

Revised development cooperation strategy

Afghanistan

January 2012 – December 2014



REGERINGSKANSLIET

Government Offices
of Sweden

Revised development cooperation strategy for Afghanistan 2012 – 2014

1. INTRODUCTION

One of the world's poorest countries, Afghanistan faces major challenges which are particularly affected by developments and events in the region as a whole. The ongoing armed conflict in the country now poses the greatest single obstacle to favourable economic and social development. The conflict is further fuelled by the absence of effective governance and lack of respect for the principles of the rule of law and human rights, particularly with regard to the ability of women and girls to enjoy their human rights. Widespread unemployment, lack of social development, corruption and erosion of state and government legitimacy are major obstacles to long-term, stable development. Moreover, illegal production and trafficking of drugs is having a profoundly adverse and destabilising effect on development both in Afghanistan and the rest of the world.

The humanitarian situation in the country continues to be extremely grave. Despite progress in some areas, there are major problems in terms of the ability of many Afghans to satisfy their basic needs. The situation is further complicated by the ongoing conflict and recurring natural disasters.

There are development needs in all sectors of society. However, donor involvement is fragmented and coordinating development assistance is problematical. Swedish support should be aimed at concentrating efforts to areas where Sweden enjoys special comparative advantages. Focused Swedish development cooperation together with the efforts of other Nordic countries and through the EU, can play an important role in Afghanistan.

The international community's involvement in Afghanistan has entered a new phase. The mutual commitments undertaken under the so-called Kabul process are intended to ensure gradually increasing Afghan ownership and responsibility alongside long-term, sustainable international support and partnership. 2014 will mark an important milestone as Afghan authorities take over responsibility for countrywide security from the international military structures through the so-called transitional process. Strengthening public institutions and functioning mechanisms for accountability are important factors to the success of this process.

Sweden's spectrum of contributions in Afghanistan will be revised and developed in line with these overall objectives and in accordance with the parliamentary agreement reached in 2010. Accordingly, the next few years, beginning in 2012, will see a gradual reduction of Sweden's military presence and a greater focus on civilian reconstruction efforts with the aim of promoting Afghan development and institution building. Broad-based Afghan ownership is crucial to stable, long-term development in Afghanistan. For Sweden, the handover of responsibility for security will entail a closer focus on the Northern provinces in which Sweden has a special responsibility.

Like other donor countries, Sweden is committed under the Kabul process to channel at least 50 per cent of its support through the Afghan government's systems and to adapt more closely to national systems and priorities by 2012. While Sweden is well on the way to achieving these objectives, it should be noted that little progress has been made in terms of the capacity of Afghan authorities to handle the increased resource flows. The political will and ability to deal effectively with issues such as corruption and lack of respect for human rights can be questioned. Nevertheless, it is vitally important to strengthen the central systems and contribute to capacity development and greater transparency, although this must not come at the expense of effectiveness and cost control of aid interventions. Effective ways must be found to help promote democratic governance.

Swedish support for national programmes should target two sectors: 1) *democracy, human rights and gender equality*, and 2) *education*. *Contributions in northern Afghanistan* must at the same time be strengthened by focusing on capacity building within local democratic institutions, including administrative reforms at local level, enhancing legal certainty in administrative bodies and procedures at district and provincial level, and providing support for the development of the private sector. Civil society is playing an increasingly important role. Sweden should therefore contribute to the work of strengthening civil society organisations as well as to efforts by advocacy groups to promote democracy, respect for human rights, and greater transparency in the central government administration.

The present revised strategy is intended to govern Swedish development cooperation with Afghanistan from January 2012 to December 2014. It thus constitutes a one-year extension of the strategy adopted by the government in July 2009. Volumes will gradually rise to approximately *SEK 560 million in 2012*, to approximately *SEK 600 million in 2013* and to approximately *SEK 620 million in 2014*.

