



Strategy for Sweden's development cooperation with Zimbabwe 2017–2021



1. Focus

The objective of Sweden's international development cooperation is to create opportunities for people living in poverty and oppression to improve their living conditions. Development cooperation with Zimbabwe will be based on the principles of aid and development effectiveness and the new international agreements reached by the international community in 2015.¹

Within the framework of this strategy, Swedish development cooperation with Zimbabwe is to contribute to greater respect for human rights, democratic development and strengthened rule of law, equitable health, sustainable livelihoods and climate-resilient and environmentally sustainable development. The strategy will apply for the period 2017–2021 and is worth a total of SEK 1500 million.²

¹ The development agenda comprises the 2030 Agenda including its 17 Global Goals and 169 targets for sustainable development, the outcome document of the Third International Conference on Financing for Development (FfD) (Addis Ababa Action Agenda) and the Paris Agreement.

² This strategy governs the use of funds under appropriation item 9 'Africa' in the appropriation directions for the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida) for each budget year.

2. Country context

Within the framework of the strategy, the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida) is expected to contribute to:

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

- Improved conditions for democratic governance, reduced corruption, responsibility and accountability in public institutions.
- Increased capacity of civil society and independent media to perform their democratic and scrutiny functions.
- Strengthened conditions for gender equality and respect for human rights, with a focus on women and girls.

Equitable health

- Improved access to good quality health services, including increased sustainability and capacity of the health system, focusing on women and children.
- Greater access to and respect for sexual and reproductive health and rights, especially for young people.

Livelihoods, environment, climate and energy

- Improved conditions for sustainable livelihoods, focusing on sustainable food security, productive employment and decent work, especially for women and young people.
- Improved access to renewable energy that is socially and environmentally sustainable.
- Improved capacity of actors to contribute to environmental and climate-resilient sustainability.

Zimbabwe is a low-income country that in recent years has seen a significant deterioration of the progress achieved up until the turn of the millennium. Poverty has increased dramatically. A serious economic situation combined with a deep political crisis dominated by the succession issue is the insecure and unpredictable context in which Zimbabwe's development challenges must be seen. The main development challenges include high poverty levels, increasing food insecurity, lack of democratic governance and respect for human rights, weak public administration, vulnerability to climate change, unsustainable use of natural resources, deep-rooted clientelism, widespread corruption and lack of gender equality. Some commitment to reform is discernible, but what this may mean in practice remains to be seen. The risk of increased political unrest, deepening economic decline and increased poverty is high.

Significant deficiencies in democratic governance remain. The new constitution adopted in 2013 provides a sound basis for improvements, but the

adaptation of other legislation is slow and uneven. Respect for human rights is still lacking/weak. Members of the opposition, activists and independent media are often subjected to harassment. The rule of law is weak and impunity prevails while at the same time the state apparatus and the security sector are repeatedly used to suppress political opposition. Freedom of expression is under pressure and state-owned media dominates. Decentralisation is lagging behind. Although the constitution establishes gender equality as a right and some progress has been made, major gender inequalities remain. Women are underrepresented in decision-making positions, and domestic violence and gender-based violence are commonplace. Many health problems that girls and young women experience are related to the lack of respect for sexual and reproductive health and rights, as well as to child marriages, sexual abuse, early pregnancies and unsafe abortions.

Poverty has risen dramatically in recent years and is officially estimated at 63 per cent of the population, of whom

76 per cent live in rural areas. The country's growth is weak. From having previously been a net exporter of food, Zimbabwe is now in a situation where about one third of the country's population has food security problems, and this proportion is expected to rise as it is becoming increasingly difficult for people to support themselves.

A failed macroeconomic policy has undermined the Government's ability to provide basic social services such as health, education, water and sanitation. Almost the entire state budget goes to civil service salaries, which contributes to the state's inability to provide the entire population with basic social services such as health care.

