

Strategy for humanitarian assistance provided through the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida) 2011 – 2014



REGERINGSKANSLIET

Government Offices
of Sweden

Strategy for humanitarian assistance provided through the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida) 2011–2014

Summary

The present strategy will govern Sida's humanitarian assistance for the period 2011–2014. The strategy is based on the Government's policy for Sweden's humanitarian assistance 2010–2016. The policy sets out the overall objective of Swedish humanitarian assistance as well as the points of departure and basic principles that will guide its design and implementation.

The overall objective of Swedish humanitarian assistance is to save lives, alleviate suffering and maintain human dignity for the benefit of people in need who are, or are at risk of becoming, affected by armed conflicts, natural disasters or other disaster situations.

The overall objective will be achieved by providing effective i.e. rapid, flexible and quality-assured support to humanitarian operations. Humanitarian assistance will be conducted within the three areas outlined below, which comprise eight goals defining the direction of the work:

Area A: Needs-based, principled and coordinated humanitarian response

Goal 1: Enhanced capacity to plan and allocate resources on the basis of humanitarian needs

Goal 2: Increased respect for international humanitarian law and humanitarian principles

Goal 3: Enhanced humanitarian coordination and humanitarian leadership in the field

Area B: Partnerships, professionalisation and flexible financing

Goal 4: Increased professionalisation of humanitarian actors

Goal 5: Predictable, rapid and flexible financing of partner organisations' humanitarian work

Goal 6: Strengthened national and local capacity to meet humanitarian needs

Area C: Accountability, learning, quality and innovation

Goal 7: Increased participation of the affected population

Goal 8: Increased quality, learning and innovation in humanitarian assistance

Two perspectives will be integrated into Sida's humanitarian assistance:

a) disaster prevention

b) recovery

1. Introduction

The present strategy will govern Sida's humanitarian assistance for the period 2011–2014.

The Government's policy for Sweden's humanitarian assistance for 2010–2016 sets out the overall objective of Swedish humanitarian assistance as well as the points of departure and basic principles that will guide its design and implementation. Sida will apply the policy in the implementation of the strategy.

As stated in the policy, humanitarian assistance comprises material assistance and protection.¹ Sida's humanitarian assistance may also include other types of support such as disaster prevention and preparedness as well as support for creating conditions for recovery and long-term development, including conflict management. These efforts will complement other support and efforts within the framework of development cooperation. For conflict-management support, Sida will take into consideration the Government's policy on security and development in development cooperation.

The point of departure for humanitarian assistance is that every state has the primary responsibility for meeting humanitarian needs that arise

¹ Cf. GHD principle 3.

within its borders.² If the central government or other institutions in the affected country are unwilling or unable to meet this responsibility, external organisations and states have a duty to provide support for action to meet these needs, in accordance with international humanitarian law and established practice in international humanitarian assistance. This duty is often called the ‘humanitarian imperative’.

Swedish humanitarian assistance is based on the Geneva Conventions of 1949 on the protection of the victims of war and their Additional Protocols, and other instruments of international humanitarian law, refugee law, human rights, legal instruments relating to natural disasters, and established international practice in this area. In addition, humanitarian assistance is guided by the humanitarian principles of humanity, impartiality, neutrality and independence.³

Swedish humanitarian assistance will also follow the UN resolutions in this area, as well as the principles of Good Humanitarian Donorship (GHD). Of particular importance is the principle that humanitarian assistance is governed by the needs of the affected people.

Humanitarian assistance must take into account that humanitarian situations affect women, men, young people, boys and girls differently. To the extent possible, environmental and climate aspects should be taken into account in humanitarian assistance.

Moreover, humanitarian assistance should be provided in a way that does not contribute to armed conflict, exacerbate tensions between population groups or expose them to violence and other forms of abuse.

2. Objectives of humanitarian action

The overall objective of Swedish humanitarian assistance is to save lives, alleviate suffering and maintain human dignity for the benefit of people in need who are, or are at risk of becoming, affected by armed conflicts,⁴ natural disasters or other disaster situations.⁵

² Cf. GHD principle 5.

