

# Strategy for Sweden's regional development cooperation with Africa 2022–2026

**Ministry for Foreign Affairs**

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## 1. Strategic objectives

The objective of Sweden's international development cooperation is to create opportunities for better living conditions for people living in poverty and under oppression. Development cooperation is to be based on the principles of aid and development effectiveness, the 2030 Agenda, the Addis Ababa Action Agenda and the Paris Agreement.

The strategy applies during the period 2022–2026, and provides SEK 4 625 million for activities implemented by the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida) and SEK 45 million for activities implemented by the Folke Bernadotte Academy (FBA).

The strategy governs the use of funds under appropriation item 1:1.9 'Africa' in the appropriation directions for Sida for each budget year, and funds under appropriation item 1:1.4 'Development Cooperation' and appropriation item 1.4.1 'Folke Bernadotte Academy' concerning administrative costs associated with implementation of the strategy in the appropriation directions for the Folke Bernadotte Academy for each budget year.

Sida's activities will contribute to the following objectives.

### **Environment, climate and sustainable use of natural resources**

- Strengthened conditions for sustainable management and use of natural resources, including protection, conservation and restoration of biodiversity and its ecosystem services.
- Improved adaptability and strengthened resilience to climate change and environmental and natural disasters.
- Reduced climate impact, including increased access to renewable energy and improved energy efficiency.

### **Human rights, democracy, the rule of law and gender equality**

- Strengthened democracy and increased respect for human rights and the rule of law, including reduced corruption.
- Increased gender equality and empowerment of women and girls.

## **Migration and development**

- Improved capacity to deal with all dimensions of migration in a way that safeguards the rights of refugees, internally displaced persons and migrants and contributes to development and safe, orderly and regulated migration.

## **Inclusive economic development**

- Strengthened conditions for open, inclusive and sustainable trade as well as regional and continental economic integration and food security.

## **Peaceful and inclusive societies**

- Strengthened regional initiatives and capacity for sustainable peace.

The activities of the FBA will contribute to the following objectives.

## **Peaceful and inclusive societies**

- Strengthened regional initiatives and capacity for sustainable peace.

## **2. Regional context**

Africa is a heterogeneous continent, whose countries and regions face widely differing conditions and opportunities when it comes to sustainable development. At the same time, several of the continent's challenges are cross-border in nature and require regional cooperation.

The consequences of climate change are evident in Africa, and include drought, extreme weather and negative impacts on biodiversity. Climate change risks driving millions of Africans into poverty by 2030. Competition for scarce natural resources affects millions of people's lives in Africa, health and livelihoods as well as households' and societies' resilience to crises. Environmentally harmful emissions and exposure to chemicals and waste are considerable challenges. Competition for natural resources and climate change also risk contributing to hunger, conflict and forced displacement. A majority of the population (70 per cent) depend on agriculture and natural resources for their livings and food security. Six hundred million people do not have access to electricity.

The trend in democratic development in Africa is negative, with restrictions of freedom of expression and assembly and access to information. Few

countries in Africa meet international or regional commitments regarding human rights and good governance. This trend has worsened due to COVID-19 restrictions. Women and girls are particularly affected, with increased prevalence of gender-based violence, limited schooling and child marriage. Access to needs-based health and medical care is lacking in several countries. Africa has a young population with more than 60 per cent under the age of 25. Meanwhile, many young people lack job opportunities and possibilities to participate on equal terms in political decision-making.

The pandemic has also caused negative consequences for economic development and social justice, and has led to increased poverty and food insecurity. The continent is highly dependent on raw material exports and imports of food, medicine and other necessities, which makes it vulnerable. Small-scale cross-border trade is extensive and important to reducing poverty, not least for women and young people. The African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) is expected to generate both increased trade and investments in Africa and more livelihood opportunities. However, implementation is expected to take time. Some of the Regional Economic Communities (RECs) have more far-reaching regional integration than the continent at large, and the majority of trade in Africa is carried out within these regions. They will continue to play a key role for inclusive economic development, growth and productive employment with decent working conditions.