However, education levels are still high and Zimbabwe has one of the highest literacy rates in Africa. The Zimbabwean diaspora is considerable; many have gone abroad to earn a living. At the same time, remittances from Zimbabweans abroad, which individual families often rely on for survival, have decreased significantly as a result of recession in South Africa. Efforts to facilitate legal movement that protects

migrants' rights in the SADC region are ongoing but lagging.

The country's economy is dominated by mining and agriculture but is hampered by, among other things, inefficiency, drought and falling world market mineral prices, which have contributed to low growth and severe liquidity problems. Agriculture accounts for about seventy per cent of the population's livelihood and employment is dominated by informal businesses in the agricultural sector. Productivity is low for reasons including lack of investment and new technology.

Unemployment and underemployment are very high and concentrated among young people and women. Most of the people with jobs work in the informal sector. High production costs, as a result of problems including lack of reform, the energy crisis and neglected infrastructure, are major challenges facing industry. Foreign investment is hampered by unclear legislation and increasing corruption, among other things.

Zimbabwe's primary environmental and climate challenges include unsustainable use of natural resources such as water, land and forest. Heavy reliance on agriculture makes the poor rural population particularly vulnerable to climate change and natural disasters, and heightens the environmental challenges. Vulnerable groups, such as older people, women, children and parentless households are often harder hit by climate change, environmental impacts and natural disasters. Resilience is weak at both individual level and societal level, and risks further undermining the progress that has been made. The country's energy crisis, exacerbated by drought, has a negative impact on households, industry and growth. Zimbabwe's climate strategy focuses on renewable energy, among other areas, and the potential for electricity production from renewable energy sources and energy efficiency is considerable. However, investment is hampered by the lack of reform and the uncertain political and economic situation.

In 2013, Zimbabwe adopted a five-year national development plan that includes improved social services, infrastructure, food security and economic growth. However, the plan lacks a structure for financing and coordinating contributions, as well as economic conditions for implementation. The Government is drawing up an interim poverty reduction strategy (I-PRSP), with a view to a long-term strategy in 2019.

3. Activities

Sweden's development cooperation with Zimbabwe is to be based on and characterised by a rights perspective and the perspectives of poor people on development. The rights perspective means that human rights and democracy are regarded as fundamental to development. This approach means that individuals and groups that are discriminated against, excluded, and marginalised, are made visible prior to each contribution. This is so that all people will be able to enjoy their rights regardless of gender, age, impairment, ethnicity, religion or other belief, sexual orientation, transgender identity or expression. The perspective of poor people on development means that the situation, needs, circumstances, and priorities of poor women, men and children must be used as the basis for poverty reduction and the promotion of equitable and sustainable development.

Swedish development cooperation is to be economically, socially and environmentally sustainable, and gender-equal. A comprehensive view of the challenges, needs and conditions of poor people

and society is the foundation of development cooperation. The guiding principle is that economic, social and environmental conditions and processes are to be understood and managed in an integrated context. Gender equality and the empowerment and rights of women and girls are both goals in themselves and a prerequisite and a means for achieving sustainable global development. Violence and armed conflict are among the greatest obstacles to economic and social development, and development cooperation is an important part of conflict prevention. An environmental and climate perspective, a gender perspective and a conflict perspective must therefore be systematically integrated into Sweden's development cooperation with Zimbabwe.

Development cooperation is to focus on the poorest and most vulnerable people and households. The internationally agreed principles on aid and development effectiveness will be applied and adapted to Zimbabwe's specific context. The primary

responsibility for a country's development lies with the partner country's government and other national actors. Ownership is seen in a broad, inclusive perspective, which in addition to state actors, includes relevant parts of civil society. Country ownership of the development process must be at the core of development cooperation. Whenever possible, Sweden will contribute to coherent and effective aid coordination in the country, for example through active participation in EU aid coordination and joint programming.