³ Based on GHD principle 2.

⁴ *In addition to armed conflicts, these situations may also include destructive economic policies, expulsion, discrimination, etc.*

To achieve the overall objective, Sida will support humanitarian efforts that meet global humanitarian needs. Sida's humanitarian assistance should be effective, i.e. rapid, flexible and quality-assured. Sida will therefore conduct activities in the following three areas:

Area A: Needs-based, principled and coordinated humanitarian response

Area B: Partnerships, professionalisation and flexible financing

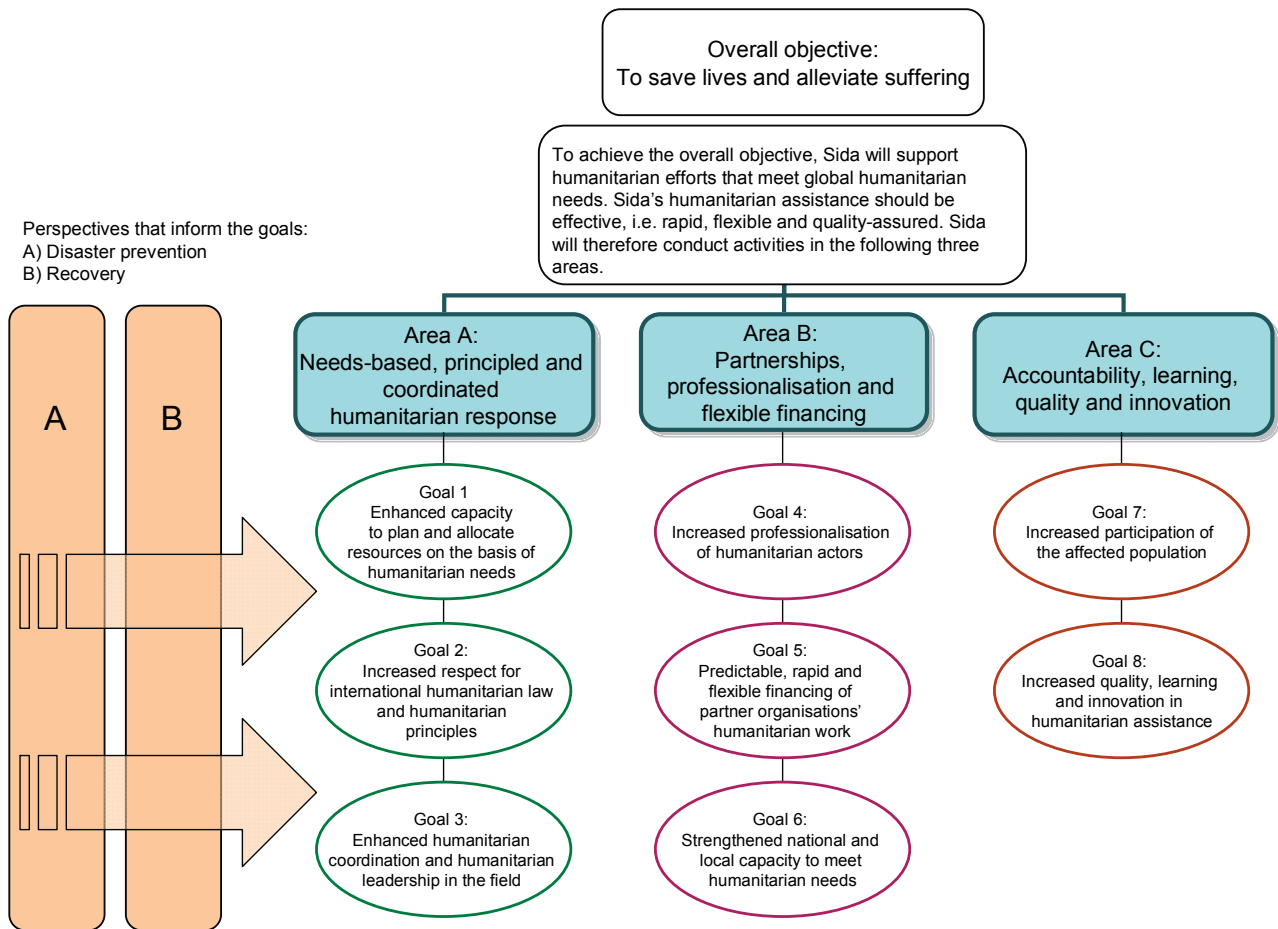
Area C: Accountability, learning, quality and innovation

