

# Strategy for Sweden's development cooperation with Zambia 2024–2028



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## **1. Direction**

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

This strategy applies for the period 2024–2028 with a total budget of SEK 2.25 billion.

The strategy governs the use of funds under appropriation item 1:1.9 'Africa' in the appropriation directions for the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida) for each budget year.

Sida's activities will contribute towards the following objectives:

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

- Stronger democracy and greater respect for human rights and the rule of law, including reduced corruption
- Greater gender equality, including access to and respect for sexual and reproductive health and rights

### **Economic development and livelihoods**

- Better conditions for livelihoods, education and trade, with a focus on productive and sustainable agriculture

## **Environmentally and climate-resilient sustainable development**

- Stronger administration and sustainable use of natural resources and ecosystems, including biodiversity
- Greater access to fossil-free energy and higher energy efficiency

## **2. Country context**

Since taking office following the 2021 elections, Zambia's Government has implemented a policy of reforms aimed at strengthening democracy and respect for human rights and independent media. It has also adopted an ambitious environmental and climate policy and invested in social sectors. The President continues to push for an agenda that encourages private-sector investment, particularly foreign investment. The aim is for the private sector to stimulate growth through investments in mining, agriculture, tourism and the transport and energy sectors. In December 2021, Zambia and the International Monetary Fund reached an agreement on a reform programme for national debt management as an important condition for long-term macroeconomic stability. With its foreign policy positions, Zambia is becoming an increasingly obvious strategic partner in the region. Expectations on the new Government are high, and there is a risk of backsliding and instability if the Government fails to make economic, social and democratic progress – particularly among the large group of young people who voted for change.

The Government's foremost priority is economic recovery following Zambia's economic crisis in 2020. This is necessary, as the country faces major economic, social and humanitarian challenges, with high national debt, widespread corruption, rising poverty, depleted education and health systems, and serious vulnerability to climate change. Unemployment is high, particularly among young people. Nearly half of Zambia's population earns a living through agriculture. This makes people vulnerable to climate impact and economic crises. In rural Zambia, most people are living without

electricity, which complicates possibilities for investments and income. Widespread use of wood and charcoal for fuel brings major health risks, climate impact and deforestation. The COVID-19 pandemic and its consequences exacerbated the gender equality situation in Zambia, which was already lagging behind. Population growth and the teenage pregnancy rate are very high. Gender-based violence is a widespread problem. Zambia is a recipient country for refugees from neighbouring conflict-affected countries, but the number of refugees is relatively low in comparison with other countries in the region.

### **3. Activities**

Sida will carry out, monitor and report on activities in accordance with the Government's guidelines for Swedish development cooperation and humanitarian assistance strategies (UD2017/21053). The guidelines state that analysis, learning and experience transfer must be integral parts of Sweden's development cooperation. Focus will be on results at all stages of the strategy process. The supporting information 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 be comprehensive 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. Based on the existing conditions, monitoring will indicate the extent to which development cooperation has made a difference.

Sweden's development cooperation must be effective and contribute to sustainable development based on the 2030 Agenda, the financing for development commitments in the Addis Ababa Action Agenda and the Paris Agreement.

This strategy's objectives are aimed at supporting long-term institution-building, including support for reforms that meet the country's needs and priorities and harness Sweden's added value as a donor. The strategy's direction is also based on the priorities of Sweden's development cooperation policy and input from Sida.

Activities will contribute to improved governance and reduced corruption through greater capacity for responsibility and accountability in public institutions and more effective administration, as well as increased democratic space for civil society and citizens to demand accountability.

Activities will also contribute to strengthening women's political representation and participation. Initiatives to counter norms and customs that limit girls' and women's freedom and self-determination will contribute to their full enjoyment of human rights. Efforts to combat child marriage will be prioritised. Initiatives to promote democracy will be implemented, particularly those which promote free elections and contribute to young people's possibilities for meaningful participation in political processes. Democracy can also be promoted through support to cultural actors. Activities will contribute to safeguarding sexual and reproductive health and rights.

Development assistance will contribute to strengthening Zambia's prospects for enterprise and trade. Zambia's conditions for participation in regional and international trade should be improved. This includes conditions for implementation of the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCTA) Agreement. In this context, conditions for micro, small and medium-sized enterprises must be strengthened, along with access to inclusive markets and opportunities for productive employment. Investments in productive and sustainable agriculture are needed. Women's economic empowerment will be supported. The potential of digitalisation to contribute to development should be harnessed. Activities will contribute to a secure food supply to the

poorest, with the aim of strengthening their resilience and enabling investments in health, education and self-employment.

Activities may also contribute to broader economic relations between Sweden and Zambia. Synergies between development cooperation, trade promotion and trade policy will be pursued. Focus will be on the country's needs and priorities. Moreover, the Swedish resource base, including Swedish businesses, should be mobilised and engaged where it is deemed effective and relevant. Mobilisation of additional financial resources to achieve the strategy's objectives will be promoted. Anti-corruption activities that strengthen accountability will permeate all areas.

Climate and environmental impact will be taken into consideration where relevant. Activities will contribute to increased access to fossil-free energy. With access to electricity, the rural population can contribute to and be part of economic development, and enterprise can be stimulated. Activities will also include initiatives that promote energy efficiency and thus contribute to accelerating the phase-out of fossil fuels.

Activities should contribute to environmentally and climate-resilient sustainable development. Capacity and knowledge for sustainable administration and use of natural resources that are fundamental to human livelihoods should be supported, and biodiversity should be protected, preserved and restored. Reduced pollution is a requirement for environmental and climate-resilient sustainable development.

Sweden will promote coherent and effective development assistance coordination, particularly with the EU as a key development policy actor and with the multilateral system. Opportunities for cooperation and synergies with other donors and actors will therefore be sought. Cooperation with development banks should be considered. Based on the 'Team Europe'

approach, Sweden will work to promote the effective implementation of the Neighbourhood, Development and International Cooperation Instrument (NDICI – Global Europe).

Sweden's development cooperation will be results-oriented, long-term and effective. Synergies will be sought between the strategy areas and with activities within the framework of other relevant strategies for Sweden's development cooperation.