Migration and forced displacement continue to increase in Africa, due to conflict, rapid population growth, labour market imbalances, environmental and climate factors and economic crises. Free movement of people and goods is important to Africa, not least regionally, and seasonal labour migration is common, as is nomadic livestock farming across national borders. Migration contributes to positive development in the region through, for example, remittances, knowledge exchange and the engagement of the diaspora. Meanwhile, irregular migration and forced displacement lead to negative consequences. Migrants, refugees and internally displaced persons are especially vulnerable and often lack protection and rights. Women, children, LGBTIQ people and ethnic minorities are particularly vulnerable groups.

Africa is one of the most conflict-affected regions in the world. There are currently protracted and violent conflicts in several African countries, of which several are transnational and have regional consequences. The conflicts are exacerbated by the presence of small arms and light weapons.

Poverty and hunger are more widespread in the affected regions. Violent extremism has increased and has become one of Africa's biggest security threats, and is often interlinked with transnational organised crime.

The African Union (AU) and the RECs play an important normative and coordinating role through regional conventions and action plans, and several of the organisations are taking the lead in increasing regional integration in different areas. Agenda 2063 is the AU's general strategic framework, and aims to deliver on goals for inclusive and sustainable development. These goals largely correspond to the 2030 Agenda and include poverty eradication, political integration, strengthened democracy and justice, gender equality, peace and security and a stronger African identity. The AU has adopted an action plan for green recovery, and Sweden has committed to being an international sponsor ('co-champion') and working to ensure that biodiversity is given attention and support. Lack of political consensus between the Member States – and to a certain extent, between the AU and the RECs – as well as limited administrative capacity, make it difficult for the regional organisations to advance their priorities.

### **3. Activities**

Sida and the FBA will implement, monitor and report on activities in accordance with the Government's guidelines for strategies for Swedish development cooperation and humanitarian aid (UD2017/21053). The guidelines state that analysis, learning and lessons learned are to be an integral part of Sweden's development cooperation. There will be a focus on results at all stages of the strategy process. The documentation will give a general account of the conditions for implementation and of how monitoring is intended to take place in the specific context. The annual strategy report will give an overview and include an account, analysis and assessment of the results of the activities in relation to the stated objectives. Performance information will be used for decision-making, learning and accountability, and for ensuring transparency towards the general public. Monitoring will produce reliable and useful performance information in both the short and long term by using both qualitative and quantitative information where possible. Performance monitoring will primarily establish whether activities have made a difference, in what way and for whom. Based on the existing conditions, monitoring will determine the extent to which development cooperation has made a difference.

Sweden's development cooperation contributes to sustainable development based on the 2030 Agenda, the financing for development commitments in the Addis Ababa Action Agenda and the Paris Agreement. The activities' contribution will be particularly relevant to the following sustainable development goals (SDGs) and the 2030 Agenda: no poverty (SDG 1), zero hunger (SDG 2), gender equality (SDG 5), affordable and clean energy (SDG 7), decent work and economic growth (SDG 8), reduced inequalities (SDG 10), sustainable cities and communities (SDG 11), responsible consumption and production (SDG 12), climate action (SDG 13), life below water (SDG 14), life on land (SDG 15), peace, justice and strong institutions (SDG 16) and partnerships for the goals (SDG 17). The strategy reports to the Government will also include references to how activities contribute to implementation of the 2030 Agenda in relation to the strategy's priorities. In all, Sweden's development cooperation will contribute to poverty reduction, better conditions for democratic development and respect for human rights.

Sweden's development cooperation will be relevant and effective. The basis for the strategy's activities will be to strengthen regional cooperation and integration in Africa and address cross-border challenges for which regional cooperation is the most effective way of working. The focus should be on support to implementation of and compliance with the African normative frameworks, and regional actors, structures and initiatives should be strengthened. The regional added value of working with continental and regional partners will be clear and complement both bilateral and global support for effective aid.

