

Strategy for development cooperation with

Afghanistan

July 2009 – December 2013



REGERINGSKANSLIET

Government Offices
of Sweden

9 July 2009

Sweden's strategy for development cooperation with Afghanistan for the period 1 July 2009–31 December 2013

SUMMARY

This strategy will govern Sweden's development cooperation with Afghanistan over the period 2009–2013. The overall objective of development cooperation is for people living in poverty, particularly women and girls, to enjoy better living conditions in a peaceful and democratic society.

Cooperation will be directed at the areas of democratic governance and human rights, education and private sector development, with particular focus on women and girls in all these areas.

Increased aid effectiveness is key, which will be achieved via improved donor coordination and performance monitoring together with strengthened Afghan ownership and capacity. Issues for strategic dialogue will be gender equality and the situation and rights of women, and democratic governance, with special focus on anti-corruption.

Afghanistan is one of the world's poorest countries and it faces enormous problems with an escalating conflict, a dependence on development assistance, a weak administration and rule of law, a lack of respect for human rights, discrimination against women, and major deficiencies in education, health, the business sector and infrastructure.

Experience shows that previous support has been relevant and in accordance with Afghanistan's priorities, but that the dialogue about, and implementation of the rights of women and girls can be strengthened.

The donor situation is fragmented, coordination problematic and there are many actors. Since Sweden is a small donor in this context, the direction must be to cooperate with other actors, seek joint channels for support and make contributions in areas in which Sweden can provide added value.

The volume of cooperation will successively increase – approximately SEK 400 million in 2009 and SEK 420 million in 2010 – followed by a gradual increase (2011–2013) to around SEK 500 million per year. Some

25 per cent of this volume will be targeted on the northern provinces where Sweden is leading a *Provincial Reconstruction Team* (PRT) within the *International Security Assistance Force* (ISAF).

PART 1. OBJECTIVES AND DIRECTION OF COOPERATION

1. Objectives and priorities

Swedish development cooperation in Afghanistan will be based on Sweden's policy for global development and will strive for a coherent Swedish Afghanistan policy, where the various Swedish contributions form parts of an integrated whole. Swedish development cooperation with Afghanistan will contribute to equitable and sustainable global development and help create conditions to enable poor people to improve their lives, in accordance with the objective of Swedish development cooperation. The starting points of cooperation are the two perspectives of the policy for global development, the perspective of the poor and the rights perspective, and the development goals of Afghanistan as formulated in the country's own strategy for poverty reduction, the *Afghanistan National Development Strategy* (ANDS), 2008–2013.

Overall objective

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

The international community, including Sweden, has declared its support for the national poverty reduction strategy (ANDS). The overall objective of Swedish development cooperation is well in agreement with the overall objectives formulated in the ANDS and Sweden's development cooperation will be based on the ANDS and its priorities.

Process objectives

Donor coordination, harmonisation and alignment with Afghanistan's own systems and processes will permeate cooperation, in line with the principles of the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness. The following process objectives will apply to the cooperation:

- Improved donor coordination, including a stronger role for the *United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan* (UNAMA).
- Improved performance monitoring for implementation of the *Afghanistan Compact* and the ANDS.
- Strengthened Afghan ownership and strengthened Afghan capacity.

Strategic issues for dialogue

- Gender equality and the situation and rights of women and girls
- Democratic governance, with particular focus on anti-corruption

Other matters

In order to increase the coherence of Swedish policy on Afghanistan and to strengthen the synergies between the various contributions, the proportion of support given to the northern provinces where Sweden is responsible for a *Provincial Reconstruction Team* (PRT), will amount to some 25 per cent of long-term Swedish development cooperation.

Of the Government's thematic priorities, the primary focus in Afghanistan will be on democracy and human rights and the promotion of gender equality and the role of women in development.

2. Direction and scope

2.1 Cooperation areas

Cooperation will be permeated by a clear crisis management and conflict prevention perspective. Contributions must be seen in the overall context of their need to promote peace and security, directly or indirectly in a longer perspective. The Security Council resolutions on the conflict in Afghanistan, and Resolutions 1325, 1820 and 1612 on women's participation, protection against violence and abuse and the rights of children to protection in armed conflicts are to be important bases of cooperation.

