

Strategy for Sweden's global development cooperation in the areas of environmental sustainability, sustainable climate and oceans, and sustainable use of natural resources 2018–2022

1. Direction

The objective of Swedish international development cooperation is to create opportunities for better living conditions for people living in poverty and under oppression. The starting point is the policy framework for Swedish development cooperation and humanitarian assistance, as well as the principles of aid effectiveness and effective development cooperation. Development cooperation shall contribute towards implementing the 2030 Agenda, the Addis Ababa Action Agenda and the Paris Agreement on climate change.

The purpose of Swedish development cooperation with a focus on environmental sustainability, sustainable climate and oceans, and sustainable use of natural resources within the remit of this strategy is to contribute to normative, global policy and methods development and to strengthen the capacity of organisations, institutions, networks and other relevant actors.

The strategy is to particularly draw on the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) of the 2030 Agenda on clean water and sanitation (SDG 6), affordable and clean energy (SDG 7), sustainable cities and communities (SDG 11), responsible consumption and production (SDG 12), climate action (SDG 13), life below water (SDG 14), and life on land (SDG 15), and contribute towards attaining these within the remit of operations.

The strategy is to cover the period 2018–2022 with a total budget of SEK 6,500 million.¹

Sida's operations are to contribute towards the following goals:

Climate-resilient sustainable development

- Preventing climate change and reducing emissions of greenhouse gases and air pollutants.
- Reduced vulnerability for people living in poverty and increased resilience to handle climate change and natural disasters.
- Sustainable energy systems based on renewable energy.

¹ Interventions within the remit of this strategy will be funded in line with the conditions for appropriation I:I Development cooperation, budget line 34 under expenditure area 7 in the appropriation directions for the Swedish Development Cooperation Agency (Sida) for the respective financial year.

Environmentally sustainable development and sustainable use of natural resources

- Stronger protection and restoration, and sustainable management and use of land-based ecosystems, biodiversity and species, natural resources, including agriculture and forestry, and ecosystem services.
- Increased access to sustainable renewable energy at an affordable price for people living in poverty.
- Environmentally sustainable cities and communities.
- Greater access to basic services and housing in urban areas for people living in poverty.
- Sustainable production and consumption patterns, including preventive chemical controls and waste management.

Sustainable oceans and water resources

- Stronger protection and restoration, and sustainable management and use of marine, coastal and freshwater ecosystems, biodiversity, natural resources and ecosystem services.
- Cleaner water and oceans, reduced emissions of pollutants and reduced littering.

2. Context

Climate change is the defining issue of our time and has serious consequences for ecosystems, natural resources, marine environments, food production, access to water and health, and brings greater risks of weather-related natural disasters. People living in poverty and without a social safety net are particularly vulnerable, especially women and girls. Climate change also has an impact on human security and constitutes a new type of security threat. A large proportion of greenhouse gas emissions in the atmosphere come from the extraction, transformation and use of fossil energy, but also from unsustainable management and over-exploitation of ecosystems. Climate impact must be confined to create preconditions to combat poverty and long-term sustainable development, but the transition to fossil-free societies also brings many positive opportunities such as greater gender equality and the creation of new jobs. There is a great need to adapt to ongoing and future climate change, especially to build resilience in least developed countries, small island nations and the most vulnerable population groups. There are also major opportunities for synergies between climate adaptation, sustainable use of natural resources and disaster risk reduction. Climate

adaptation can also reduce vulnerability and increase resilience to other types of natural disaster, thus contributing to implementing the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction.

A large proportion of the world's population still lives without access to electricity, and many people are, for example, dependent on wood and traditional biomass for cooking and kerosene for lighting. This creates major environmental and health problems, especially for women and children who are particularly exposed in their homes. Greater access to sustainable and modern energy services is key to combat poverty, and this can be achieved, for example, by combining greater expansion of sustainable renewable energy with strategic energy efficiency in sustainable energy systems.

Social and economic development depends on sustainable management of our planet's natural resources. Biodiversity is a vital prerequisite for the earth's life support system which our current and future welfare depend upon. Long-term sustainable development, management and use of natural resources and ecosystem services are crucial for people being able to overcome poverty. This is particularly important for women and girls, and local communities and indigenous populations, which are also important actors to safeguard sustainable development.

Transition to sustainable consumption and production of goods and services is necessary to reduce the negative impact on climate and the environment and human health. Efficient and toxin-free resource cycles are important starting points. Free and fair trade can contribute to creating more sustainable production and consumption patterns. Analyses based on a lifecycle perspective are important to highlight the way in which people who live in poverty are affected by chemicals, waste and other environmental impact and to be able to propose relevant measures. Food waste in different parts of the chain of production, sales and consumption has a major impact on the environment and climate.

Extensive urbanisation is creating major changes across the world. More than half of the world's population already lives in urban areas. Poverty, weak institutions, the lack of or insufficient social security systems and insufficient planning capacity lead to the emergence and growth of slums. These have major deficiencies in terms of waste and sewage management as well as recycling, air quality, access to housing, transport and basic services for the individuals who live in them, also resulting in major negative consequences for the environment and people's health both in and outside the cities. Urbanisation strategies must take into account the interaction between urban and rural areas.