Two perspectives will be integrated into Sida's humanitarian assistance:

- a) disaster prevention
- b) recovery

The figure below illustrates the structure of objectives for this strategy. The three areas each comprise two or three goals that define the direction of Sida's humanitarian efforts. The two perspectives will be integrated into Sida's humanitarian assistance. The goals and perspectives are clearly based on the principles of Good Humanitarian Donorship (GHD).

⁵ Based on GHD principle 1.



Presented below are the areas and associated goals, a brief description of how these goals are expected to contribute to the overall objective, and the direction of activities.

AREA A: Needs-based, principled and coordinated humanitarian response

*Goal 1: Enhanced capacity to plan and allocate resources on the basis of humanitarian needs*⁶

Promoting needs-based and evidence-based planning and allocation of resources to humanitarian assistance is an important prerequisite in contributing to effective humanitarian assistance.

⁶ Based on GHD principles 6 and 11.

To achieve this goal, Sida will enhance its own capacity for planning and resource allocation in various ways, including developing criteria for the allocation of humanitarian funds. These criteria will be based on, inter alia, the needs assessment analysis of the European Commission Humanitarian Aid Office (ECHO).

To enhance its own capacity for evidence-based planning, Sida will take part in seminars that prepare UN-led consolidated appeals (CAP-workshops).

Through methods support, Sida will support initiatives that strengthen the needs assessment capacity of the humanitarian response system, i.e. of the partner organisations.

Goal 2: Increased respect for international humanitarian law and humanitarian principles⁷

International humanitarian law and the humanitarian principles form the basis of humanitarian assistance. Respect for and compliance with these is a prerequisite for effective humanitarian assistance.

To achieve this goal, Sida will promote respect for and compliance with international humanitarian law and humanitarian principles.

This will mainly be achieved through support to humanitarian protection efforts, particularly the work of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), the UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR) and other relevant actors, including UNICEF. Support can also be provided, for example, to the work of humanitarian actors in the areas of security and access to facilitate their unimpeded access to people in need.

Sida will also promote efforts for a clear division of roles between humanitarian and military actors. This collaboration will be based on the *MCDA Guidelines* and the IASC Reference Paper *Civil-Military Relationship in Complex Emergencies* in conflict areas, and the *Oslo Guidelines* in the context of natural disasters.

Sida may also support activities to spread knowledge of international humanitarian law and humanitarian principles, particularly through

⁷ Based on GHD principles 2, 4, 10, 16, 17, 19 and 20.

ATHA⁸ – *the Advanced Training Programme on Humanitarian Action* – and will as an agency also take active part in this work.

*Goal 3: Enhanced humanitarian coordination and humanitarian leadership in the field*⁹

A robust and well-coordinated international humanitarian response system with clear leadership in the field is a prerequisite for effective humanitarian assistance.

To achieve this goal, Sida will support humanitarian coordination in the field and the existing multilateral mechanisms, mainly led by the UN, for coordination and implementation of international humanitarian assistance.

Within the framework of the cluster system, Sida will promote strategic, operational and substantial coordination between various humanitarian actors, including national authorities, humanitarian organisations and donors. Support will only be provided to organisations working in accordance with this coordination.

Sida will also work to strengthen UN coordinated humanitarian appeals and flash appeals that aim to enhance strategic coordination in ongoing and sudden-onset humanitarian crises.

Sida will moreover work to strengthen the link between humanitarian coordination mechanisms and similar development cooperation mechanisms by, where possible, promoting the participation of national and local authorities in cluster cooperation.

