Strategy for Sweden’s development cooperation with Bolivia 2016–2020

Focus
Within the framework of this strategy, Swedish development cooperation with Bolivia is to contribute to a better environment and sustainable use of natural resources, reduced climate impact and enhanced resilience, the democratic development of society and improved opportunities for poor people to support themselves. In addition, it is to support a transition from development cooperation to broader relations. The strategy will apply in 2016–2020 and provide a total of SEK 750 million.

Contributions within the framework of the strategy are expected to contribute to:

**Strengthened democracy and gender equality, and greater respect for human rights**
- Strengthened democratic institutions, greater capacity and due process in public administration, and increased participation in political processes.
- Strengthened capacity among public institutions and civil society organisations to promote respect for human rights, with focus on women, children and indigenous people.
- Strengthened capacity among public institutions and civil society organisations to promote gender equality, with particular focus on combating gender-based violence.

**A better environment, reduced climate impact and enhanced resilience to environmental impacts, climate change and natural disasters**
- Strengthened capacity among public institutions and civil society organisations to manage the effects of negative environmental impacts and climate change.
- Enhanced resilience to environmental impacts and climate change in rural areas.
- Increased productivity in primarily small-scale agriculture, including sustainable use and management of natural resources and ecosystem services, with focus on women and indigenous people.
- Greater access to environmentally sustainable community services.

**Better opportunities and tools to enable poor people to improve their living conditions**
- Enhanced conditions for free and fair trade and sustainable investments that will benefit sustainable development, with particular focus on a better environment, reduced climate impact and greater resilience to environmental impacts and natural disasters.
Country context

Bolivia’s development challenges include continuing to reduce poverty, strengthen respect for human rights including children’s rights, increase gender equality and tackle the country’s environmental problems. Democratic institutions are weak and the accountability and transparency systems are deficient. Corruption is widespread and an obstacle to economic and social development in the country. However, it can be noted that many people have lifted themselves out of poverty since 2006, when Evo Morales became president. Bolivia has experienced positive economic development in the last decade and has become a lower middle-income country. The country has succeeded in achieving the Millennium Development Goal of halving poverty and hunger. In particular, the observance of human rights of women and indigenous people has improved. Of the country’s inhabitants, however, around 40 per cent still live in poverty, and in rural areas an estimated 60 per cent are poor.

Bolivia’s economy is dependent on exports of natural gas and raw materials. The falling global market price of gas has resulted in a reduction of Bolivia’s export revenue, which directly affects the central government budget. Increased diversification and improved conditions for trade and investment in other sectors are important to ensure more sustainable development.

It is estimated that a large proportion of children are involved in child labour, and many do jobs that are dangerous. Moreover, the Bolivian Government recently reduced the minimum working age, which prevents children from attending school and exposes children to exploitation and abuse.

Capacity and expertise in public administration is low. One reason for this is the frequent change of staff and politically appointed positions. The constitution specifies that there should be a separation between the legislative, judicial and executive powers, but the latter has become increasingly dominant. Decentralisation to give the right of self-government to municipalities and regions is ongoing but the process is slow, despite the fact that it is emphasised in the constitution. Municipalities have been given considerable responsibility for public services, but lack access to corresponding economic and administrative resources. Sweden has a long tradition of supporting central government institutions and civil society in Bolivia, which makes Sweden well-suited for cooperation in this area.

Despite some progress, respect for human rights is lacking. In particular, women’s, girls’, boys’ and indigenous people’s enjoyment of their human rights is seriously neglected. Historically, Bolivia is a patriarchal society. Women, girls and boys are generally seen as subordinate to men. Seven out of ten women have been subjected to some form of gender-based violence, which is the highest level in Latin America. A disturbing trend is that civil society’s ability to operate freely has been restricted.

The country’s dependence on natural resources and the population’s vulnerability to climate change has made environmentally and climate-friendly sustainable development and sustainable use of natural resources a crucial issue for Bolivia’s future. The country has rich biodiversity which is an enormous resource but which is also under threat from exploitation and climate change. The strong economic development of recent years has often taken place at the expense of a long-term use of natural resources, and has also resulted in major environmental problems and social challenges. Emissions of air and environmental
pollutants from cities, industries and mining pollute watercourses and groundwater reservoirs, and this can also adversely affect health, working environments, agriculture, and gender equality. Deforestation and land erosion, caused by inferior agricultural practices, threaten long-term economic development and contribute to global warming. The overuse of chemicals is a major health and environmental problem. Large proportions of the population lack access to basic public services such as water, sanitation and waste management. This in turn leads to increased vulnerability to climate variations and natural disasters, regarding the environment, health and economic survival. Women, children and indigenous people are among the most vulnerable. Sweden’s long experience of sustainability issues, along with a wide range of partners and actors in Bolivia, contributes to significant added value in its development cooperation.

