

Results strategy for Sweden's international
development cooperation with

Afghanistan

2014 – 2019



REGERINGSKANSLIET

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of Sweden**

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1. Expected results

This results strategy governs the use of funds allocated under appropriation item 'Asia' to the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida) for each fiscal year. The strategy will apply for the period 2014–2019 and comprise a total of SEK 4.87 billion¹.

The purpose of activities is to contribute to democratic, peaceful and sustainable development, and long-term economic growth that benefits people living in poverty.

Activities are expected to contribute to the following results:

1. Strengthened democracy and gender equality, greater respect for human rights and freedom from oppression

Focus on empowerment

- Strengthened respect for human rights, with particular focus on the opportunities of women and children to enjoy their human rights.
- More women and men participate in strengthened democratic processes and demand accountability from authorities and elected representatives.
- Strengthened capacity of public institutions to provide basic services.
- Strengthened capacity of civil society to promote greater respect for human rights and contribute to the transparency and scrutiny of public institutions.

¹ The total amount of SEK 4.87 billion includes previously adopted strategy volume for 2014 of SEK 620 million. The remaining SEK 4.25 billion comes from Sweden's announced intention at the Tokyo Conference in July 2012 to support Afghanistan during the period 2015–2024 with a total indicative volume range of SEK 8 billion to SEK 8.5 billion.

2. Better opportunities for people living in poverty to contribute to and benefit from economic growth and gain a good education.

Focus on education

- More girls and boys have access to improved schooling up to and including upper secondary education
- More girls and boys have the opportunity to complete their schooling

Focus on employment

- Increased number of women and men have knowledge and skills that increase their opportunities for productive and sustainable employment

Focus on private sector development and rural development

- Increased productivity and value added in agriculture, as well as sustainable use of natural resources
- Improved livelihood opportunities for poor women and men in rural areas, including conditions to start and run commercial activities

Focus on economic integration

- Improved infrastructure, access to markets and financial services in rural areas

2. Country context

Afghanistan is one of the world's poorest countries. At the same time, there is an ongoing conflict in parts of the country and the security situation is difficult. There is armed resistance against the state and armed groups that continuously carry out acts of terrorism and violence.

Since 2001, a number of public services have been established and several national elections have been held. However, there are major shortcomings concerning democratic governance and the ability to provide basic services. Respect for human rights is weak, and the situation of women and children in particular is serious. Other groups also live in very vul-

nerable conditions. During the conflict, there has been major movement of migrants and refugees, both within the country and across its borders. Corruption and illegal drugs production constitute major barriers to economic and social development in the country. At the same time, reforms are under way to improve democratic processes, governance, respect for human rights, etc.

Growth since 2001 has been good, but it has been driven to a large extent by the considerable international military presence and high levels of aid. Political instability, the problematic security situation and the international withdrawal of troops led to an economic decline in 2013 that is expected to continue over the next few years. The state needs to increase its revenues and lay the foundations for sustainable economic growth and social development based on increased employment and production.

The level of education in the country is low, and lowest among women in rural areas. Unemployment is a major challenge. The level of productive employment among women is low. Few Afghan goods can compete on export markets and cheap imported goods dominate locally. The infrastructure is neglected and the economic and social disparities between urban and rural areas are large. Agriculture accounts for one third of the economy, but productivity is low. Half of the agricultural sector consists of subsistence farming with little or no connection to markets. In addition, the majority of poor people live in rural areas.

3. Activities

At the Tokyo Conference in July 2012 a mutual agreement was entered into by Afghanistan and the international community. In the 'Tokyo Mutual Accountability Framework', Afghanistan committed to long-term reforms in five areas². In turn, Sweden and the international community pledged to support Afghanistan with a total of USD 16 billion in aid until 2015 and continue the aid levels of the previous decade until 2017.

²The five areas are: 1) Representational Democracy and Equitable Elections; 2) Governance, Rule of Law and Human Rights; 3) Integrity of Public Finance and Commercial Banking; 4) Government Revenues, Budget Execution and Sub-National Governance; 5) Inclusive and Sustained Growth and Development.

At the Tokyo Conference, Sweden announced its intention to support Afghanistan with a focus on the *Five E's for Afghan Development*:

- *Empowerment*
- *Education*
- *Employment*
- *Enterprise*
- *Economic Integration*

The target group will mainly comprise people living in poverty in rural areas, with a particular focus on women and children. Increased gender equality and opportunities for women and girls to enjoy their human rights and actively participate in the development of society are to pervade all result areas.

