

Strategy for Sweden's development cooperation with Cuba 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 provides the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida) with a total of SEK 175 million. 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 gender equality, and increased respect for human rights and the rule of law.

Environment, climate and sustainable use of natural resources

- Reduced climate impact and greater resilience to climate change.

Inclusive economic development

- Improved conditions for sustainable and inclusive economic development.

2. Country context

Certain political shifts have taken place in Cuba in recent years. A constitutional reform process was concluded, and an economic reform package was adopted in July 2020. At the same time, human rights remain strongly curtailed. The new constitution adopted in 2019 affirms the socialist one-party system.

At the same time, the slow implementation of economic and social reforms, developments in Venezuela and the US sanctions resulted in a difficult economic situation in the country. Like other developing small island states, Cuba is vulnerable to climate change and increasingly frequent floods and

droughts in recent years, while biodiversity in the marine environment and on land has been decimated.

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 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 are expected to specifically contribute to the following sustainable development goals (SDGs) of the 2030 Agenda: zero hunger (SDG 5), decent work and economic growth (SDG 8), industry, innovation and infrastructure (SDG 9), 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 refer to how activities contribute to implementation of the 2030 Agenda.

The development cooperation will comprise a breadth of Cuban actors. Support will be given to agents of change with the aim of contributing to a more open and democratic society. No budget support will be allocated to representatives of the Cuban state or Cuban authorities. Only cooperation with agents of change who are deemed to have the will and capacity to contribute to openness and greater respect for human rights can be considered. Activities should focus on creating points of contact with open

social systems through exchange of experience, capacity development and education campaigns to ultimately contribute to a more open society in Cuba.

A clear rights perspective will permeate activities. Support should be given to civil society and other agents of change to increase capacities for a rights-based approach and accountability. Support should also be given to promote increased knowledge of non-discrimination and participation. Moreover, activities will contribute to increased transparency and reduced corruption. Digital development should also be strengthened to promote openness and transparency. In general, support should go to initiatives that can benefit from the positive effects of digital development and contribute to reducing poverty and oppression in an increasingly globalised world. Innovation and digital development should also be a cross-sectoral issue to contribute to achieving all objectives. Activities will have a special focus on LGBTIQ persons, Afro-Cubans and women. Working with girls and women, boys and men to promote gender equality and combat gender-based violence is central to changing attitudes and norms.

Activities will promote reduced climate impact and climate change adaptation and increased resilience to climate change, with national Cuban ownership, engagement and expertise. Support for nature-based solutions will be included and contribute to preserving ecosystems and biodiversity, and generating public benefit. Activities will also promote sustainable management and use of natural resources. Support for revival of the Cuban economy will be included, with a focus on contributing to economic policy that promotes openness, sustainable production, sustainable consumption and commerce, increased productivity through innovation, and the creation of productive jobs with decent working conditions. There is an opportunity in the private sector to strengthen self-employed persons' capacity with a special focus on women's economic empowerment.

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