By supporting country-level pooled funds, Sida can contribute to enhanced coordination and stronger leadership in the field.

⁸ ATHA is Sida's training programme that aims to enhance the capacity of actors operating in humanitarian contexts.

⁹ Based on GHD principles 10, 14 and 15.

AREA B: Partnerships, professionalisation and flexible financing

Goal 4: Increased professionalisation of humanitarian actors¹⁰

Professional humanitarian actors are a prerequisite for effective and quality-assured humanitarian assistance.

To achieve this goal, Sida will provide support to professional and experienced humanitarian organisations, based on their comparative advantages including results.

Moreover, Sida will devise objective and quantifiable criteria for entering into partnerships; these will require, for example, that humanitarian partner organisations must have acceded to internationally recognised codes of conduct or made other similar commitments.

To achieve a more coherent approach to its support, Sida will develop a strategic partnership with partner organisations that includes financing, advocacy, and methods and policy work, and are based on the partnership principles of respect, openness, results orientation, division of responsibilities and complementarity between humanitarian organisations.

Support may also be provided to train humanitarian partner organisations and other relevant actors on humanitarian action.

Goal 5: Predictable, rapid and flexible financing of partner organisations' humanitarian work¹¹

By providing partner organisations with predictable, rapid and flexible financing, Sida will help to promote independence, flexibility and a longer-term perspective of the humanitarian activities of these organisations, which enables a more effective humanitarian assistance.

To achieve this goal, Sida will use various forms of financing mechanisms, described in Section 4, *Implementation*.

Sida will also encourage and support a longer-term approach to the planning and implementation of the work of partners, especially in

¹⁰ Based on GHD principle 16.

¹¹ Based on GHD principles 5, 12 and 13.

protracted crisis situations. From now on, Sida will therefore take gradual steps towards extending the scope for establishing multi-annual humanitarian framework agreements with humanitarian country-level pooled funds and reliable partners in key life saving sectors, focusing on coordination, protection, health, water and sanitation, non-food items, food security and livelihoods.

To ensure a rapid response to the growing number of sudden-onset humanitarian situations, Sida will increase the number of *Rapid Response Mechanism (RRM)* agreements with organisations that cooperate closely with civil society actors and have a local presence.

Goal 6: Strengthened national and local capacity to meet humanitarian needs¹²

Strengthened national and local capacity, particularly of authorities and humanitarian organisations, contributes to improving a country's ability to meet humanitarian needs within its own territory and ensure long-term effect. This includes both preventive measures and enhancing preparedness and capacity to respond to humanitarian crises, including the ability to coordinate national and local efforts with international relief operations when these are needed.

To achieve this goal, Sida will support the efforts of partner organisations to strengthen local capacity and thus ensure that humanitarian efforts have a longer-term impact, and contribute to laying the foundations for longer-term development. Where relevant, agreements with humanitarian partner organisations will stipulate that local and inclusive capacity-building is to be an integral part of humanitarian assistance.

AREA C: Accountability, learning, quality and innovation

Goal 7: Increased participation of the affected population¹³

Increased participation of the affected population contributes to appropriate humanitarian assistance that responds to the perceived needs of the population.

¹² Based on GHD principles 8 and 18.

¹³ Based on GHD principle 7.

To achieve this goal, support will be provided to efforts that aim to enhance the capacity of the affected population to demand accountability from local and national authorities and institutions as well as humanitarian organisations. Through agreements with partner organisations, Sida will ensure in particular that the affected people themselves – vulnerable women, men, young people, boys and girls – are, as far possible, involved in the design, implementation and evaluation of the support they are expected to receive.

Goal 8: Increased quality, learning and innovation in humanitarian assistance¹⁴

Increased quality and learning in the field of humanitarian assistance, both at Sida and partner organisations, along with innovative technical solutions and methods in implementing humanitarian assistance contribute to effective humanitarian support.

To achieve this goal, Sida will support networks and organisations involved in quality assurance of humanitarian assistance and research institutions that conduct applied research, particularly within the strategy's two perspectives, i.e preventive measures and recovery.

