

Ministry for Foreign Affairs

Strategy for Sweden's development cooperation with Uganda 2025–2029

1. Starting points and added value

Sweden and Uganda have longstanding relations, and development cooperation between the two countries dates back to the late 1980s. Uganda is an important country for the regional stability of East Africa. This includes its contributions to the African Union's peace and security efforts through measures such as providing troops. Uganda is also Africa's largest recipient of refugees in terms of numbers. The country's progressive refugee legislation makes it possible for refugees to get established in host communities.

2. Direction and objective of Swedish development assistance

The objective of Sweden's international development assistance is to create conditions to improve the lives of people living in poverty and oppression. Together with other forms of funding, development cooperation reinforces a country's aspiration to go from poverty to prosperity and contribute to the Paris Agreement. Based on the principles of development effectiveness, Sweden's development cooperation should be effective, transparent and catalytic. Through clear and realistic demands, it should strengthen long-term sustainable development with broad local ownership in partner countries.

This Strategy is part of Sweden's overall development assistance and foreign policy. Its strategic objectives are based on Sweden's provision of added value in Uganda and previous results achieved within the areas of activity.

The Strategy will apply in 2025–2029 and is worth a total of SEK 1.5 billion.

The Strategy governs the use of funds under appropriation item 1.1 Development assistance, item 1.9 Africa in the appropriation directions for the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida) for each budget year.

Activities should contribute to the following objectives:

Promoting freedom and democracy and fighting oppression

- Better prospects for a democratic society with possibilities for representative citizen influence, accountability and respect for everyone's enjoyment of human rights and freedoms and the rule of law, including reduced corruption.
- Improved gender equality, with a focus on women's and girls' rights and opportunities, including sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR) and reduced gender-based violence.

Sustainable trade and enterprise that contribute to job creation and greater prosperity

- Improved conditions for productive employment with decent working conditions and free, sustainable and rules-based trade.
- Better administration of environmental and natural resources and greater resilience to climate change.
- Greater access to fossil-free energy and higher energy efficiency.

Improved health for the most vulnerable

- Better access to basic health and medical care for the most vulnerable.
- Increased respect for and access to sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR).

3. Country context

In recent decades, Uganda has enjoyed good economic growth and is often highlighted as a model in the region for its work on economic reform. Uganda has the goal of becoming an upper-middle-class country by 2040. Poverty levels in the country reveal major regional differences and tend to be especially high in rural areas and those that receive refugees.

Democratic developments in Uganda are negative. Although a multi-party system is in place, the governing party largely dominates, taking measures such as limiting dissidents and political opposition. Civil society continues to be vibrant and lively despite a decreased scope for civil society organisations in recent years. Challenges concerning respect for human rights persist. The situation for LGBTIQ people is difficult. A new law enacted in May 2023 severely restricts the rights of homosexuals, and certain acts are now punishable by death.

Access to basic health and medical care is limited, particularly for women, children and young people. Maternal and child mortality have decreased but remain at high levels. Respect for, acceptance of, and access to SRHR are generally low. Compared with many other countries in Africa, Uganda has progressive gender equality legislation but its implementation is lagging. Women and girls are subjected to discrimination and, in general, hold a subordinate position in society.

Uganda is an important country for regional stability. It takes part in the fight against violent Islamism by providing troops in Somalia (to the African Union Transition Mission in Somalia (ATMIS) against Al-Shabaab) and in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (against the Islamic-State-affiliated rebel group Allied Democratic Forces (ADF)). Uganda's refugee legislation allows refugees to work, go to school and have access to health care. However, the situation for refugees is difficult, and most are completely dependent on humanitarian assistance for their survival.

Uganda has one of the world's fastest-growing populations, which together with refugee reception puts serious pressure on the country's natural resources. Conflicts and violence in connection with land disputes are increasingly commonplace. There is also increased awareness in Uganda of the need for measures for adaptation to climate change and the importance of preserving the country's biodiversity, as is reflected in its development plans.

Uganda has been a driving force for increased regional integration, and the country should likely enjoy major economic benefits from the implementation of the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA).