2. OVERALL OBJECTIVES AND PRIORITIES, OBJECTIVES AND PRIORITIES FOR AID EFFECTIVENESS, AND OVERARCHING DIALOGUE ISSUES

Overall objectives and priorities

The overall objective of Swedish development cooperation in Afghanistan is to enable *people living in poverty, particularly women, girls and young people, to enjoy better living conditions in a peaceful, democratic and legally secure society.*

Corruption is to be actively combated and prevented in all sectors of cooperation. Furthermore, Swedish contributions must be characterised by conflict sensitivity and contribute to a conflict prevention approach. In recent years, Sweden has been an important recipient country of Afghani asylum seekers. Efforts should be made to identify opportunities to utilise the experience of the Afghan diaspora both in Sweden and the rest of Europe, as well as that of a larger number Swedish actors, in order to broaden the cooperation partner base.

Cooperation is to be based on Afghan priorities as expressly provided in the *Afghanistan National Development Strategy (ANDS)*, *National Priority Programmes (NPP)* and development plans at provincial and district level. To strengthen Afghan ownership, cooperation must be characterised by greater coordination and harmonisation and be closely adapted to Afghanistan's own systems. Development cooperation should avoid the establishment of short-term parallel structures.

Initiatives, including those at national level, must contribute to fair and sustainable development, the goal of Sweden's policy for global development. Of the Government's thematic priorities, primary emphasis is to be placed on democracy and human rights, the promotion of gender equality and the role of women in development in Afghanistan. The adoption of a rights perspective and the perspective of poor people on development is important.

Humanitarian assistance is an important part of Swedish support to Afghanistan. Support in this area is to be governed by the Swedish government's strategy on humanitarian assistance and guided by the principles of humanity, impartiality, neutrality and independence. Collaboration between humanitarian assistance and long-term development cooperation must be as close and effective as possible.

Aid effectiveness: objectives and priorities

- *A programme-based approach to be applied to at least 50 per cent of Sweden's contribution portfolio by the end of the strategy period.*
- *Improved donor coordination including a stronger role for the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) and more effective coordination in EU circles.*
- *Strengthened coordination structures in northern Afghanistan based on inclusive local ownership.*

Sweden will work for greater aid effectiveness and thereby help ensure that agreed OECD/DAC principles are upheld, particularly with respect to fragile states and to the EU Code of Conduct on Complementarity and the Division of Labour in Development Policy.

Collaboration with the EU and other Nordic countries on institution building measures and dialogue with Afghan representatives should be intensified. Contributing to the implementation of the EU Action Plan is a key means of achieving this.

Helping to strengthen UNAMA's role as an important actor in civilian interventions and donor coordination is essential. Sweden should assume special responsibility in northern Afghanistan and actively seek to improve coordination.

Forms of development cooperation

The Afghanistan Reconstruction Trust Fund (ARTF) and other donor funds should continue to serve as important channels for Swedish development assistance, which should be increasingly focused on programme-based approaches. The feasibility of implementing performance-based aid modalities should be explored. Substantial, coordinated support via multilateral organisations is essential to maintaining aid effectiveness and donor coordination. Earmarking of Swedish support channelled through multilateral organisations should be avoided.

Efforts in all cooperation areas should be aimed at developing a well-integrated, concentrated portfolio, with a limited number of major initiatives which then can be supplemented by smaller, innovative, strategic initiatives. There should be scope to act flexibly and rapidly when necessary.

Swedish support must be based on mutual responsibility. In particular, activities must be predicated on the requirement that Afghan partners live up to their commitments, particularly with regard to improved governance, greater respect for human rights and combating corruption. Support channelled through the partner country's public systems

may only be increased provided the Afghan government meets its commitments under the Kabul process.

Afghanistan must be open to loans and guarantees. Loan and guarantee terms will be assessed on a case-by-case basis.