In addition, Sida will conduct quality assurance of humanitarian contributions by means of regular evaluations and seminars.

Support will be given to organisations, actors and networks that use innovative methods and technical solutions, especially in the area of information and communication technologies, and that help to stimulate and encourage innovation aimed at improving international humanitarian assistance.

To promote both internal and mutual learning, regular and systematic dialogue will be fostered with partner organisations, other donor countries and the Government Offices (MFA).

3. Perspectives

¹⁴ Based on GHD principles 15, 21 and 22.

The following two perspectives will be integrated into Sida's humanitarian assistance.

a) The disaster prevention perspective¹⁵

A disaster prevention perspective aims to prevent the emergence of and alleviate the effects of natural disasters, above all by strengthening the capacity of vulnerable women, men, children and communities to protect themselves against natural disasters.

According to the Government's policy for environmental and climate issues in development cooperation 2010-2014, disaster risk reduction is essential if developing countries are to be able to meet the double challenge of climate change and poverty.

Effective preventive efforts substantially reduce the risk of large-scale humanitarian crises happening in the future. Sida will therefore support measures to prevent natural disasters and reduce vulnerability at national and local level with a particular focus on countries where Sida is involved in humanitarian action. Sida will also promote the inclusion of disaster prevention measures in the regular programmes of humanitarian partner organisations and support measures to strengthen the international disaster risk reduction system.

b) The recovery perspective¹⁶

A recovery perspective contributes to facilitate the transition to longer-term development. The foundations for recovery and long-term development are laid in a humanitarian crisis. Even if recovery efforts are to be undertaken primarily through development cooperation, humanitarian assistance can contribute to effective recovery and long-term development.

Sida will therefore integrate a recovery perspective into humanitarian assistance with the purpose of supporting partner organisations' operational flexibility and longer-term approach in planning and implementation, as well as strengthening national and local capacity.

To achieve effective recovery, Sida will promote that these efforts are initiated in conjunction with humanitarian assistance and that the link

¹⁵ Based on GHD principle 8.

¹⁶ Based on GHD principle 9.

between humanitarian assistance and development cooperation and its coordination mechanisms is strengthened.

To ensure flexibility, recovery in humanitarian contexts can also be charged to the humanitarian appropriation. Sida may also support global measures for more effective recovery support.

4. Implementation

Sida will conduct humanitarian assistance by financing international humanitarian efforts delivered by humanitarian organisations based on their comparative advantages, and by advocacy work and methods development in the humanitarian field.

4.1. Support advocacy work and active donor coordination

Sida will support the advocacy work of the Government Offices by sharing its lessons learned and experience gained from humanitarian work. This includes:

- taking part in, and following, specific processes such as Good Humanitarian Donorship (GHD);
- monitoring financing mechanisms, such as country-level pooled funds, which among others things involve participation in the boards of these funds in order to contribute to overall development of both the mechanisms and the humanitarian system as a whole;
- contributing to the strategic and comprehensive dialogue with multilateral humanitarian organisations;
- contributing to efforts to strengthen the international humanitarian response system;
- contributing to strengthening the interplay between humanitarian assistance and development assistance; and
- contributing to strengthening coordination and consistency between the humanitarian efforts of the EU and the UN, and following and taking part in the regular consultations between the European Commission and the Member States concerning the Union's common humanitarian action.

Sida will prioritise active coordination with like-minded donors, both at capital city level and in the field, by sharing aid information and experiences, conducting joint assignments such as field trips,

evaluations and follow-up of contributions, especially in countries where Sida has no field presence.

4.2 Information activities and methods support

Sida will encourage and support qualified research, methods development and quality assurance in humanitarian assistance. Part of the humanitarian appropriation can be used for quality assurance of humanitarian action.

As part of its responsibility for providing information, Sida will contribute to reporting and creating an understanding of the reasons for and principles of Swedish support to international humanitarian efforts.

