

Results strategy for special initiatives for human rights and democratisation for the period 2014–2017

1 Expected results

This strategy governs the use of funds allocated under appropriation item ‘Special initiatives for human rights and democratisation’ in Sida’s appropriation directions for the respective financial year. The strategy will apply for the period 2014–2017.

Activities within the strategy are intended to contribute to freedom from oppression by strengthening human rights, gender equality, democratisation and the rule of law.

Activities are expected to contribute to the achievement of sub-objective 1 in the Government’s aid policy framework (Government Communication 2013/14:131).

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

The following results are expected:

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

Focus on special initiatives for democratisation and freedom of expression

- Improved conditions for change agents to work for democratisation and respect for freedoms of opinion (freedom of expression, information, assembly, demonstration, association and religion).
- Greater opportunities for women to exercise the right to freedom of expression, be an active participant in democratisation processes and exercise influence in public decision-making.
- Increased opportunities for private individuals, groups and civil society organisations to produce, gather and disseminate information via the internet and other information and communication technologies (ICT).
- Strengthened positions and greater security for vulnerable actors for freedom and democratisation, especially in the world’s least free countries.

Focus on global initiatives for human rights, gender equality, democratic development and the rule of law

- Improved impact of Swedish priorities for human rights, gender equality, democratic development and the rule of law.
- Strengthened global change agents promoting democratisation, human rights and the rule of law.
- Greater enjoyment of human rights for lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) persons.

- Strengthened global organisations promoting gender equality, women's organisation, participation and influence in political processes.
- Stronger global organisations and networks promoting democratic development.

Focus on support to election observation missions

- Greater number of citizens exercising their right to vote in free and fair elections.
- Greater number of independent and credible elections.

2 Activities

Sweden's democracy support aims to create conditions for women and men to assert and actively exercise their political and civil rights and, by doing so, increase their influence over their living conditions.

The Government considers that states have both a right and an obligation to expose and criticise human rights violations, and thus a responsibility to support individuals, groups and organisations whose efforts to increase respect for human rights expose them to significant risks. Experience of previously successful and ongoing democratisation processes shows that agents of change, also in civil society, play a central role in promoting democratisation and greater freedom of expression.

Activities should contribute to strengthening human rights, gender equality and democratisation and reduce different forms of vulnerability and oppression. Activities should primarily be channelled through civil society organisations and organisations at global, regional and national level as defined in the various parts of the strategy. Respect for civil and political rights and the rule of law is crucial for democratic development and reducing poverty in all its dimensions.

Activities may include strategic support to democratic transitions, support to change agents promoting democratisation, the rule of law, freedom of expression and freedom of religion. Activities may also include global efforts to promote gender equality and women's rights. Special attention should be given, for example, to activities that help to secure the right to vote and broad political participation, including women's rights and opportunities to exert influence. Furthermore, the activities may include support to combat discrimination against lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) persons and minorities, and to promote the human rights of persons with disabilities.

Important components also include support for free and independent media and functioning multiparty systems based on democratic principles. Activities may also consist of global, regional and national mechanisms for the protection of human rights, including the right to cultural diversity and cultural expression, and favourable conditions for civil society actors.

Activities to promote the increased use of open and free information and communication technologies (ICT) as a tool for democratisation and freedom of expression should be further strengthened. These may include support for secure communication, increased political participation, transparency and conditions for accountability.

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

Focus on special initiatives for democratisation and freedom of expression

Activities should consist of both planned long-term activities and rapid action to improve the conditions for change agents to promote greater democratisation and freedom of expression. Activities should contribute to reducing different forms of vulnerability and oppression.

Activities should contribute to greater opportunities for change agents to disseminate and receive information and express their views. These agents should be given the opportunity to promote pluralism and freedom of opinion so as to pave the way for democratic and transparent decision-making and changes to legislation, etc. which limits freedom of association, freedom of religion, freedom of expression, freedom of the press, the right to a fair hearing in court and the right to defence in court, or otherwise restricting civil rights and freedoms.

Support should be given primarily to individuals, groups or civil society organisations, including human rights defenders, trade unions, journalists and other media actors, politically active persons and party-affiliated organisations, cultural actors, researchers, women's rights groups, religious communities, youth organisations and other relevant actors promoting democratisation and freedom of expression.

Based on Swedish experience in the area, the work of cultural groups to promote democratisation and freedom of expression should be facilitated.

Support should be given to the activities of democracy and human rights defenders in cases where they are forced into exile, such as to guest writers in cities of refuge. Exile-based organisations may also be supported if their activities aim to strengthen change agents in their country of origin.

Support should also be granted to free, independent and professional media by using Swedish expertise in the area and through initiatives with other international and national actors.

Support should be made available through national, regional and global channels.

Focus on global initiatives for human rights, gender equality, democratic development and the rule of law

The strategy covers activities that provide clear global value-added and that are not specific to a particular continent, region or country. Global initiatives consist of support intended to help Swedish priority issues gain recognition and influence international normative policy-making and respect for human rights, democratisation and the rule of law. Support may be given to organisations, networks or other actors that are standard-setters and thus play a key role in Sweden's priority issues. Leading standard-setting organisations include multilateral organisations that are important to Sweden. Support may also be given to global organisations or funds when it is more effective for them to channel support to several countries in the area than for Sweden to provide contributions via bilateral agreements.

Headwind issues where Sweden represents a set of values that is not sufficiently emphasised by other actors in international cooperation should be considered.

Global efforts to strengthen horizontal and vertical accountability and respect for the freedoms of opinion (freedom of expression, information, assembly, demonstration, association and religion) should be supported. Activities may include support to independent media and human rights defenders, as well as to global efforts to strengthen parliaments, civil society's role in democratic development, and efforts showcasing and promoting LGBT persons' full enjoyment of human rights. Global gender equality efforts may include support to global organisations promoting women's organisation, participation and influence in political processes and organisations working to combat gender-based violence, including sexual violence. Activities may also include support for greater respect for the human rights of children and persons with disabilities.

Focus on support to election observation missions

Swedish support and participation in election observation missions are part of, and should be seen in relation to, long-term efforts for democratisation and greater respect for human rights. Support to election observation missions, including training of election observers, is an important instrument of Sweden's democracy assistance. The activities should contribute to greater opportunities for people to influence their living conditions by exerting influence in political and decision-making processes.

Activities should include recruitment and training of short- and long-term observers for participation in election observation missions of the EU and the OSCE (Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe). Decisions concerning Swedish participation in election observation missions are made in close cooperation with ODIHR (responsible for the democracy efforts of the OSCE and its participating States) and with other EU countries and relevant EU institutions.

3 Follow-up

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