General dialogue issues

Sweden is to maintain an intensive, focused dialogue on human rights and gender equality, in particular the ability of women and children to enjoy their human rights. The dialogue should focus on gender-related violence and the ability of women to enjoy their economic and political rights. This includes expanded opportunities for girls to receive an education and for women to support themselves and thereby reduce their vulnerability. The selected cooperation areas offer entry points for dialogue in these areas. An important point of departure here is implementation of UN Security Council Resolutions 1325, 1820 and 1612. Collaboration with the EU and the Nordic countries should constitute a central platform for Swedish dialogue.

3. SECTORS SELECTED FOR SUPPORT TO NATIONAL PROGRAMMES

Sector 1: Democracy, human rights and gender equality

SECTOR OBJECTIVES

- *Strengthened democratic institutions and systems for public financial management, and greater transparency in central government administration.*
- *Strengthened ability of women to enjoy their human rights and influence the development of society.*
- *The presence of viable actors in civil society and free, independent media capable of contributing to greater accountability and a more transparent public administration.*

In order to achieve these objectives, Sweden must continue to support the state-building process in Afghanistan towards transparent, responsible and efficient public administration at central and provincial level. In supporting reform, particular emphasis must be placed on capacity development so that Afghanistan is able to handle decision-making processes independently, strengthen its budget process and combat corruption. Support to the *Afghanistan Reconstruction Trust Fund (ARTF)* is an important component here. Opportunities for targeted pilot projects aimed at combating corruption should be explored. Joint donor programmes and coordination, in particular with the EU, play a central role in the sector.

Consideration may also be given to extending limited support for capacity-building measures that foster the rule of law, as part of efforts to strengthen public administration. Programmes and projects in this area should be undertaken primarily in northern Afghanistan, and linked to reform measures at central government level. Efforts should be made to determine the conditions for a coordinated support for advisory, training and capacity-building measures to authorities and institutions with a view to strengthening the rule of law.

Sweden is to support activities that serve to promote human rights, in particular those of women, and the ability of young people and children to enjoy their human rights. In addition, Sweden is to support and contribute to conditions favourable to the work of agents of change in order to help widen political space, promote freedom of expression and better enable civil society to actively and critically scrutinise and monitor the exercise of power. Support must help enhance the ability of civil society to influence decision-making and demand accountability. As independent media and freedom of expression are of major importance to democratic development, Sweden must also be prepared to extend support in these areas. Particular consideration should be given to the feasibility of supporting new media.

With regard to the ability of women and girls to enjoy their human rights, special priority is to be given to support for: 1) *women's participation and influence*, 2) *sexual and reproductive health and rights*, and 3) *measures to prevent gender-based violence*. It is especially important that efforts to increase gender equality include measures aimed at boys and young men. UN Security Council Resolution 1325, which emphasises the role of women as key actors in efforts to achieve peace and security, is an important basis for cooperation in this area. Priority is to be given to protecting and strengthening the ability of children to enjoy their human rights in conflict situations. Support for the implementation of the national action plan on Security Council Resolution 1612 (focused specifically on preventing the recruitment and use of minors by armed forces or groups and on the prevention of sexual violence against children) can be relevant to ongoing efforts to help protect children against different forms of violence in Afghanistan. Activities aimed at supporting the rights of people with disabilities are also especially relevant in Afghanistan.

Sector 2: Education

SECTOR OBJECTIVES

- *Increased access to primary education of good quality, with special focus on girls' right to education.*
- *More trained teachers.*
- *Increased literacy among women aged 15–24.*

Support in this area must be aimed at further strengthening the development of the education sector, and based on previously gained experience.

Support must serve to promote the right of all girls and boys to high-quality education. Special efforts must be made to help ensure that more girls are able to complete their schooling. Priority is to be given to initiatives aimed at enhancing teacher skills and competence. To help ensure that more girls attend school, efforts must be made to increase the number of women teachers.

Consideration should be given to the feasibility of implementing targeted contributions in the education sector aimed at combating corruption, primarily in collaboration with other donors.