In addition, Sida will help to strengthen Sweden's humanitarian resource base through capacity development, mainly through ATHA. In helping to enhance Swedish and international humanitarian capacity, Sida will support strategic secondments of qualified Swedish humanitarian personnel to relevant international humanitarian actors.

4.3. Volume and financing

The annual amount for the implementation of the strategy is set by the Government in Sida's letter of appropriation.

Sida will finance international humanitarian efforts conducted by UN agencies, the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement,¹⁷ civil society organisations and relevant government agencies, in particular the Swedish Civil Contingencies Agency (MSB). The financing allocated to the Swedish Civil Contingencies Agency is for international humanitarian operations and in particular for operations requested by UN humanitarian agencies, but also other operations where the unique expertise of the Swedish Civil Contingencies Agency is needed and its assistance required internationally. In the future, support will continue to be based on assessed humanitarian needs, demands, and the comparative advantages, expertise and capacity of the Swedish Civil Contingencies Agency.

Sida has various financing mechanisms at its disposal. In ongoing humanitarian crises, Sida supports humanitarian organisations via UN emergency appeals¹⁸ and framework agreements with humanitarian

¹⁷ Based on GHD principle 10

¹⁸ Based on GHD principle 14.

organisations and humanitarian country-level pooled funds such as *Common Humanitarian Funds* (CHF). In sudden-onset humanitarian crises, Sida supports humanitarian organisations including via UN flash appeals through the *Rapid Response Mechanism* (RRM) and support to country-level pooled funds such as *Emergency Response Funds* (ERF). In certain cases, project support may also be used. Sida may also provide non-earmarked funds to humanitarian organisations on a discretionary basis.

Reliable partner organisations may enter into single or multi-year framework agreements with Sida. Particularly suitable partner organisations may receive unallocated funds – *Rapid Response Mechanism* (RRM) – which, in accordance with special instructions and Sida’s approval in each individual case, may be used for limited and rapid response following a sudden-onset disaster.

To ease the burden on the implementing organisations, Sida will endeavour to accept joint donor reports¹⁹ to the extent that this is compatible with the performance reporting requirements for humanitarian assistance. If this is not the case, the implementing organisation should be encouraged to incorporate Sida’s requirements into the joint donor reports.

4.4 Consultation

Sida will convene regular consultations in the Humanitarian Consultative Group (HUMSAM) with the Government Offices (Ministry for Foreign Affairs) to discuss humanitarian assistance and conflict-related assistance. The Ministry for Foreign Affairs will, if needed, be able to convene a consultation if there are special grounds for doing so.

Consultations will take place in HUMSAM regarding the scale of Sida’s framework support and collective agreements with the organisations receiving core support from the Ministry for Foreign Affairs and Swedish government agencies.

When Sida plans contributions in line with the above that exceed SEK 200 million, these decisions must be preceded by consultations in HUMSAM.

¹⁹ Based on GHD principle 23.

5. Monitoring

Contributions within the framework of this strategy will be monitored in accordance with Sida's system for monitoring contributions.

When implementing the strategy, Sida will use a results matrix to monitor the results of the action it is supporting and the goals specified in the strategy. The results matrix will be updated annually.

Sida will design an implementation plan for the present strategy within the framework of the agency's operational plan.

A strategy report will be produced as background material for one of the year's HUMSAM consultation meetings. Among other things, the strategy report will present the results of the activities that Sida supports in relation to the goals of the strategy and highlight any problems arising in its implementation. The strategy report will also explain how the two perspectives have been integrated into each goal.

Sida will consult with the Ministry for Foreign Affairs concerning the format of the strategy report.

For the ongoing performance monitoring and dialogue on effectiveness, Sida and the Ministry for Foreign Affairs will use the HUMSAM forum for regular information exchange.

Evaluations of strategically important activities will be conducted in accordance with Sida's evaluation plan.

A more thorough results analysis of Sida's humanitarian assistance will be conducted at the end of the strategy period. This analysis will also include an overview of Swedish humanitarian aid channels, and as a whole form the basis of a new humanitarian strategy.

Information regarding activities within the framework of the strategy, including the results of contributions, will be publicly accessible and searchable.



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