Within Swedish development cooperation there must be a good balance between contributions that produce quick, concrete results for poor people and long-term contributions for capacity development and strengthened institutions. In all areas of cooperation, development cooperation must strive to strengthen the position of women and their opportunities to enjoy human rights, to build domestic capacity and to reform public administration. Anti-corruption is also a key issue in all cooperation areas.

Efforts in all cooperation areas must be directed at having a well-coordinated, concentrated portfolio, with a small number of major contributions that can be supplemented by smaller, flexible and strategic contributions.

Some 25 per cent of the long-term Swedish development cooperation in Afghanistan will be targeted at the provinces for which Sweden has special responsibility through its leadership of the provincial reconstruction team in Mazar-e Sharif (Balkh, Jowzjan, Samangan and Sar-e Pul). The focus will primarily be on the poorest provinces and areas in its area of responsibility. Support to the four provinces in the north

shall reflect the national programme. Dialogue on support to the north must also be held with the Afghan central administration.

Development cooperation will be directed towards the following three cooperation areas, in support of the overall objective.

1) Democratic governance and human rights

Sector objectives:

(i) strengthened democratic governance, including strengthened administration

(ii) increased respect for human rights, with particular focus on the position of women and their opportunities to enjoy human rights

These objectives will be achieved by Swedish contributions focusing on building up and developing democratic institutions and processes such as, for example, election support, parliament, administration at central and local levels and the legal system. Work on anti-corruption, transparency and increased Afghan ownership via capacity development must permeate Swedish support. General support to the *Afghanistan Reconstruction Trust Fund* (ARTF), including a strengthened budget process, is an important element in achieving this.

In order to enable a systematic strengthening of capacity within, for instance, the rule of law and the security sector, the Folke Bernadotte Academy will examine the conditions and present proposals for civilian capacity-building measures in Afghanistan. Consultations on these proposals will take place between the Government Offices, Sida, the Folke Bernadotte Academy, the Embassy and other relevant agencies. Sida will decide on the contributions to be implemented. These will be financed by Sida, implemented by the Folke Bernadotte Academy and primarily take place in northern Afghanistan.

To increase respect for human rights, Sweden will work on providing support to various actors including civil society, focusing on independent actors working with accountability and advocacy.

The opportunities of women and girls to enjoy human rights are of key importance and Sweden will have three priorities in this connection: sexual and reproductive health and rights, women's participation and influence, and gender-related violence. Direct support to these areas and support for implementation of Security Council Resolution 1325 via multilateral channels and civil society will be prioritised.

Particular attention must be given to young people when designing these contributions. Support must also take account of other groups including people with disabilities.

2) *Education*

Sector objective:

(i) increased access to education of good quality, with particular focus on women and girls

Support will be targeted on strengthening the development of the education sector and be based on previous experience. Support should be given to contributions in which the educational administration at central and local levels is strengthened, and to measures that deliver education. Programme-based support and broad, national programmes must be striven for.

This support will promote the development of the education sector so that it includes everyone, provides for the rights of all girls and boys to a good standard of education and builds the foundation for a democratic society. Special efforts must be made for girls. Other areas in which special efforts will be made are contributions to strengthen the rights of disabled people to education.

Work with a conflict and gender equality perspective is key and support to contributions that help to prevent conflicts and that protect and strengthen children in situations of conflict will be considered. Security Council Resolutions 1325 and 1612 are starting points for this work.

Support to reading and writing courses for adults, particularly for women, and support to teacher education will be considered.

Key dialogue issues in this sector will be a) non-discrimination and the right of everyone to education, and b) raising the standards of education.

3) *Private sector development*

Sector objective:

(i) a strengthened and growing private sector, in which people living in poverty participate more extensively and are employed.

To reach people living in poverty and to promote their employment and incomes, support will particularly focus on favourable conditions for micro-entrepreneurs and small companies, especially women's entrepreneurship where possible, and to a large extent be targeted at rural areas and agriculture-based industries and trade. In this context, Sida will examine the conditions for initiating cooperation with organisations engaged in supporting women and women's entrepreneurship via self-help organisations and micro-financing.