The right to education for girls and boys with disabilities is to be supported through a range of measures.

Efforts rooted in a conflict and gender equality perspective are of central importance, and priority is to be given to support for interventions that help prevent conflicts and protect and strengthen children affected by armed conflicts. UN Security Council Resolutions 1325 and 1612 serve as points of departure for this work. For many pupils, the right to education is continually at risk of being neglected or disregarded owing to the armed conflict. It is therefore vital that education and training programmes and projects are implemented in a conflict-sensitive manner and that efforts are made to develop innovative education models. Consideration should be given to the establishment of literacy programmes for girls/women. These can be put in place as extensions of primary school programmes or be made an integrated part of private sector development programmes in northern Afghanistan.

4. SUPPORT TO THE PROVINCES OF NORTHERN AFGHANISTAN

OBJECTIVES

In addition to the objectives set for Afghanistan as a whole (see Section 3), Sweden has the following specific objectives for northern Afghanistan (the provinces of Balkh, Samangan, Sar-e-Pul and Jowzjan):

- *Strengthened administrative capacity at provincial and district level so that basic social services can be delivered in a democratic and legally secure manner.*
- *A growing private business sector able to help improve livelihoods and boost employment, particularly among women and young people.*

- i. Development of local democracy and public administration at provincial and district level. Support to democratic institutions and administrative bodies at provincial and district level should be linked to ongoing reforms at central government level as well as to reform work under way in the ministries at provincial level, with the aim of strengthening their ability to effectively implement reforms at local level. Innovative measures designed to contribute to greater transparency in administrative processes and to combat corruption should be implemented.
- ii. The rule of law is crucial to conflict prevention, to efforts to strengthen peace in the long term, and to the creation of a secure and safe environment conducive to sustainable development. Measures to strengthen capacity to sustain the rule of law. As operations in this area are fragmented and donor coordination is deficient, it is particularly important that actions should be coordinated and closely linked to national reforms.
- iii. Civil society's capacity to monitor the emergence of the rule of law should be further strengthened. A key task is to reinforce the links between central government and provincial level in terms of reform work so that democratically made decisions are implemented in practice, and institutions at local level can strengthen their capacity.
- iv. Opportunities for further education/training and vocational training, particularly for women and young people, should be enhanced as part of programmes and projects aimed at supporting private sector development. Sweden should accordingly look at ways of helping to improve access to vocational training programmes with clear links to the private sector. Special priority should be given to support for women and other employment-related support aimed at risk groups, such as young men, in order to prevent the conflict from spreading and counter recruitment to criminal networks. Contributions should also include support for the development and maintenance of local roads and other pro-development investment activities with a closer focus on capacity-building and opportunities to contribute to improved livelihoods and access to social services for poor people.
- v. There may be valid grounds for focusing Swedish support geographically in northern Afghanistan. However, assistance should be extended in those geographical areas where conditions for achieving long-term results are most propitious. Promoting a conflict prevention approach in the implementation is especially important. To boost the effectiveness of Swedish support, greater emphasis should be placed on exploiting the synergy potential between aid interventions.

- vi. Opportunities to harness the potential of the Afghan diaspora in this area, e.g. through intensified exchanges, should be explored.

5. OTHER INTERVENTIONS

The Government sees a need for additional contributions in the areas of civilian crisis and conflict management, security sector reform, disaster risk reduction and capacity-building for disaster management and contingency planning at local level. Selective measures to this end should be implemented in collaboration and coordination with the Swedish Civil Contingencies Agency (MSB), the Folke Bernadotte Academy (FBA) and, where appropriate, Swedish law enforcement authorities. Contributions are to be focused primarily on northern Afghanistan.

Support for interventions involving the handling of landmines and unexploded ordnance should continue, with a focus on national capacity development in order to enable Afghanistan to adhere to the terms of the Ottawa Convention.