Activities

Sweden’s development cooperation with Bolivia should be based on and characterised by a rights perspective and the perspective of poor people on development. The rights perspective means that human rights and democracy are to be regarded as fundamental to development. Such an approach involves giving visibility ahead of each contribution to individuals and groups who are discriminated against, excluded and marginalised, so that all people, regardless of gender, age, disability, ethnicity, religion or other belief, sexual orientation, transgender identity or expression, are able to enjoy their rights. The perspectives of poor people on development means that the situation, needs, circumstances and priorities of poor women, men and children are to be the starting point for fighting poverty and promoting equitable and sustainable development.

Swedish development cooperation is to integrate environmental sustainability, gender equality, and peaceful and democratic development. The basis of development cooperation is a holistic view of the challenges facing poor people and societies, and their needs and opportunities to improve their situation. The guiding principle is that economic, social and environmental conditions and processes are to be interpreted and managed in an integrated context. Gender equality and the empowerment and rights of women and girls are both goals in themselves, as well as a prerequisite and a means for achieving sustainable global development. Violence and armed conflicts are two of 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 are therefore to be systematically integrated into Sweden’s development cooperation with Bolivia.

Internationally agreed principles on aid and development effectiveness are to be applied in Swedish development cooperation with Bolivia and adapted to the specific context. The main responsibility for a country’s development lies with the partner countries’ governments and other national actors. Ownership is seen from a broad, inclusive perspective which, alongside state actors, includes relevant parts of civil society. Development cooperation should place ownership of a country’s own development at the core by taking its cue from the partner country’s development strategy and other relevant national documents, and the country’s national climate action plan.
Sweden will promote coherent and effective aid coordination in the country, above all by means of active participation in EU aid coordination and joint programming. A perspective beyond aid is of particular importance. In implementing the strategy, Sweden will therefore encourage Bolivia to strengthen the conditions for domestic resource mobilisation, international trade and investments, and moreover stimulate partnerships that, in the long term, can continue without development cooperation funding. Institution-building measures, capacity development and exchanges of experience should be integral parts of this work. The broadened relations, including trade, are to contribute to viability, increased prosperity and sustainable development in Bolivia. Strategic choices of contributions and actors can be identified in collaboration with the partner country so as to be able to combine the aims of poverty reduction and improved conditions for trade and investment.

The Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida) is to ensure that a holistic view is taken of the total Swedish support to a country or region when implementing a strategy. Synergies between the different areas of the strategy are therefore to be harnessed as far as possible. Synergies are also to be sought with other relevant strategies, including developing capacity, institutions and research cooperation.

Sweden is to help strengthen democratic developments and respect for human rights at national and local level in Bolivia, focusing on women, children and indigenous people. Activities are to focus on strengthening the democratic process, including by increasing women’s and indigenous people’s participation in municipal and regional boards. Activities that aim to strengthen public institutions, civil society organisations and actors of change for the protection of human rights including children’s right to development are also to be included. The ongoing decentralisation process to strengthen local democracy and streamline local and national public administration will be supported. Contributions to strengthen the rule of law should also be considered. Sweden will promote increased respect for, and better observance of, human rights for indigenous people. The vulnerability of women, girls and boys to sexual and gender-based violence must be included in preventive efforts, and this calls for the possibility of redress by individuals affected.

In environmentally and climate-friendly sustainable development and sustainable use of natural resources, activities are to help enhance institutions’ and households’ resilience to environmental impacts and climate change, the capacity to adapt to environment and climate change and the potential for recovery. Sustainable administration and sustainable use of ecosystems and natural resources, such as land, water and forests, contribute to durable ecosystem services, which are an important prerequisite for resilience to environmental impacts and climate change, and should be included in development cooperation. Activities should also encompass enhanced capacity in primarily small-scale agriculture to sustainably use natural resources. In addition, priority will be given to better access to environmentally sustainable basic public services, such as water and sanitation, for long-term sustainable development. Particular attention will be given to civil society’s capacity to promote improved opportunities for accountability in relation to public institutions.

Swedish development cooperation is to contribute to improved potential to benefit from trade and investments. Reinforcing trade-related institutions and enhancing the ability to
meet international standards and sustainability requirements are key. Particular attention should be given to the opportunities for women and indigenous people to take part in, and benefit from, the advantages of local, regional and international trade.

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