Swedish support will contribute to the mutual commitments of the Tokyo Mutual Accountability Framework with a focus on supporting Afghan ownership and capacity. Sweden will promote coordinated efforts from the various UN bodies in the country. Joint EU programming of aid should be sought in order to contribute to a coherent EU policy. The implementation of activities should also contribute to the achievement of the five peacebuilding and statebuilding goals, as well as principles for cooperation and ownership within the New Deal.³

Activities will be carried out on the basis of where aid can provide the greatest benefit and contribute to lasting results, without any particular geographical focus. Direct cooperation with the state should be avoided as far as possible. The approach is mainly expected to provide long-term support through joint donor funds, multilateral organisations and civil society organisations. Other forms of cooperation may also be considered during the strategy period. Smaller-scale measures limited in time may be supported if they are analytical, strategic or catalytic in nature, for example with a focus on the peace process. Budget support is not considered to be an option for the strategy period.

³The five goals are: 1) Legitimate politics; 2) Security, 3) Justice, 4) Economic foundations; 5) Revenues and services

Conflict sensitivity in aid implementation is central. The security situation and the limited possibilities of field presence are also expected to continue to complicate the planning, implementation and follow-up of aid. Great emphasis will therefore be placed on risk assessment and risk management. Measures involving varying degrees of risk should be combined to increase the possibilities of achieving results. Widespread corruption and related risks in particular should also be recognised and managed.

Sweden currently contributes considerable humanitarian assistance to Afghanistan in proportion to the country's major needs. The aim is that during the strategy period aid will be able to contribute to a reduced demand for humanitarian assistance. If the situation in the country deteriorates, a reorientation of aid may be necessary.

Support for empowerment

Swedish aid will contribute to strengthened democratic statebuilding, strengthened respect for human rights, as well as improved opportunities for transparency and accountability. Greater capacity within public institutions to provide basic services is a priority. Strengthening the capacity of the state to mobilise resources and improve financial management is important. The participation of women and girls in social life, economic activity, democratic processes and civil society is limited. Increased gender equality and women's and men's active participation in democratic processes on different levels are important conditions for sustainable and peaceful economic and social development. An important priority is to strengthen women's and girls' knowledge of, and ability to enjoy, their human rights. Activities may also include support to sexual and reproductive health and rights, as well as participation in the peace process in accordance with UN Resolution 1325 and the agenda for women, peace and security. An independent civil society is important for democratic and peaceful development in the country. In this respect, media freedom, internet freedom, freedom of expression and social media may be considered in order to make greater transparency and scrutiny possible for citizens and civil society organisations.

Education

The number of children enrolled in school up to and including upper secondary school has increased significantly in the past decade. However, four million children of primary school age still lack access to education. The number of children who leave school early is high. This is particularly true of girls. Lack of security, long distances and few female teachers are contributing factors. Aid should therefore focus on increasing the availability and quality of education from primary to upper secondary level. In addition to girls and children in rural areas, children with special needs may also be prioritised. Support to girls to continue on to higher education may also be considered.

Employment

Afghanistan has one of the youngest populations in the world. Almost 70 per cent of the population is under the age of 25. Unemployment and underemployment in the country is high. Every year, half a million young people leave school to look for work. Improving people's employability, through literacy for example, is important. Vocational education and training should be carried out in sectors that need trained workers. As a result of the economic transition linked to a reduced international presence, a larger number of qualified people are expected to be laid off in the services sector. Through training and improved labour market information, these people can be given the opportunity to find new jobs.

Private sector development and rural development (Enterprise)

Improving the conditions for the agricultural sector and the private sector is important for sustainable economic growth in Afghanistan. The contribution of women to formal economic activities is limited. An increase in agricultural productivity is a priority. Diversification of production and adding value to products is important for increasing income and economic growth. Landmines remaining in the ground constitute an obstacle to development. The sustainable use of natural resources in agriculture can contribute to strengthening the resilience of local com-

munities to adverse changes. Food security and strengthened capacity to manage disasters can contribute to reduced dependency on humanitarian assistance. Improved conditions for starting and operating commercial activities is also important. Past experience has shown that it has been possible to implement similar efforts, even in the most insecure areas of the country. The possibilities of providing support for alternative livelihoods in areas with extensive illegal drug handling should be investigated.

Economic integration

The neglected rural infrastructure makes access to markets and basic services such as education and health care difficult. Improved conditions for effective market exchange between rural and urban areas are therefore prioritised.

4. Follow-up

Follow-up procedures are outlined in the Government's guidelines for results strategies for Sweden's international development cooperation.