6. AMOUNT AND IMPLEMENTATION

The amount of aid will increase in steps to approximately SEK 560 million in 2012, to approximately SEK 600 million in 2013 and to approximately SEK 620 million in 2014. Interventions that strengthen the capacity of civil society and its role in a pluralistic society are of particular importance. Provided effectiveness and local ownership can be ensured and implementation is possible from a security standpoint, the total volume of civilian support to northern Afghanistan should account for approximately a third of total contributions.

Staffing and implementation

Sida is responsible for ensuring that sufficient staff resources are allocated to ensure effective, results-oriented implementation of the Swedish support. However, the physical security risks for personnel and property are considerable. Staff security must therefore always take precedence, which means that security is a major factor in the way in which Swedish development cooperation is implemented.

7. SCENARIOS AND RISK MANAGEMENT

Given the adverse political development in recent years and in light of the security situation in large parts of Afghanistan, the risk factors for development cooperation are significant. The physical security risks with regard to staff and property are significant, as

are the risks of corruption and misuse of funds. This will entail conscious risk-taking, flexibility and regular reconciliation between the Government Offices/Ministry for Foreign Affairs and Sida.

Scenarios that can affect development cooperation

In an improved scenario, security will improve in the most densely populated areas in the coming years, although sporadic terror attacks will continue. A gradual strengthening of central government capacity and a degree of decline in corruption. This would mean that a growing proportion of Swedish support could be channelled via ARTF or similar funds, but supplemented by a substantial project portfolio for support to civil society organisations – mainly for advocacy work, which would strengthen the ability of women, children and young people to enjoy their human rights – and for support for greater transparency in the political system. The development cooperation and civilian presence in the north will be important, especially towards the end of the strategy period, as means of strengthening the transitional process. Programmes and projects which were initiated in the north and have shown good results should be continued although the Swedish civilian presence may eventually be based in Kabul.

International development cooperation with Afghanistan may decline as international military forces are withdrawn after 2014. This is likely to pose major challenges in terms of development and economic growth in Afghanistan. Sweden should therefore continue to urge donors to meet their commitments and pledges to Afghanistan.

In a less favourable scenario, the authoritarian tendencies of the government would be strengthened and its legitimacy undermined, thereby further weakening the capacity for reconstruction and development cooperation. In such a case, Swedish development cooperation should be reduced in volume, mainly take the form of support to civil society and be implemented through NGOs or UN bodies with a continued presence in Afghanistan.

A worst-case scenario would see the total collapse of the state and the takeover of different parts of the country by criminal or militant groups. Civil war cannot be ruled out. In this scenario, current development cooperation efforts should be replaced mainly by humanitarian assistance and, if possible, support to civil society.

Given the conflict situation, the level of poverty, the lack of political will and ability to deal with governance issues, accountability and human rights, combined with the country's weak capacity, contributions must be designed with realistic timetables for achieving goals as reforms typically take a long time to take effect. As corruption is an obstacle to democratic development, the fight against corruption must inform all Swedish contributions.

Risk management

- Greater focus on risk management in the design, implementation and follow-up of aid interventions, where in particular a conflict prevention approach is especially relevant.
- Greater use of evaluations and audits, preferably as joint donor exercises.
- Sida is to actively promote risk management practices and approaches in each sector, including through joint donor efforts, and seek to ensure a balanced contribution portfolio with higher and lower risks and a mix of aid modalities.
- Swedish initiatives within the ARTF framework for support for the development of public financial management systems and control contribute to risk reduction and reduced corruption.
- Support for capacity development so that implementing parties and Afghan actors can drive these reforms forward themselves in the event of the international community being forced to reduce or change its presence in Afghanistan. Assessment of cooperation partners' capacity is also particularly important.
- Sweden's strengthened civilian presence in northern Afghanistan creates better conditions for following up interventions and can thereby help reduce risks in the implementation stage.
- Continued use of multilateral channels for an extended period in the event developments prevent a transition to cooperation modalities incorporating additional significant elements of local ownership.
- Close coordination, particularly with Nordic donors and the EU, so as to enable joint follow-ups and dialogue with Afghan representatives. There should be preparedness for adjustments in the direction and extent of cooperation and the channels used.