To contribute to greater respect for human rights, strengthened democracy, gender equality and the rule of law, Sweden is to promote more democratic and effective institutions at local and central level in the country. In the event of a positive political development and implementation of reforms, Sweden may consider support to democratically conducted elections. Development cooperation is also to strengthen civil society, including independent media, through increased participation, strengthened monitoring and defence

of human rights, reduced discrimination and improved accountability. Swedish development cooperation is also to increase women's and girls' knowledge about their rights, including participation in political processes and accountability, and contribute to enhanced protection of vulnerable children. The new constitution is an important starting point in this area.

Sweden will contribute to increased access to basic health and social security in the country, focusing on women, children and young people. Development cooperation is to contribute to increased sustainability and capacity of the health system to provide care and services, with a particular focus on improved and more equitable access to good maternal and child health care. Sweden is also to contribute to strengthened legislation and implementation of sexual and reproductive health and rights, as well as increased access to sexual and reproductive health services, especially for young people. Gender-based violence prevention and support for survivors should also be included.

Sweden is to contribute to strengthened livelihood resilience, focusing on sustainable food security, productive employment and decent work, especially for young people and women. Sweden is also to contribute to sustainable use of natural resources, which is an important starting point, as well as strengthened value chains and improved access to renewable energy and energy efficiency, to promote sustainable economic growth. Swedish development cooperation will also contribute to enhancing the capacity of actors at national and local level to contribute to environmental sustainability, greater resilience to environmental change, climate change and natural disasters, as well as improved access to renewable energy. Activities may contribute to strengthened capacity of civil society and public institutions. The conditions for implementing the national climate action plan may thereby be strengthened, as may the opportunities to apply for and obtain financing from climate funds. Sweden is also to contribute to strengthening the resilience of individuals and society to prevent and manage stress factors and external shocks.

The focus of activities and the specific context govern the choice of partners and forms of cooperation. The risk of corruption is high and should be given particular consideration in the design of development cooperation. The main channels for implementing Sweden's development cooperation in Zimbabwe will be civil society, and multilateral and international organisations. In the event of a positive political development, Sida may – after consulting the Swedish Ministry for Foreign Affairs – consider gradually increased cooperation with state actors, where it is deemed effective and strategic for the strategy's implementation, for the purpose of strengthening institutional capacity, increasing democratic transparency and contributing to effective public administration. In the event of such a development, Sida may also review the opportunities for supporting activities focusing on social security systems. Cooperation is to focus on reform-oriented forces seeking new initiatives and contemporary solutions to societal challenges, and promoting greater respect for human rights, democratisation and the rule of law.

Cooperation and exchange between Zimbabwean and Swedish actors may be considered as part of institutional and capacity development, and building relations beyond aid.

Synergies between the various areas of the strategy are to be harnessed as far as possible. Complementarity is also to be sought with other relevant strategies, such as the regional strategy for sub-Saharan Africa, the regional strategy for sexual and reproductive health and rights, and the strategy for humanitarian aid.

In countries characterised by rapid change and conflict, flexibility and the application of a conflict-sensitive approach are essential. Strengthening the resilience of individuals and societies is of great importance. Due to the current situation in Zimbabwe, developments are difficult to predict. Development cooperation must therefore be flexible and a level of preparedness maintained so that, when necessary, contributions can quickly be reassessed and adapted to new conditions and political developments, which must

be taken into account continuously. A level of preparedness must be maintained to enable strategic contributions of limited scope in critical stages. There must be flexibility to enable development resources to be redistributed within and between the various areas of activity. Against this background, consultation between Sida and the Ministry for Foreign Affairs is important.

Follow-up procedures are outlined in the Government's guidelines for strategies. Evaluations are to be considered an integral part of continuous follow-up and will be conducted as necessary. Various performance monitoring methods are to be used to obtain both qualitative and quantitative performance data. A balance should be sought between short-term and long-term results of the contribution portfolio to ensure that aid contributes to equitable and sustainable development.



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