



Strategy for capacity development,  
partnership and methods  
that support the 2030 Agenda  
for sustainable development



# 1. Direction

The objective of Swedish international development cooperation is to create preconditions for better living conditions for people living in poverty and under oppression. Sweden's development cooperation is founded on the principles of aid and development effectiveness, as well as the new international agreements that the international community reached in 2015: the 2030 Agenda, the Addis Ababa Action Agenda and the Paris Agreement on climate change.

Within the framework of this strategy, Swedish development cooperation is to contribute to capacity development, collaboration and partnership with a range of actors and to the development of methods and of forms for working as well as to strengthen and broaden the Swedish resource base.

The Strategy applies to the period 2018–2022 and includes the funds allocated each year in the appropriation directions for the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida) and for the Swedish Institute (SI).<sup>1</sup>

**Sida's activities are to contribute to the following objectives:**

## **Capacity development**

- Strengthened institutional capacity of actors in partner countries<sup>2</sup> for sustainable development and poverty reduction.
- Better possibilities and strengthened capacity for actors in partner countries to implement, follow up and participate in the global dialogue on the 2030 Agenda.

## **Collaboration and partnership**

- Strengthened partnership and leadership, greater knowledge and engagement among a range of actors, including Swedish actors, able to contribute to the global implementation of the 2030 Agenda.

## **Innovative methods and forms of working for development cooperation**

- Greater access to and stronger impact for innovative forms of collaboration, financing and methods.

## **A broad Swedish resource base<sup>3</sup>**

- Strengthened capacity and learning in the Swedish resource base for the international implementation of the 2030 Agenda.
- Greater Swedish representation in strategic posts in international development cooperation.
- Greater use and feedback of Swedish expertise and experience in international development cooperation.

**The Swedish Institute's activities are to contribute to the following objectives:**

- Stronger capacity among actors in partner countries to work for the implementation of the 2030 Agenda.
- Better access to scholarships for higher education and professional development for actors in partner countries.

<sup>1</sup> Interventions within this Strategy are funded according to the conditions set out in the appropriation directions regarding the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida) and in the appropriation directions regarding the Swedish Institute for each budget year.

<sup>2</sup> The term partner countries includes all countries on the OECD-DAC List of ODA recipients.

<sup>3</sup> In this context the Swedish resource base refers to a broader group of Swedish actors in the public and private sectors and in civil society that can contribute to the international implementation of the 2030 Agenda.

## 2. Context

In 2015 the international community agreed to bring together the international agendas for poverty reduction and sustainable development in a common global framework. Taken together, the 2030 Agenda with its Sustainable Development Goals, the Addis Ababa Action Agenda on the financing of development and the Paris Agreement on climate change form an integrated framework for sustainable development. The 2030 Agenda and the 17 Sustainable Development Goals are universal, indivisible and integrate the three dimensions of sustainable development – the social, economic and environmental dimensions. The Agenda raises the level of ambition of the existing goals of promoting sustainable development that benefits all people. Sweden has higher ambitions than the Agenda in many areas, not least concerning the upholding of democracy and the respect for human rights, the principles of the rule of law and gender equality, both as goals and as means for sustainable development in its three dimensions. The 2030 Agenda is also a call to the countries of the world to engage in innovative

thinking about the challenges and opportunities of tomorrow and to open up for more and new actors to contribute to sustainable development. The universal nature of the Agenda means that all countries, including Sweden, are now working towards the same goals, which provides greater opportunities for mutual learning and partnership. Implementing the 2030 Agenda will require new solutions, new knowledge and new forms of working. The aggregate development assistance provided by the international community is far from sufficient to meet the global challenges. One important part is therefore to increase developing countries' own capacity to mobilise resources.

The 2030 Agenda makes clear how important it is that all parts of society – public institutions, universities and other higher education institutions, business, civil society, etc. – are engaged and take joint responsibility for the future. In accordance with Sweden's Policy for Global Development, development assistance is one of several policy areas that is to contribute to the

2030 Agenda, and it both can and should play a catalytic role in mobilising new resources for the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and the associated financing process within the framework of the Addis Ababa Action Agenda.

