

# An Analysis of Best and Worst Practices in Aid Projects

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## Abstract

The main goal for Sida, The Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency, is to “contribute to making it possible for poor people to improve their living conditions”. Sida is funded by Swedish tax payers and the budget for aid projects in 2008 are 28 billion Swedish kronor (approx 2, 9 billion Euro). The effectiveness of these investments are of interest for donors as well as receivers. Jan Mosander’s recently published book “*Pengarna som försvann – Missbruk av det svenska biståndet*” [eng transl “The money that vanished – abuse of the Swedish aid”] started a national debate on these issues.

This paper discusses some of the worst practices identified by Mosander and compares them with other case studies in order to identify important factors for quality assurance in ICT4D projects. While worst practices teach us what to avoid and carefully monitor, best practices teach us good models and what to emphasize in order to be successful.

The main objective is to construct a set of guidelines that could be of use in planning and implementation of projects in developing regions, based on an analysis of selected cases. The investigated cases have been implemented in Latvia, Mozambique, Sri Lanka, Uganda and Vietnam. In three cases field studies with direct observations and interviews have been conducted by the authors.

Findings of importance for a set of guidelines are discussed and compiled to a checklist where every item is crucial. The following aspects are considered as essential for a successful ICT4D project initiation and survival: 1) The bottom up perspective, 2) An in depth specialized pre-study, 3) Strong partner commitment, 4) A local and ICT skilled coordinator, 5) Communication strategy, 6) Iterative monitoring, 7) Openness and flexibility to positive side effects and creative adaptations, and 8) A realistic sustainability plan.

**Keywords:** aid effectiveness, ICT4D, quality assurance, projects in developing regions,