative March 1.
8. Final evaluation report	Evaluators	March 5, 2021.

³⁰ OECD/DAC (2010) Quality Standards for Development Evaluation.

³¹ OECD/DAC (1999) Guidance for Evaluating Humanitarian Assistance in Complex Emergencies.

³² Sida OECD/DAC (2014) Glossary of Key Terms in Evaluation and Results Based Management.

³³ OECD/DAC (2019) Better Criteria for Better Evaluation: Revised Evaluation Criteria Definitions and Principles for Use.

9. Seminar/presentation	Stake-holders	Tentative March 2021.
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The consultants should present an inception report informing on their intended interviewees, questionnaires, and approach. *including how a utilization-focused and gender-responsive approach will be ensured.* This report should be approved by all three donor agencies involved.

A draft report should be presented no later than February 22, 2021. After receiving comments from the donors, the consultants will have another week to submit the final report.

Prior to submitting the final report, the consultants' should liaise with the Covid-19 Global Evaluation Coalition in order to ascertain whether there are relevant findings from other, similar evaluations to which reference could be made in the final report.

The final report should be written in English with a summary in Spanish, and be professionally proof read. The final report should have clear structure. The report shall clearly and in detail describe the evaluation approach/methodology and methods for data collection and analysis and make a clear distinction between the two. The gender-responsive approach shall be described and reflected in the findings, conclusions and recommendations along with other identified and relevant crosscutting issues. Limitations to the methodology and methods and the consequences of these limitations for findings and conclusions shall be described.

Evaluation findings shall flow logically from the data, showing a clear line of evidence to support the conclusions. Conclusions should be substantiated by findings and analysis. Evaluation questions shall be clearly stated and answered in the executive summary and in the conclusions. Recommendations and lessons learned should flow logically from conclusions and be specific, directed to relevant intended users and categorised as a short-term, medium-term and long-term.

The report should be no more than 35 pages, excluding annexes. If the methods section is extensive, it could be placed in an annex to the report. Annexes shall always include the Terms of Reference. Lists of key informants/interviewees shall only include personal data if deemed relevant (i.e. when it is contributing to the credibility of the evaluation) based on a case-based assessment by the evaluator and the commissioning unit/embassy. The inclusion of personal data in the report must always be based on a written consent.

The evaluator shall adhere to the Sida OECD/DAC Glossary of Key Terms in Evaluation, when relevant.³⁴

The evaluator shall, upon approval of the final report, insert the report into Sida's template for decentralised evaluations (see Annex C) and submit it to Nordic

³⁴ Sida OECD/DAC (2014) Glossary of Key Terms in Evaluation and Results Based Management.

Morning (in pdf-format) for publication and release in the Sida publication database, unless the three donor agencies agree on another format of publication.

2.8 Evaluation team qualification

In addition to the qualifications already stated in the framework agreement for evaluation services, the evaluation team shall include the following competencies: Knowledge of the working practices of different donor agencies; Bolivian context, Spanish.

A CV for each team member shall be included in the call-off response. It should contain a full description of relevant qualifications and professional work experience.

The use of local or regional evaluation consultants is welcomed.

The evaluators must be independent from the evaluation object and evaluated activities, and have no stake in the outcome of the evaluation.

Please note that in the tender, the tenderers must propose a team leader that takes part in the evaluation by at least thirty per cent of the total evaluation team time including core team members, specialists and all support functions, but excluding time for the quality assurance expert.

2.9 Financial and human resources

The maximum budget amount available for the evaluation is 450.000 SEK. Invoicing and payment shall be managed according to the following: 50 per cent after the approval of the inception report, 50 per cent after the approval of the final report.

The contact person at Sida/Swedish Embassy is Fredrik Uggla, head of development cooperation, Embassy of Sweden in La Paz . The contact person should be consulted if any problems arise during the evaluation process.

Relevant documentation will be provided by each of the participating donors.

Contact details to intended users (cooperation partners, Swedish Embassies, other donors etc.) will be provided by each of the participating donors.

The evaluator will be required to arrange the logistics including any necessary security arrangements.



Process evaluation of three donor agencies' responses to the COVID-19 pandemic in Bolivia during the period March–December 2020

This process evaluation concerns the response of three donor agencies (the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida), the Swiss Development Cooperation (SDC), and the Global Affairs Canada (GAC)) to the COVID-19 pandemic in Bolivia. The evaluation assesses in a comparative manner how well the three agencies have responded to the COVID-19 pandemic and lessons are drawn for future crises. Focus is on internal procedures within the agencies as well as on the reprogramming process. It is concluded that all three donor agencies have demonstrated a strong responsiveness towards project partners in Bolivia and that decentralised decision-making and adaptive capacity have been critical assets. It is recommended that more thorough assessments of headquarters' "fit for fragility" preparedness are conducted, and that headquarters' "duty of care" procedures are reviewed to address critical family issues and protection of national staff. Embassies are recommended to expand their virtual toolbox for communication and monitoring and to serve as a hub for exchange among partner's during crises. More contextualised gender and vulnerability assessment tools should also be developed.

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