Capacity at various levels is necessary if partner countries are to be able to meet the development challenges of today and achieve the Sustainable Development Goals. The 2030 Agenda has among other, in Goal 16, a focus on peaceful and inclusive societies, and in Goal 17, stronger implementation mechanisms and partnerships for sustainable development is highlighted. Well-functioning public institutions are of central importance for functioning regulatory frameworks and markets, the investment climate, free and fair trade, effective management of public funds, sustainable public investments and procurement and basic public services without corruption. Transparent and effective public management is of central importance for sustainable peace and the prevention of violent conflict, not least in fragile and

conflict-affected states, as well as for sustainable development in environmental and climate terms and sustainable use of natural resources.

Capacity development is a foundation of almost all development cooperation. Stronger capacity improves the possibilities of working through countries' own systems and lays the foundation for lasting results that go beyond development cooperation. Capacity development builds on processes in which individuals, groups and organisations develop their ability to identify and manage changes and challenges. The interaction between public institutions, organisations and other actors in society is important in meeting challenges in an ever-changing world.

Supporting a development that is based on partner countries' priorities and has a clear local ownership, requires relevant and adapted support for capacity development targeted on public institutions and other actors in society. The principle of adapting development cooperation to the

### 3. Operations

partner country's own development strategies and plans and the use of that country's systems is key.

The global partnership for sustainable development needs to be strengthened to include more parties that mobilise and exchange knowledge, expertise and technical and financial resources. Given the universal nature of the 2030 Agenda, there is a great need for mutual exchanges of experience and lessons learned.

Flexible and appropriate development cooperation is better able to be innovative and forward-looking. Learning is an important part.

Swedish experiences, competencies and networks in various sectors of society – at local, national and global level – can be used in an innovative and strategic way and contribute to capacity development through development cooperation. It is important to continue to strengthen and broaden the Swedish resource base so as to be able to address the challenges that the 2030 Agenda, the Addis Ababa Action Agenda and the Climate Agreement from Paris are intended to

contribute to solving. In this context, Swedish resource base refers to a broader group of Swedish actors in the public and private sectors and in civil society that can contribute to the international implementation of the 2030 Agenda.

More Swedes need to get experience of and competence from international development cooperation and international organisations, at the same time as they can, when there, contribute to Swedish development policy priorities having an impact.

Sweden's development cooperation is to 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 are to be seen as fundamental to development. This approach means making individuals and groups facing discrimination, exclusion and marginalisation visible prior to each intervention. This is to ensure 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. The perspective of poor people on development means that the situation, needs, conditions and priorities of poor women, men and children are to be the starting point for combating poverty and for promoting equitable and sustainable development.

Swedish development cooperation is to be economically, socially and environmentally sustainable and gender equal. The foundation for development cooperation is a holistic view of the challenges, needs and conditions of people and communities. The key

principle is that economic, social and environmental circumstances and processes have to be understood and addressed in an integrated context. Gender equality, women's and girls' empowerment and the rights of women and girls are both a goal in their own right and a precondition for and 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 part of conflict prevention. An environmental and climate perspective, a gender equality perspective and a conflict perspective therefore are to be systematically integrated in Swedish development cooperation.

The internationally agreed principles on aid and development effectiveness have to be applied in implementation. This strategy refers to activities in development cooperation that contribute to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda, including by developing capacity in partner countries with a focus on strengthening public institutions, other actors in society and partnership.

One important part of this is strengthening the conditions and incentives for Swedish authorities and other actors in society to contribute to the 2030 Agenda. This can include more coordination and increased access to financial resources. Use is to be made of the competence of Swedish authorities regarding openness, independence and legal certainty in public administration. The development of methods, forms for working and innovative and flexible approaches is also a priority.

These activities are to contribute to broader and more self-sustaining relations between Sweden and partner countries, including economic relations, that supplement or aim at cooperation beyond development assistance and that promote mutual learning. Broader relations, including trade, are to contribute to greater prosperity and sustainable development in partner countries. Use is to be made of experience from similar approaches, such as actor-driven cooperation.

Use is to be made of synergies between the different areas of the Strategy, as well

as of complementarity between the commissions of Sida and the Swedish Institute within the framework of the Strategy. This Strategy supplements activities within the framework of regional, bilateral and thematic strategies, including the three strategies for sustainable development, and makes integrated activities possible across a broad range of areas and synergy effects.

