



Sida's Policy Sustainable Development

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SWEDISH INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT
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Department for Natural Resources
and the Environment

Sida's POLICY ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

PREFACE

Sweden has committed herself to working for sustainable development. In consequence, follow-up activities related to the UN Conference on the Environment and Development (UNCED) are currently being carried out in a number of areas. Development cooperation is one of these. The Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida) has launched a comprehensive *Action Programme for Sustainable Development*, consisting of more than 60 action points involving all areas of Sida's operation. A translation of the initial policy chapter of Sida's Action Programme follows below.

POLICY ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

1. OBJECTIVES AND POINTS OF REFERENCE

The fifth objective for development cooperation, established by the Swedish Parliament in 1988, stipulates that Swedish development cooperation shall contribute to the sustainable use of natural resources and the protection of the environment.

In accordance with the undertakings arising from Sweden's ratification of the Rio Declaration, Agenda 21 and international environmental conventions, developmental and environmental issues shall be integrated together within the framework of Swedish development cooperation.

Sweden has committed herself to work for sustainable development. Follow-up activities to the UN Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED) are under way in many areas and Sida is further developing its approaches and policies. An official Commission on development cooperation and the environment was appointed by the Government during the spring of 1994. The Commission's final report, *Sustainable Aid - Swedish Development Assistance after UNCED* (Ds 1994:132, hereinafter referred to as the Sustainable Development report), was presented to the Government in November 1994 and was circulated for comment to interest groups, state agencies and other organisations during the spring of 1995.

This *Action Programme for Sustainable Development* sets out what Sida intends to do to put the recommendations of the Sustainable Development report into practice.

2. APPROACH

A fundamental point of departure - but a problematic one - is that sustainable development is not a unidimensional concept. As a measure of *development*, economic growth in its narrowest definition is both insufficient and out of date. Nor is it possible first to discuss development - let alone economic growth - and leave the environment to later. The actual content of development must be defined and specified and *development* and *environmental protection* must be regarded as two sides of the same coin.

The development paths of industrialised countries cannot be used as a yardstick to define the concept - we have not yet achieved environmentally sustainable development ourselves. It is also clear that local environmental conditions are of decisive import in defining the term - it is therefore not possible to define *one* path to sustainable development.

Sida's Action Programme thus focuses on *development cooperation for sustainable development from the environmental perspective*, but it assumes the broad definition of development found in the Sustainable Development report, which integrates ecological and environmental issues with economic, social, cultural and political ones. This inter-linking is also expressed through Sida's activities - indirectly, Sida activities in all these fields could also be said to be environmental activities. However, this Action Programme naturally cannot report on all these activities.

Every country bears the final responsibility for its own environment and its natural resources as well as for actively working towards environmentally sustainable development. It is impossible for Swedish development assistance in itself to create sustainable development in recipient countries. One important point of focus is thus to strengthen and develop the *recipient countries' own capacity* to analyse and manage their own environmental problems. The needs of the recipient are the basis of development cooperation.

3. PRINCIPLES

Development cooperation through Sida for sustainable development shall:

- Assist recipient countries to identify and implement activities which protect and conserve the natural resources and environment of the country;
- Emphasise and support sustainability in a long-term perspective;
- Follow the principle that prevention is better than cure;
- Enable recipient countries to work with long-term planning horizons.

This carries the following consequences:

- The environmental perspective must be included in Sida's general development analyses as well as in its country, sector and project analyses;
- Sida shall refrain from contributing to projects which obstruct sustainable development;
- Environmental consciousness and environmental considerations must be integrated into the work of all of Sida's departments.

4. METHODS OF WORK

The focus of the development cooperation to be carried out in Sweden's programme countries for each coming five year period is established in the relevant *Country Strategy*. One basic task in the work of developing a country strategy is to examine whether the Swedish assistance to the country in question should have the objective of contributing directly to sustainable development from an environmental point of view. An analysis of environmental issues will always be given prominence in the work of developing a

country strategy. The environmental analysis will focus on the Swedish assistance to the country in question and firstly, cover environmental aspects of the intended Swedish support as a whole, secondly, propose how environmental matters should be addressed through projects in other sectors and thirdly, propose special projects to be given priority within the environmental sector itself.

Environmental issues will constitute an integral part of projects financed through the country frame allocation whose primary focus is on another sector. In addition, a larger number of purely environmental projects will be implemented *financed from the country frame allocation*.

The *special environment allocation* will primarily be utilised for methods development, for experimental and pilot projects and for strategically important environmental projects for which the country frame allocation cannot be used, mostly at an introductory stage.

