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Appendix A

The new model for FBA's international research working groups from 2023

Objectives and guidance

FBA's international research working groups fulfil two related objectives:

- 1) The promotion of research in FBA's areas of expertise
- 2) The facilitation of research use, both in FBA's core activities and by the agency's partners.

FBA's research promotion mandate is guided by the agency's directives. Its mandate is broadly formulated, the main guiding principle being that research should be aimed at the effective implementation of international peace interventions.¹ FBA may guide the priorities itself within this flexible framework. As discussed below, FBA has decided to also use the thematic and geographic mandates fulfilled by the agency in its core activities as a starting point for its research-promotion work.

With regard to the mandate to facilitate the use of research, the government states in the draft budget for 2023 that research can make a significant contribution to the development of evidence-based and effective aid interventions.² The guidelines for Swedish development cooperation and humanitarian aid strategies also state that analysis, together with learning and experience feedback, should be the basis for every step in the strategy process.³

In line with these guiding principles, and following the organisational changes at FBA in 2020, it was concluded that the agency is a knowledge-based organisation that needs to promote the integration of research in its activities still further. To realise this vision, the agency's Unit for Research and Development was given an enhanced mandate. This means an increased focus on assisting employees of the agency's core activity with research use, for example in connection with the fulfilment of the agency's bilateral and regional strategy mandate. This more ambitious

¹ Section 2(3) of regulation (2020:767) issuing directives for the Folke Bernadotte Academy.

² Draft budget for 2023. Bill 2022/23:1, Spending area 7, page 41.

³ *Riktlinjer för strategier inom svenskt utvecklingssamarbete och humanitärt bistånd* (Guidelines for Swedish development cooperation and humanitarian aid strategies). Appendix to the government decision of 21/12/2017 (UD2017/21053/IU).

research use objective for FBA's core activities is an important component of the agency's results-based approach and will make it easier for FBA's employees to communicate relevant research results to its partners.⁴ Direct contact with researchers is key in order to ensure that FBA's employees use research in their work. The new model for FBA's international research working groups is therefore a key component in the implementation of the research programme's mandate to facilitate research use.

The new model

Formation

FBA's international research working groups are formed on the basis of the agency's mandate from the Swedish government. The number of groups and their geographic and thematic priorities will be modified as the agency's mandate evolves. For example, thematic programmes and geographic project groups may have research working groups associated with them. Additional research working groups may also be set up if the work so requires, focusing for instance on cross-cutting issues such as climate security. The number and priorities of the research working groups are established in an agency-wide preparation document before each call for members (see below). The number of researchers in each working group depends on the number required by the work and the standard of the applications. According to the guidelines, there should be three researchers per group, but this figure may vary. In order to promote broad-based research, stimulate the exchanging of ideas, and give employees of FBA's core operations access to different types of knowledge, FBA aims to ensure diversity in group members. This includes diversity in terms of academic seniority, the researchers' methodological and epistemological approaches, and their gender and geographic origin. The priorities and scope of FBA's research-promotion work depend on the steering of the agency and are determined in connection with the annual planning of activities.

Function

The international research working groups function as a bridge between the world of research and FBA. The model makes it easy for FBA's employees to contact and collaborate extensively with researchers and, at the same time, offers researchers the opportunity to work more closely with practitioners focusing on issues of thematic and geographical relevance. FBA's Unit for Research and Development has the overall responsibility for the research working groups, but the employees of the agency's core operations are encouraged to have closer and continuous contact with relevant research working group members to benefit from the researchers' expertise to the greatest extent possible.

⁴ Appendix B *Organisationsstruktur för FBA med ansvarsbeskrivningar och dimensionering* (FBA's organisational structure with descriptions of responsibilities and sizing), September 2020, page 5 [18/10/2022]; *GD:s vägval – beslutsunderlag* (Director General's policy brief – decision document), Ref. No 19-00724, 16 September 2020, page 9 and page 15.

The benefits offered by FBA to members

FBA offers members of its international research working groups a unique platform for scientific exchange. The groups bring together an informed circle of academics who all conduct empirical research connected with FBA's areas of expertise. By regularly inviting them to scientific seminars, FBA offers members the opportunity to present and get feedback on ongoing research, and to take part in other researchers' work. FBA also offers members a unique chance to apply for research grants for empirical research. In addition, members may be invited to join a pool of approved suppliers through which they may be offered more long-term, fee-paying consultancy work for FBA. Furthermore, the agency can offer members the opportunity to publish research in FBA Research Briefs, whose target group consists of decision-makers and practitioners. The publications are peer-reviewed before they are published.⁵ The members of FBA's international research working groups are not employed by FBA and do not receive any remuneration for being members.

FBA's expectations of members

FBA expects all members to participate actively in the research working groups. This means collaborating with other members and being available to contribute to the use of research in FBA's core activities. This involves giving research presentations, for example at internal FBA meetings or research policy discussions and being available to advise FBA. Among other things, a member may be asked for advice prior to a policy brief for the activity, before a visit to a partner country, or to recommend additional research contacts. The scope of the tasks performed by members varies over time, depending on members' other commitments and the state of progress of FBA's work.

Calls for members

Membership of FBA's research working groups lasts for four years. FBA launches a call for new members every fourth year. Before every call for members the specific number of research working groups and their focus is determined based on the activity's needs. The call for members is deliberated within FBA and presented to the Director General. If the need for additional research working groups arises in FBA's core activity outside the ordinary call for members cycle, the agency may also organise supplementary calls for members. These are also prepared as above. The four-year membership period begins on the membership start date. Researchers apply by sending in their CVs, lists of publications, and a cover letter in which they state the research working group that they are interested in and how they intend to contribute to FBA's activities. Applicants are chosen by FBA's Unit for Research and Development, which consults relevant colleagues within FBA's core operations before the final selection of members is made. Applications are assessed based on the applicants' profiles and scientific qualifications, and on the research's relevance to FBA's activities. At the end of the membership period, existing members are able to apply, in open competition with other researchers, to become members again.

⁵ Peer reviews are conducted by FBA employees with research training and other members of research working groups.