8. COLLABORATION WITH OTHER DONORS

Development cooperation with Afghanistan is marked by the large-scale military presence in the country. Almost all the traditional donors are present in Afghanistan. In addition, many non-traditional donors are active in the country, e.g. neighbouring countries in the region.

The result is 'donor congestion' and fragmentation of development cooperation, making coordination and harmonisation a serious challenge. The largest single donor is the US, which dominates the donor situation in Afghanistan and is active in virtually all areas.

The World Bank administers the ARTF and focuses on building up state capacity, rural development and private sector development. Sweden extends significant support to ARTF; and the Fund has the potential to become a forum for closer coordination.

Priority is to be given to efforts to further strengthen cooperation with the Nordic countries, particularly in the areas of democratic governance, human rights – especially the ability of women, young people and children to enjoy these rights – and support to civil society.

Within the UN family, UNICEF and Sweden are working together in the field of education. The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) is active in the sphere of democratic governance – as is UN Women in terms of measures aimed at enabling women to enjoy their human rights – and will continue to be key cooperation partners. In the four Northern provinces, Sweden supports a road rehabilitation programme in cooperation with the United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS). The aim of the programme is to increase accessibility to social services and contribute to improved livelihoods in neglected areas. Improving women's ability to support themselves independently is the focal concern of a sub-project for small investments, initiated at the request of local communities.

The European Commission's activities in this area are mainly concerned with rural development, democratic governance and health, along with a focus on civilian capacity building.

Sweden should continue to press for greater coordination with the EU and contribute to the implementation of the EU Action Plan on Afghanistan. It is of key importance that collaboration and common positions be continually adapted to development needs – not least from a risk management perspective.

Under its mandate, UNAMA has a key role in aid coordination along with the Afghan government. Sweden should contribute to efforts to strengthen this function.

The biggest donors on the ground in northern Afghanistan are the US, Germany and Turkey. Sweden should assume special responsibility and seek to improve coordination mechanisms locally in northern Afghanistan. These should be based on close local ownership with Afghan representatives.

9. COHERENCE

Sweden's involvement in Afghanistan must continue to include political dialogue, security operations, and development and civilian programmes and projects. Basically, these areas are closely interlinked and form a single integrated whole. Migration policy and

Promoting Sweden must also remain permanent components of Sweden's total contributions in Afghanistan.

Sweden's presence in northern Afghanistan, both military and civilian, should be viewed as a cohesive undertaking in order to consolidate interventions and thereby contribute to sustainable results. Support for development and improved democratic governance is the overriding goal of Swedish development cooperation in Afghanistan. Measures to improve security are a key factor in achieving this. The total Swedish support must be characterised by consensus and coordination. Although close collaboration where necessary is essential, confusion between civilian and military tasks must be avoided. The military operation provides security- and institution-building support to the Afghan security structures as well as support for more long-term, sustainable involvement aimed at promoting Afghan development and capacity building. Civilian-military collaboration is not a goal in itself but a means to a better solution to civilian and military tasks respectively. Collaboration is important in meeting Afghan needs and priorities in the most effective way. For Swedish interventions with links to the security sector this is particularly important. Mutual exchange, information and context analysis strengthen Sweden's involvement as a whole.

Sweden's military operation in northern Afghanistan comes under the Nato-led Afghanistan International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) and includes contributions to Afghan security structures. Besides this, Swedish security involvement is composed of the EU-led Police Mission EUPOL Afghanistan, to which Sweden contributes staff. Swedish staff assists EUPOL in fulfilling its mandate and achieving its objective. There is a general need to support the building and training of the Afghan police force and to work for an integrated gender equality perspective.