Activities will contribute to reducing environmental and climate impacts and sustainable management and use of natural resources and ecosystems, which includes protecting, conserving and restoring biodiversity and its ecosystems. This is crucial for food security and more productive and sustainable food systems. A toxin-free circular economy will be promoted, which may also include support for sustainable chemical and waste management. Climate change requires strengthened measures for climate adaptation and better resilience, and increased capacity of regional actors. Activities will contribute to reduced vulnerability and increased resistance to climate change, building resilience and disaster risk reduction. This may also include support for nature-based solutions and other innovative solutions. The implementation capacity of regional actors, structures and initiatives should be strengthened, especially in fragile regions and contexts. Renewable energy and better access to sustainable electricity for companies and households must be supported. Support can also be given to strengthen land rights and climate justice.

Activities will contribute to democratic development, increased respect for human rights, gender equality and the rule of law, including reduced corruption. This should include support to improve implementation of and compliance with the African normative frameworks, human rights systems and governance. Inclusion of young people and their meaningful participation in society should be supported. Regional actors' efforts to promote opportunities for women to influence and participate fully in decision-making at all levels should be supported, in regard to both political influence and economic empowerment.

Activities will contribute to promoting regional and continental initiatives and strengthen regional actors' capacity to act in a way that ensures the rights of refugees, internally displaced persons and migrants and their opportunities to contribute to and benefit from development. Furthermore, activities should strengthen regional actors' capacity to create conditions for safe, orderly and regulated migration, including functioning return and reintegration, and reduced vulnerability, lasting solutions and development opportunities for refugees and their host communities in line with regional priorities and global frameworks for migration and refugees.

Activities within the framework of the strategy will contribute to regional economic integration and inclusive and sustainable trade. Activities should support the implementation of African regional frameworks and agreements in the field of trade. This may include capacity-building and supporting simplified trade procedures. Women's economic empowerment should be supported. Sustainable productivity gains in agriculture and fisheries are a prerequisite to achieve food security, and accordingly, sustainable economic development. Developing regional trade is important for local production and services and for food security.

Activities will support regional actors, structures and initiatives to prevent, manage and solve conflicts in an inclusive manner. Support may include early warning systems and preventive activities that promote democratic governance, mediation, peacebuilding and resilience. The focus should be on regions where the vulnerability and tensions are the greatest. Women's active participation in conflict resolution, peace processes and strengthened resilience to conflict should be promoted, as should young people's meaningful participation for sustainable and inclusive peace. Activities should support the institutional framework of the African Peace and Security Architecture's (APSA), and actors and processes that complement the APSA, such as regional and local cross-border cooperation relating to



conflict resolution. FBA activities may also include dialogue, peace processes and women's and young people's participation in decision-making and peace processes. Support to disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration of combatants (DDR) may be part of FBA activities.

Activities will harness the linkages between long-term development cooperation, humanitarian aid and peacebuilding. Sweden will strive for coherent and effective aid coordination, not least with the EU and the multilateral system. Opportunities for cooperation and synergies with other donors and actors will be sought. The EU is a key development policy actor in Africa and has a formal partnership with the AU. Based on the 'Team Europe' approach, Sweden will work toward effective implementation of the Neighbourhood, Development and International Cooperation Instrument (NDICI), Global Europe.

Synergies will be sought between the different areas of the strategy and with activities within the framework of other relevant strategies for Sweden's development cooperation, including the regional strategy for the Middle East and North Africa, the strategy for sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR) in Africa, humanitarian aid and the strategy for research cooperation and research in development cooperation. In the long run, activities will contribute to reducing dependency on humanitarian aid. Activities will lay the foundation for broader and more self-sustaining relations between Sweden and Africa, and between the EU and Africa, including the AU. Cooperation with the Swedish resource base should be deepened. Synergies and cooperation between Sida and the FBA should be promoted. Mobilisation of additional financial resources to achieve the strategy's objectives should increase, for example through guarantees. Activities to combat corruption and strengthen accountability will permeate all areas.