### **Sida's activities**

#### **Capacity development**

Sida's activities are to contribute to building up effective, transparent and inclusive institutions with accountability at all levels in partner countries for combating poverty and the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. Strengthening democratic governance is a priority. Sida is also to contribute to better possibilities and greater capacity for the implementation, monitoring and follow-up of the 2030 Agenda, not least by participating in dialogue and negotiations at national, regional and local level. Its activities can, for example, include support for inclusive work on national plans and global conventions, the gathering of statistics

and data, resource mobilisation, making data available, the establishment of innovation systems, digitisation, sustainable public procurement, monitoring, evaluation and learning.

#### **Collaboration and partnership**

Sida is to mobilise a broad range of actors than can contribute to improving the living conditions of people living in poverty and oppression, changing norms and contributing to the design of new solutions within and beyond present development cooperation. Work on identifying, developing and supporting partnerships for sustainable development can include support for existing platforms for collaboration between different actors, for example companies, investors, public authorities, higher education institutions and other donors. Promoting cooperation with and between new agents of change is an important part of these activities. This is to include a greater exchange of knowledge, expertise and technical and financial resources held by a range of actors at local, national, regional and global level. The activities are also to contribute to broader and more self-

sustaining relations between Sweden and partner countries and cooperation at regional and global level. This can, for example, include areas such as trade, culture and higher education. A mutual exchange of experience and lessons learned is of central importance to this work.

#### **Innovative methods and forms of working for development cooperation**

Sida is to contribute to the development of methods and ways of working to be able to deal better with current global development challenges. The development and use of sought-after innovative and catalytic forms of collaboration and funding is a priority. This includes creating conditions for increased flows of finance and for development financing within the framework of the Addis Ababa Action Agenda. The activities are also to contribute to strengthening evaluation functions, evaluation capacity and learning.

These activities can include both internal development work and the financing of external partners. The Agency is to seek

an approach based on co-creation with other relevant actors within the framework of the implementation of the 2030 Agenda.

### **The Swedish resource base**

The Swedish resource base is to be used in a strategic, appropriate and flexible way so that Swedish development policy priorities have an impact. Sida is to contribute to creating better conditions for more Swedish actors to contribute to the objectives and implementation of development cooperation and to enable mutual learning and exchanges of experience. These activities can include public authorities, business, local and regional administration, higher education institutions, civil society organisations, social partners, etc.

It is important to increase Sweden's representation and impact in international and multilateral organisations and in EU institutions. These activities are to contribute to both increasing the range of Swedish actors and the number of Swedes in these organisations and institutions as well as

platforms for interaction with relevant authorities, institutions and organisations so as to thereby achieve more impact for Swedish policies and positions.

Sida is to contribute to greater coordination concerning Swedish secondments in development cooperation. Continuous dialogue is to be conducted with the Government Offices (Ministry for Foreign Affairs) on strategic priorities.

The feedback of Swedish competence and experience from Swedes on secondments to their sending agency/organisation is important.

Broadening the Swedish resource base and facilitating partnership and mutual learning enhances Sweden's possibilities of contributing to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and creating conditions for broader and more self-sustaining relations beyond development assistance.

### **Activities of the Swedish Institute**

Focusing on the international capacity development programme, the Swedish Institute is to increase the visibility and awareness of the 2030 Agenda in partner countries and strengthen the capacity of relevant actors to run development processes that contribute to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. These activities are to contribute to the creation and further development of sustainable relations, networks and learning processes between actors, both individuals and organisations, in Sweden and partner countries. The activities can, for example, include leadership programmes, visit programmes and other capacity-enhancing events.

SI is also to promote qualified and gender-equal skills planning and provision so as to increase the knowledge of agents of change for contributing to sustainable development in partner countries. These activities mainly relate to the provision of scholarship programmes for higher education but can also include other activities to meet special needs of

professional development in partner countries. The innovative use of digitally transferred knowledge can also be developed.

It is important to benefit from synergies, tools and forms for collaboration in SI's other activities, which also contributes to the conditions for broader and more self-sustaining relations beyond development assistance.

### **Monitoring and follow-up**

The activities of Sida and the Swedish Institute within the framework of the strategy are to be monitored and followed up in accordance with the principles and processes set out in the Government's Guidelines for strategies in Swedish development cooperation and humanitarian aid.



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