The environmental impact of development programmes and projects will be analysed before the decision to support them is made. Environmental impact assessments will be carried out for all projects in accordance with established guidelines. Such an assessment may result in the realisation that environmental effects are not relevant to the project in question. Any project initiated in the past without the benefit of an environmental impact study will be examined from this perspective as soon as possible, especially where an extension is planned. Ongoing activities which do not fulfill environmental protection requirements will be phased out as soon as possible. Methods for strategic environmental impact assessment will be developed in collaboration with other development cooperation agencies.

Environmentally-based economic analysis will be applied to the greatest possible extent.

Sida will cooperate in *multilateral activities* in the field of environment and development, in close coordination with the Ministry for Foreign Affairs, the Ministry of the Environment, the National Environment Protection Agency and other interest groups. Some of the most suitable areas for such cooperation are in the follow-up work to UNCED (CSD) and to the international conventions within the environmental field.

In principle, the responsibility for the inclusion of environmental issues in development assistance activities is *decentralised* within Sida. All heads and programme officers are answerable for the integration of environmental issues within their particular areas of responsibility, and department heads must ensure that sufficient competence exists within their respective departments. The central Environment Policy Division is generally available to provide advice and support and is also responsible for general policy and methods development in this field.

Sida's *Department for Evaluations and Internal Audit* will systematically assess the extent to which environmental guidelines and concerns are being observed, both in-house and within development assistance.

5. PRIORITIES

Part II in the Swedish version of the Action Programme presents some of the ongoing and planned environment-related programmes and activities. Below are listed the subject areas and methods which are to be specially emphasised and developed during the coming years.

During the next few years the following *subject areas* will be specially prioritised:

a. Water resources

Water is a finite, vulnerable and non-exchangeable resource. In many developing countries it is being used in an uncontrolled and non-sustainable fashion. Water utilisation must be planned on the basis of its availability and not, as previously, based solely on consumption needs. Water shortages will soon become a serious threat to development in many areas.

b. Sustainable use of land and forest, and soil conservation

The future supply of food is a source of great concern. The world's population is continuing to increase, while agricultural production shows signs of stagnation in many areas. Extensive areas of land are becoming exhausted and subject to environmental degradation. The competent management of land resources will be decisive for the future food supply and chances of survival for a substantial number of people on this planet.

c. The marine environment

The marine environment is threatened by uncontrolled fishing, by pollution from shipping, cities, industries and agriculture and by direct physical destruction. When mangrove swamps, coral reefs and kelp beds disappear, the very basis of coastal fishing also disappears. Coastal marine ecosystems are the production areas for the primary protein intake of between one and two billion people. These people are dependant on coastal fishing for their individual development and their health.

d. Urban environmental issues

Migration into the cities, especially those in coastal areas, is occurring at an increasingly rapid pace and will continue without respite. It has been estimated that at least half of the population of developing countries will live in urban areas within 20 years. Rapid urbanisation causes environmental problems to increase, with serious consequences for the health of the population.

e. Environmentally sound production and consumption of energy

The future supply of energy appears to be one of the greatest challenges to humanity just now, especially as regards the preservation of the environment. The greenhouse effect, acid rain effects on soil and water, and direct effects on people's health all demand the development of sustainable energy systems.

The following *methods* will be specially emphasised and applied in Sida's development cooperation during the next few years:

f. Competence, capacity and institutional development

Support to the development of recipient countries' own ability to manage environmental problems, as well as to environment and natural resource planning, will form major components of Swedish development assistance.

g. NGOs and civil society

These play a particularly important role in bringing about the establishment of environmentally sound sustainable development. As a complement to its support to government environmental projects, Sida will actively search for ways to support strategically important non-governmental activities in the environmental field.

6. APPLICATION OF THE GOAL IN SWEDEN

Sweden is responsible for part of the global consumption of resources. The way we treat our natural resources and environment on a national level - our consumption and production patterns - is important both for our credibility in the international development debate and cooperation and for the general environmental situation, not only in Sweden but also in other countries.

In the Action Programme there follows Part II, *Plan of Action*, which includes more than 60 action points involving all areas of Sida's operation. They are grouped under the following headings:

1. Prioritised Subject Areas and Methods (in detail)
2. Integration of Environmental Issues in Sida's Activities
3. Cooperation with Other Actors
4. Information Work
5. Organisational Development
6. Capacity Building within Sida

Sida's various Departments will carry out their respective action points.



Sida

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