

## A Human Rights Based Approach to Market development - Summary

There can be strong synergies between – on the one hand - the objectives, processes and methods relating to Sida’s approach to market development, and – on the other – a human rights based approach. Both emphasise empowerment of women and men living in poverty, removal of barriers and discriminatory systems and practices, and accountability of people in power.

Applying a human rights based approach to initiatives related to market development will also help staff to understand the responsibilities of different actors in the public sector, private sector and civil society. The questions below are intended to assist in the preparation, assessment and monitoring of market development interventions and ensure that human rights are enhanced, respected and protected both in results and processes.

A human rights based approach takes a starting point in **international human rights commitments and standards**. Key questions to discuss when assessing support to market development initiatives are:

- Has an analysis been made of the intervention in relation to expected human rights improvements for women and men living in poverty e.g. economic and social rights, land rights, labour rights, fair trade policies etc.?
- Does the analysis include identification of existing obstacles and underlying causes of lack of access to rights?
- Has an analysis been made of the possible risks of human rights violations?

An important element in a human rights based approach is the focus on **empowerment and capacity development**. Key issues to consider are:

- Is the intervention based on a analysis of how the current political economy and power relations may affect its implementation and impact?
- What are the major capacity gaps in terms of government performance (regulations, systems, monitoring mechanisms)?
- What are the major obstacles experienced by poor and marginalised persons in their access to markets and economic empowerment (access to information, skills, services, land, capital, time, transport, free movement, negotiation skills etc.)?

The questions below, related to the four HRBA principles, may also help to prepare, assess and monitor initiatives to ensure that human rights are enhanced and respected both in results and processes.

<p><b>Participation</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Are effective platforms for public-private dialogue in place?</li> <li>• Do these platforms give space to representatives of informal actors to raise their voice?</li> <li>• Has support to capacity development of associations which represent informal actors been considered?</li> </ul>	<p><b>Transparency</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Have effective communication strategies been put in place, which specifically consider accessibility of unbiased information for poor and marginalised groups?</li> <li>• Have opportunities been considered to enhance openness and transparency by providing support to local monitoring mechanisms, like civil society monitoring?</li> </ul>
<p><b>Accountability</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Have assessments been made of the capacity of agencies involved in business environment reforms to deal with challenges related to formalisation?</li> <li>• Are complaints mechanisms in place through which stakeholders affected by reforms and/or projects may challenge decisions or actions that affect them negatively?</li> <li>• Could human rights perspectives be promoted through contracts with market facilitators or in criteria for selection of firms applying for grants from competitive so called “challenge funds”?</li> <li>• Does the intervention build capacity and monitor adherence of national and local authorities, investors and businesses to legal and voluntary human rights instruments and agreements?</li> </ul>	<p><b>Non-discrimination</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Is the intervention based on an analysis of the causes of exclusion from markets of marginalised groups (women, ethnic minorities, people with disabilities etc.)?</li> <li>• Are actions taken to address discriminatory policies, laws, regulations, practises and other power imbalances that exclude poor women and men from markets?</li> <li>• Have targeted support to excluded groups of women and men been considered (e.g. persons with disabilities, minorities, women)?</li> <li>• Are measures taken to make information and opportunities accessible to marginalised groups?</li> </ul>

To learn more on a human rights based approach to market development interventions, read the full thematic area brief.