

Strategy for Sweden's regional development cooperation with Latin America 2021–2025



1. Strategic direction

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

The strategy applies in 2021–2025 and comprise a total of SEK 1 billion for activities implemented by the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida).

The strategy governs the use of funds under appropriation item 7 'Latin America' in the appropriation directions for Sida for each budget year.

Activities will contribute to the following objectives:

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

- Improved conditions for democracy and increased respect for human rights and the rule of law.
- Strengthened prospects for a gender-equal society and women's economic empowerment.
- Increased access to and respect for sexual and reproductive health and rights.

Environment, climate and sustainable use of natural resources

- Improved conditions for sustainable use and management of cross-border natural resources.
- Reduced climate impact and enhanced resilience to climate change.
- Improved conditions for preservation and restoration of biodiversity and its ecosystem services.

Migration and development

- Improved capacity to deal with migration in a way that safeguards the rights of refugees, internally displaced persons and migrants and contributes to development.
- Improved opportunities for productive employment with decent working conditions, particularly for migrants, refugees and internally displaced persons.

2. Regional context

Since the turn of the millennium, substantial progress has been made in Latin America, where the economies have been modernised and poverty reduced. While major variations exist between the countries in the region, there are many common or cross-border challenges. Weak institutions and corruption are contributing factors in citizens' low level of confidence in democracy. Inadequate respect for human rights and the rule of law is an obstacle to sustainable and equitable development. The people's demands for reforms, transparency, and accountability in many parts of the region have manifested themselves in protests.

Civil society and social movements have a long tradition in the region and are instrumental to organising and driving rights issues in areas such as the environment, indigenous peoples, LGBTIQ persons, women, trade union rights, democracy and peace. In the meantime, civil society in some countries is experiencing shrinking space for opportunities to act. Frequent threats, attacks and murders committed against human rights defenders and environmentalists mark the region. Violence against women and girls is widespread. In recent years, increased focus on women's enjoyment of human rights and women's economic empowerment has engaged many citizens. In parallel with this, conservative groups' resistance to gender equality and sexual and reproductive health and rights has increased in many parts of the region.

Latin America contains 60–70 per cent of the world's biodiversity, 30 per cent of the world's fresh water and some of the world's most fertile soils. Deforestation is occurring at an alarming rate, and the glaciers in the Andes are melting. Biodiversity is decreasing rapidly. The region is vulnerable to natural disasters. The level of inequality is the world's highest. Unequal access to land in many parts of the region is a contributing factor in

inequality and a driving force behind conflict. Rights to land and natural resources are the greatest challenges to the ability of the more than 800 indigenous peoples to exercise their rights.

Regional institutions with a mandate to promote democracy and respect for human rights and the rule of law have contributed to promoting stability in Latin America. At the same time, regional cooperation on other cross-border issues is insufficient. In recent years, ideological differences have negatively impacted regional cooperation. Political, economic and social challenges, as well as violence, insufficient human security, natural disasters and social conflicts are contributing factors in Latin America experiencing the greatest refugee and migration crisis in the region's history, and to the large number of internally displaced persons in the region. Many migrants and forcibly displaced persons lack access to fundamental rights.

3. Activities

Sida will implement, monitor and report on activities in accordance with the Government's guidelines for Swedish development cooperation and humanitarian aid strategies (UD2017/21053/IU). The guidelines state that activities must be actively directed towards achieving the objectives and that the actual performance must be monitored based on those objectives. The annual strategy report will be comprehensive and include a presentation, analysis and assessment of activities' performance in relation to stated objectives. Information about performance will be used for decision-making, learning and accountability, and for ensuring transparency to the general public. Monitoring will produce reliable and useful information about short- and long-term performance by using both qualitative and quantitative information where possible. Performance monitoring will primarily establish whether activities have made a difference, how and for whom. Based on the existing conditions, follow-up will determine the extent to which development cooperation has made a difference.

Sweden's development cooperation will contribute 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) of the 2030 Agenda: no poverty (SDG 1), gender equality (SDG 5), decent work and economic growth (SDG 8), reduced inequalities (SDG 10), 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). Sida's strategy reports to the Government will clarify how activities contribute to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda.

Development cooperation will be implemented in Latin America and address the region's cross-border challenges and challenges that are common to many of the region's countries. Activities will contribute to strengthening regional actors and regional solutions, and to strengthened capacity for regional cooperation.

Activities will contribute to increased capacity, cooperation and dialogue, and improved conditions for the region to strengthen democracy and increase respect for human rights and the rule of law in line with regional and international frameworks. This includes support to improve opportunities for citizens to influence political processes, demand accountability and have their human rights safeguarded. Activities will contribute to accountability, increased transparency and reduced corruption.

In addition, activities will contribute to strengthening regional cooperation to increase and strengthen gender equality and women's economic empowerment. Activities will also contribute to increased awareness of, access to and respect for sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR) and reduced gender-based violence. This will include support to influential advocates for change, normative work and policy development.

Activities will contribute to increased awareness of the environment and climate, and their importance to poverty reduction, gender equality and inclusive economic development. This will also include support in adapting to climate change and reducing emissions, i.e. by transitioning to renewable energies. The participation of women, indigenous peoples and Afro-descendants in decision-making processes related to the environment, climate and sustainable use of natural resources will be prioritised. Activities will contribute to creating conditions for regional cooperation in the use and management of cross-border natural resources, the circular economy and strengthening conditions for more sustainable land use. This includes support for preservation of biological diversity in line with commitments linked to relevant conventions. Amazonia will be a special focus area.

Migration and development activities will support capacity-building and institutional and policy development at regional level and regional initiatives that promote governmental efforts to enhance the positive effects of

migration on development. Poverty reduction and protecting the human rights of migrants and refugees are central to activities. Moreover, activities will contribute to managing and facilitating safe, orderly and regulated migration and contribute to lasting solutions and development possibilities for refugees and their host societies in line with regional priorities and the global frameworks for migration and refugees. This will include support to improve conditions for productive employment with decent working conditions, especially for migrants and refugees, in line with the Decent Work Agenda and with a focus on women's economic empowerment.

The nexus perspective will be incorporated into activities and linkages between long-term development cooperation, humanitarian aid and peacebuilding will be harnessed.

Sweden's development cooperation will be appropriate and effective. Activities within and between areas of the strategy will strive for an integrated approach and seek synergies with other strategies and actors that are relevant for the development context. Sweden will promote coherent and effective development and aid coordination, not least by seeking cooperation with relevant actors. Financing solutions that can contribute to stimulating other financial resources should be used.

Where possible, strategy implementation for the three objectives should consider possibilities of contributing to inclusive economic development. Sweden's development cooperation will lay the foundation for broader relations between Sweden and Latin America, and cooperation with the Swedish resource base should be deepened. This may be achieved by creating conditions for engagement through collaboration with the private sector, civil society and other agents of change, state actors and academics. The potential of digital transformation and innovation will be harnessed as a tool for achieving the objectives.