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Dear coordinators and supervisors in Sida's bilateral programmes,

First of all let me thank you for all the efforts and engagement that you provide in the programs for capacity building in the partnership.

As you probably are aware of, there have been considerable changes to the amount of available funds for the bilateral research programmes. The Swedish government in its 2023 letter of appropriation to Sida has decided on substantive cuts in the budget for development cooperation. The budget for research cooperation within development cooperation is very affected. This decision is part of the government's plan to restructure Swedish foreign aid, including an increased focus on support to Ukraine and humanitarian aid. We are normally able to cushion fluctuations between years, but this cut is much larger than usual and will affect all partnerships.

The Unit for Research Cooperation in dialogue with the Sida senior management have assessed and analysed how adjustments can be made to minimize the consequences of the reduced budget. Guided by the appropriation to the whole of Sida we are working under the assumption that the reduction does not only affect the budget for 2023, but also indicates the appropriation for 2024 and 2025. This means that long-term adjustments to the programmes have to be made.

We are highly aware that reduced budgets will have substantial consequences for the bilateral programmes and that considerable adjustments are required.

In dialogue with the Embassies that handle the programmes we have established guiding principles to assist when adjustments to the programmes are made. Importantly, support to PhD students is prioritised to allow for students already enrolled in the bilateral programmes to complete their studies. Capacity strengthening activities that are central to the sustainability of the research environment should also be prioritised. In some cases, the possibility that the partner university covers costs like tuition fees for masters and national PhD-students might be explored (in programmes where this is included in the budget). These guiding principles are general. Decisions on how they are best applied in the different programmes are best done by the research

advisor in dialogue with the partner university, as you are the ones informed about the specifics of the programme.

Unfortunately, we do foresee that these reductions in our budget can have implications also for the level of our long-term engagement. We propose that we explore how this will play out in close dialogue between all parties engaged.

It is our intention to communicate the consequences of this drastic reduction to decision makers, with the hope that there might be increased funding to research cooperation in the future. In the mean-time, we will strive to make as effective use of the available resources as possible.

We would like to extend our gratitude to all of you who are working so hard to contribute to and deliver results within the bilateral programmes.

Kind regards,



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