Sweden should continue to support – and consider strengthening its support to – EUPOL, and to direct secondments to northern Afghanistan. The Folke Bernadotte Academy is currently running a training project for the Police Academy in Kabul. The Swedish Civil Contingencies Agency is also conducting a number of minor projects in Afghanistan.

Inter-agency collaboration based on the various authorities' respective spheres of responsibility will be important during the strategy period. The aim is to create and identify synergies and thereby ensure the largest possible impact from the total Swedish contribution. Agencies should also be open to contributions that are related to and strengthen measures in such areas as migration.

The Swedish Committee for Afghanistan has been active in Afghanistan longer than any other Swedish actor. The organisation's long-standing involvement in Afghanistan and its information work in Sweden have done much to stimulate public interest in Afghanistan.

Save the Children Sweden and the Swedish Red Cross are also active in Afghanistan, and undertake information activities in Sweden. In recent years, a number of Swedish actors have become increasingly interested in strengthening relations with and initiatives in Afghanistan. Sweden should therefore seek to widen exchanges between organisations, schools, educational institutions, businesses, chambers of commerce and municipal undertakings, particularly in the field of democracy building.

10. CONSIDERATIONS CONCERNING THE DIRECTION OF THE STRATEGY

Afghanistan has immense development needs in all social sectors. In the present cooperation strategy, two main sectors at central level deemed to be of special relevance in the coming years have been selected. The proposed contributions in these sectors are based on previous experience and an assessment of Sweden's comparative advantages, after taking other active donors into account.

It is important that Sweden continues to contribute to efforts to strengthen central systems and capacity building measures, promote greater transparency and help combat corruption in government administration at central and regional level. Helping to strengthen democratic governance, primarily through ARTF, will therefore continue to have priority. Sweden and the other Nordic countries are leading donors and dialogue partners in the human rights sphere – in particular with regard to the ability of women to enjoy these rights – and in terms of support to civil society. Sweden should therefore continue to extend substantial support in these areas.

Support to programmes and projects aimed at building up the education sector is key to Afghanistan's development, and a way of laying the foundations of a democratic society. In the education sector, Sweden is one of the largest donors to UNICEF's primary education programme. Moreover, the Swedish Committee for Afghanistan's strong position and long experience in this very sector has contributed to Sweden's high profile. Apart from helping to improve access to and the quality of education, Swedish support in this sector has been instrumental in sharpening the focus on girls' right and access to schooling.

Sweden has previously extended support in the sphere of private sector development at central level. However, due to the relatively limited scale of Swedish assistance and given the presence of more prominent donors in the sector, Sweden has decided to phase out this support and instead contribute to private sector development and job creation measures at regional level in northern Afghanistan. The focus on the provinces where Sweden has a special responsibility will facilitate the handover of responsibility for security during the transition process. The very pressing needs in northern Afghanistan, the importance of focusing Swedish support, combined with our longstanding presence

and experience in this area, justify strengthening our contributions in this part of the country in the coming years. Sweden will seek to contribute to the transition process with a greater focus on capacity development in local administration and the strengthening of the rule of law at provincial and district level.

11. FOLLOW-UP

The results of activities supported by Sweden under the present strategy are to be followed up on a regular basis and reported in the yearly strategy report. Achieved results will be set against expected results, sector and the aid effectiveness objectives of the strategy. An assessment of the cost-effectiveness of aid delivery should be conducted and costs set against results. Observations, experiences and any problems in connection with implementation of the strategy are to be reported and analysed. Decisions concerning the future direction of aid interventions should be clearly based on an assessment of the results data.

In order to improve public access and transparency, active efforts must be made to ensure that information relating to activities falling within the strategy framework, including their results, are available to and searchable by the general public.



REGERINGSKANSLIET

**Ministry for Foreign Affairs
Sweden**

103 39 Stockholm

Telephone: Int+46-(0)8-405 10 00, fax: Int+46-(0)8-723 11 76, web site: www.ud.se

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