4. Activities

Activities aim to contribute to a democratic society based on the rule of law, which respects human rights, provides opportunities for vulnerable groups to support themselves through productive employment with decent working conditions and thereby accelerates the pace towards sustainable development and reduced dependence on development assistance. An important step in this process is to take measures that lead to increased gender equality and thereby strengthen women's and girls' empowerment, rights and opportunities. Gender equality should be integrated into activities and may comprise initiatives to address underlying causes of gender inequality and power imbalances. Activities should also help reduce gender-based violence.

This Strategy should contribute to achieving the objectives of the Government's Strategy for Sweden's global development cooperation on migration, returns and voluntary repatriation 2024–2028 (UD2024/14340). Refugees and host communities should be a

focus of activities, not least to contribute to refugees' self-sufficiency and access to basic public services. Synergies between long-term development cooperation, humanitarian assistance and peacebuilding should be harnessed. Where necessary, these activities should also include early and pre-emptive measures.

To strengthen long-term sustainability and effective development cooperation, the effects of climate change should be taken into consideration throughout all activities, and possibilities of contributing to emissions reductions and adaptation measures should be considered within relevant strategic objectives and initiatives. Where relevant, one or more interim climate objectives could be included in initiatives that have a main purpose other than climate.

To promote freedom and democracy and combat oppression, activities should support equitable access to justice and increased transparency and greater possibilities for accountability. This could include support to free media, civil society actors, independent and auditing authorities, and to promote and strengthen conditions for political pluralism and free and fair elections. Activities should help provide civil society and human rights defenders possibilities to operate freely and safely. Women's and young people's possibilities for participation and influence should be promoted, as should those of individuals in vulnerable situations, such as LGBTIQ people. The widespread corruption, which particularly affects people in poverty, should be tackled. The fight against corruption should permeate all areas of the strategy. Moreover, activities should help combat child marriage.

Uganda has good conditions to harness synergies between development cooperation, trade policy and promotion. There are Swedish business interests in the Ugandan energy and transport sectors. Sweden also has relevant expertise and technical solutions in the areas of digitalisation, innovation and green transition, which could contribute to sustainable development and the Government's development assistance policy objectives.

Activities should promote *sustainable trade and enterprise that contribute to job creation and greater prosperity*. Increased access to fossil-free energy and effective use of sustainable energy solutions should be stimulated. Biodiversity and reduced environmental impact should be furthered, as should resilience to climate change, to reduce the risk of climate-related conflicts and disasters. This can help strengthen Uganda's conditions to implement its undertakings within the framework of international climate-change and environmental conventions and agreements. Activities should also contribute to a stronger business and investment climate that promotes entrepreneurship and self-sufficiency, particularly for women and young people. This could comprise support for education and vocational training. Activities should improve conditions for trade and the implementation of AfCFTA. To strengthen resilience among particularly vulnerable groups in refugee-hosting

communities and contribute to investments in human capital, support to social security systems via multilateral organisations could also be considered.

To contribute to *improved health for those who are most vulnerable*, activities should help improve access to and quality of maternal and children's and young people's health, including SRHR services, and water and sanitation. Education and training could be a key part of this.

Opportunities for influence through dialogue beyond development assistance should be utilised. Synergies should be sought between the strategy areas and with activities within the framework of other relevant strategies for Sweden's development cooperation. Potential synergies between development cooperation, promotion and trade policy should be identified and harnessed, and collaboration should be sought with actors within Team Sweden. The broad Swedish resource base, including the Swedish business sector, should be mobilised to a greater extent and included where it is deemed relevant and effective. Where relevant and effective, the potential of digitalisation and innovation should be harnessed as a tool for achieving objectives.

Based on the Team Europe approach, Sweden will push for effective implementation of the EU's development cooperation with Uganda within the framework of Global Europe, in line with Sweden's development cooperation engagement.

Primary cooperation partners should be civil society organisations, multilateral organisations and development banks. Opportunities for cooperation and synergies with other donors and actors should therefore be sought, particularly with central development policy actors such as the EU and the multilateral system.

Activities will be followed up and reported on in line with what is prescribed in the current guidelines for development assistance strategies. The annual strategy report will include reporting, analysis and assessment of the results of the activities in relation to the stated objectives. Where possible, gender-disaggregated statistics will be included in activity reports.