Water is essential for all living things on earth, and thus is also fundamental to human health and wellbeing. Long-term sustainable use of water, with functioning ecosystems and ecosystem services which purify and buffer access to water, demands integrated and transparent water management within and between countries. Cross-border collaboration on water can also contribute to preventing conflicts.

Protection, ecosystem-based planning, management and restoration of freshwater, coastal and marine areas, and marine resources are essential to reduce poverty, preserve biodiversity and fish stocks, and to strengthen ocean resilience against climate change and acidification. Ecosystem-based management contributes towards a sustainable blue economy. Marine-based industries need to be founded on economic, social and environmental sustainability. Pollution, including marine litter and microplastics, is an additional challenge that shows the importance of working with an integrated source-to-sea approach. The development of sustainable management of the oceans needs to take into account regional circumstances as well as sustainability in terms of allocation of and access to natural resources. The impact of climate change on the sea and the climate benefit of marine environment measures need to be taken into account.

In many parts of the world, a lack of institutional capacity and education pose fundamental obstacles to the promotion of environmental sustainability and sustainable use of natural resources. Unsustainable exploitation of the environment often leads to violations of human rights. At the same time, the scope and opportunities to democratically influence decisions, laws, rules and other agreements that affect ecosystems, natural resources, etc. are shrinking in many countries. Greater access to information, greater participation in decision-making processes, access to justice and transparency promote environmental sustainability and can contribute to preventing conflict.

3. Operations

Sweden's development cooperation shall be founded on and characterised by a rights perspective and the perspective of poor people on development. The rights perspective means that human rights and democracy must be seen as fundamental for development. This approach involves making individuals and groups facing discrimination, exclusion and marginalisation visible prior to each intervention. This ensures that all people are able to enjoy their rights irrespective of sex, age, disability, ethnic origin, religion and other belief, sexual orientation, transsexual identity or expression. Poor people's perspective on development means that the situation, needs, conditions and priorities of poor women, men and children must be the starting point for combating poverty and for promoting fair and sustainable development.

Swedish development cooperation shall be economically, socially and environmentally sustainable and gender equal. The foundation for development cooperation is a holistic approach to the challenges, needs and circumstances of people and communities. The key principle is that economic, social and environmental conditions and processes must be understood and addressed in an integrated context. Gender equality, empowering women and girls and the rights of women and girls are a goal in their own right, as well as a condition and a means of achieving sustainable global development. Violence and armed conflict are one of the greatest obstacles to economic and social development, and development cooperation is an important element in conflict prevention. An environmental and climate perspective, a

gender equality perspective and a conflict perspective must therefore be systematically integrated in Swedish development cooperation.

Operations are to seek to be integrated and contribute towards several goals simultaneously. Global added value is to be prioritised, but operations focused on a single region may also occur. Sweden must particularly stand up for issues that are not sufficiently highlighted by other actors in international cooperation. The internationally agreed principles on aid and development effectiveness must be applied.

By contributing towards the goals of the strategy, operations can support low and middle-income countries' allegiance to and implementation of commitments under international environmental conventions and environmental agreements. Greater knowledge, access to information, dialogue, and participation that promote equality and gender equality are cross-cutting themes throughout, contributing towards the development of global policy and methods as well as capacity building.

Operations linked to energy shall increase access to renewable energy and promote energy efficiency, thus contributing to the phase-out of fossil fuels. Operations that promote the phase-out of environmentally harmful subsidies can also be included. Operations linked to sustainable cities can include sustainable, resilient infrastructure. Greater access to basic services must contribute to reduced environmental impact. Biodiversity concerns need to be integrated within the relevant sectors. Operations should take into account the fact that sustainable cultivation and conservation of land and forests and sustainable land use are also important from a climate perspective and in terms of contributing towards reduced poverty and greater food security. Operations with a link to sustainable production and consumption should be based on a lifecycle perspective, the precautionary principle and the polluter pays principle. Operations with a focus on sustainable marine and water resources shall apply a resource-efficiency, water cycle and source-to-sea perspective.

The focus of operations serves as the starting point in selecting partners and forms of partnership. Sida shall use the partners and forms of partnership that most effectively contribute towards implementing the strategy and long-term sustainable results. Partners should work globally, while at the same time need to have a solid foundation in a regional and country context. An innovative and flexible approach should be applied, including the use of innovative forms of financing and new technical solutions, as well as mobilising additional financial resources. Collaboration, partnership and communication with a breadth of actors – supranational, international, public and non-governmental – must be sought in implementation. The opportunity for the Swedish resource base, e.g. agencies, local government, universities and higher education institutions with experience and skills in different social structures, to contribute to implementation should be taken into account.

Synergies between the different areas of the strategy should be sought. Operations should also seek to create synergies with other thematically focussed strategies, regional and bilateral strategies. Particular emphasis should be placed on complementarity and synergies between

the three strategies for sustainable development. Support via multilateral organisations must be compatible with Swedish priorities and approaches in partnership with multilateral organisations.

The strategy shall be followed up in line with the principles and processes stated in the Government's guidelines for strategies in Swedish development cooperation and humanitarian aid. Reporting is to be conducted with reference to how the operations contribute towards the implementation of the 2030 Agenda.