

KEY QUESTIONS

the big six

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What are Sweden's strategic priorities for development?

Focus on gender equality/ SRHR, climate/marine resources, and conflict-related spending

The Agenda 2030 and the sustainable development goals (SDGs) are central in Sweden's policies, and the government seeks to be a leader in implementing them, both nationally and internationally. The Agenda 2030 framework is referred to in national sector policies, and there is increased ambition to report which SDGs the policies and strategies adhere to and how. In line with this overarching framework, the Swedish development policy strongly aligns with the SDGs. The government's 2016 'Aid Policy Framework' outlines the overall objectives of Swedish development cooperation and sets eight focus areas: 1) human rights, democracy, and the rule of law; 2) gender equality; 3) the environment and climate change, and the sustainable use of natural resources; 4) peace and security; 5) inclusive economic development; 6) migration and development; 7) health equity; and 8) education and research.

Within these eight overarching priorities, the Swedish Government places a particular focus on environmental and climate-change issues, particularly under the leadership of Isabella Lövin, Minister for International Development Cooperation and Climate. Limiting climate impact, environmental resilience, and disaster-risk reduction are core elements of the 2016 Aid Policy Framework. A special emphasis is placed on marine resources. In its 'Strategy for development cooperation in sustainable environment, climate and marine resources, and sustainable use of natural resources' for 2018 to 2022, published in March 2018, the government set an indicative financial envelope of SEK6.5 billion for the five-year period (US\$759 million). In addition, Sweden is the largest per-capita donor to both the Green Environment Facility (GEF) and to the Green Climate Fund (GCF). Sweden has committed SEK4 billion (US\$467 million) to GEF for 2016 to 2018. An additional SEK360 million (US\$42 million) was added to the 2018 budget. It has pledged SEK4.9 billion (US\$581 million) to GCF for the 2015 to 2018 period.

Conflict prevention, under the overarching theme of 'peace and security', is also increasing in focus. Within conflict prevention, Sweden focuses particularly on women, peace and security, including training and integration of women in peace-negotiation processes. For example, it has a national action plan for the implementation of the UN Security Council Resolution 1325, a

Sweden's key development priorities:

- **Gender equality and women's empowerment:** 2017-2019 'feminist foreign policy' governs overarching orientation of foreign policy; SRHR is one of six objectives (SEK1.75 billion (US\$204 million) allocated to SRHR in sub-Saharan Africa from 2015 to 2019).
- **Conflict prevention:** Funding has shifted towards conflict-affected areas. Budget allocations to the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region increased by 27% between 2015 and 2016 and are set to reach US\$152 million in 2018.
- **Climate change:** Sweden is the largest per capita donor to GCF and GEF; strong focus on marine resources for bilateral ODA.

resolution that calls for increased participation of women in peace and security efforts within the UN. In addition to gender, conflict-sensitivity and resilience are systematically integrated into humanitarian assistance.

Against the backdrop of its overall 'feminist foreign policy' for 2015 to 2018, Sweden's foreign policy aims to enhance both gender equality and the full enjoyment of human rights by all women and girls. Improving sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR) is one of the six sub-objectives of the feminist foreign policy. Sweden's development agency, Sida, focuses heavily on gender equality and women's empowerment.

Democratic participation and human rights are funding priorities; more allocations towards humanitarian assistance

Sweden channels the majority of its ODA bilaterally (71% in 2016). According to OECD data, almost a quarter of bilateral ODA in 2016 went towards covering the costs of hosting refugees in Sweden (US\$821 million, or 23% of bilateral ODA). In 2015, Sweden received a particularly high number of asylum seekers, especially considering the size of its population. 162,877 asylum applications were filed in 2015, compared to 81,301 in 2014 and 49,870 in 2013. Consequently, costs from hosting refugees have gone up significantly since 2014. As reported to the

OECD, these costs more than doubled between 2014 and 2015, from US\$907 million to US\$2.4 billion, before decreasing by 66% between 2015 and 2016, reaching US\$821 million. In 2017, there amounted to US\$808 million, remaining stable.

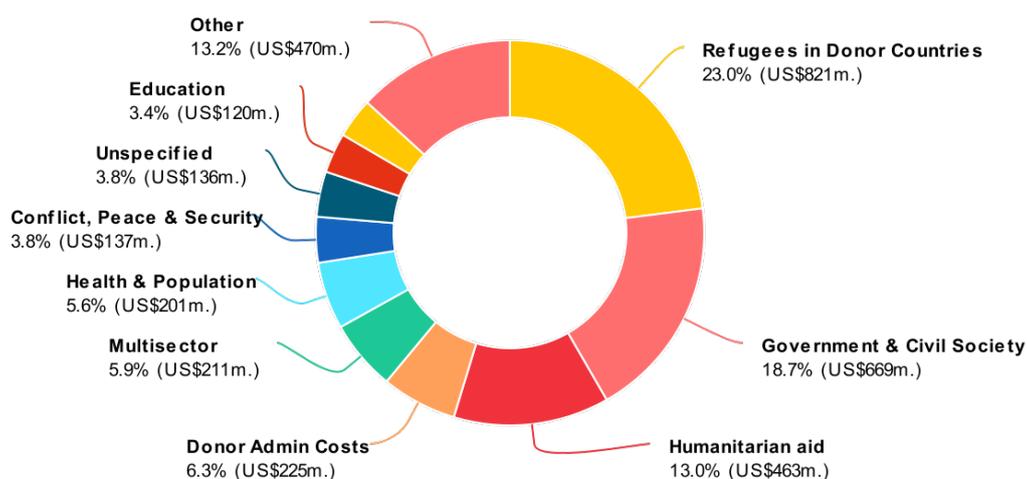
Since 2015, the government has been using the ODA budget, among other funding sources, to cover the costs of hosting refugees in Sweden. These rising costs led the country to significantly exceed its own 1% target in 2015, when ODA reached 1.41% of GNI. As a result of Sweden's tighter policy on immigration, which started in 2016, new arrivals in Sweden sharply decreased in 2016 and 2017. Funds from the ODA budget that had been put aside at the beginning of the year to cover these costs were re-allocated to development programs. For 2018, the government has set ODA funds used to cover the costs of hosting refugees at US\$321 million (SEK2,752 million, or 6% of the total ODA budget). This is their lowest level in 10 years.

The second-largest share of bilateral ODA is allocated to interventions in the 'government and civil society' sector (19% of bilateral ODA, or US\$669 million in 2016). Around two-thirds of the funding in this area goes to projects supporting democratic participation or human rights. In this sector, Sweden relies on its civil society organizations (CSOs), as well as on international organizations and local CSOs in partner countries for the implementation of its bilateral cooperation. This is especially true for support going to countries that are not governed by democratic principles.

The third-largest share of Swedish bilateral ODA is allocated to humanitarian assistance, a traditional focus of funding in Sweden (13% of bilateral ODA, US\$463 million). Funding to the sector has grown by 23% between 2015 and 2016, and is likely to continue increasing as Sweden strengthens its focus on conflict-affected areas. Sweden's 2016 Aid policy framework makes special mention of the nexus between development cooperation and humanitarian assistance. In January 2017, the government approved a new strategy for Sida's humanitarian assistance for 2017 to 2020, reiterating the focus of humanitarian assistance. Sweden's humanitarian assistance also aims to strengthen the capacity and effectiveness of the humanitarian system in partner countries.

SWEDEN'S BILATERAL ODA BY SECTOR, 2016

Total: US\$3 581 million



OECD CRS. Gross disbursements. *Includes agriculture, forestry, fishing, and rural development. In 2016 prices.