Contributions to promote market development and business sector capacity will be given special consideration. Support to institutional frameworks, focusing on the implementation and application of rules, will be considered. Support will be partially targeted at the country's

northern areas and include limited contributions to infrastructure within the field of transport.

Support to measures to strengthen the business sector's dialogue and collaboration with public administration will be considered, as will employment-related support targeted at groups at risk (such as young men) to prevent the spread of conflict and recruitment to criminal networks.

Since private sector development is a new cooperation area, the conditions for specific measures in the above-mentioned sub-areas will be examined, particularly at the beginning of the strategy period.

Selective measures

The conditions for support to land-mine and unexploded ammunition disposal will be examined. Contributions will also be made in the field of disaster preparedness in collaboration with the Swedish Civil Contingencies Agency.

Humanitarian support

Sweden's humanitarian support to Afghanistan is governed by the government's humanitarian aid policy and by the strategy adopted by the government for Sida's humanitarian aid. This aid is governed by the needs of people in distress and builds on the principles of humanity, impartiality, neutrality and independence. The principles of good humanitarian donorship shall guide the work. This means that Sida's humanitarian aid must be rapid, predictable, flexible and needs-based.

As far as possible, humanitarian support and long-term development cooperation should be coordinated.

2.2 Aid modalities

General budget support will not be granted during the strategy period. The *Afghanistan Reconstruction Trust Fund* (ARTF) will continue to be an important channel for financing recurrent costs and general support to national programmes. The intention is for the ARTF to move towards programme-based funding. If possible, a larger proportion of development assistance will be channelled via the ARTF and more than half the support will be non-earmarked, in accordance with the rules governing ARTF.

In addition to this, multilateral channels and pooled funding will be used as far as possible. Forms of programme support should be aimed for in the education sector.

There is a fund for smaller contributions in northern Afghanistan, administered by the embassy in conjunction with the provincial reconstruction team, which will continue if it proves on evaluation to be

an effective model. There shall be a preparedness to increase the volume of the fund. Plans must be made to supplement this fund so that locally determined contributions can be made throughout Afghanistan. The aim is to make the support more flexible and rapid and, with regard to contributions in northern Afghanistan, to strengthen the synergies with Swedish contributions to the stabilization efforts.

Afghanistan will be eligible for Sida's guarantees. The terms for granting guarantees will be assessed on a case-by-case basis.

The choice of aid modalities and forms for cooperation shall be characterised by flexibility. A blend of aid modalities will be used.

2.3. Dialogue issues

The dialogue on gender equality will particularly focus on the situation of women and girls, and specifically include sexual and reproductive health and rights and gender-related violence. Another key, cross-sectoral dialogue issue will be democratic governance with particular focus on anti-corruption, transparency and accountability.

The dialogue within the framework of Swedish development cooperation, shall take place with representatives of the Afghan government, civil society and other actors to achieve a greater impact. The channels for this dialogue will be the UNAMA, the ARTF and other bodies. It is particularly important to coordinate the dialogue within the EU, with the European Commission, the Nordic countries and other like-minded donors, to increase the impact of jointly prioritised issues. Dialogue will also be held in the four northern provinces with locally elected bodies, representatives of the local government structure and non-government actors.

Within the framework of the cooperation areas, these dialogue issues must be addressed in the programmes and projects that are supported. Work on the dialogue issues must be adapted to the type of contribution and to the best way of achieving results.

2.4 Scope (volume)

The volume of cooperation will successively increase to approximately SEK 400 million in 2009 and SEK 420 million in 2010, followed by a further gradual increase (2011–2013) to around SEK 500 million per year.

3. Implementation

Risk analysis

There are substantial risks associated with implementing the strategy which will require calculated risk-taking and flexibility when doing so. In view of the conflict situation, the level of poverty, the lack of political

will and ability to deal with issues related to governance, accountability and human rights, as well as the country's weak capacity, contributions must be designed with realistic timetables for achieving goals since reforms typically take a long time to take effect.

To ensure flexibility and alternative courses of action if the situation in Afghanistan continues to deteriorate, development assistance shall be characterised by the following:

- Support to capacity development so that the 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.
- The continued use of multilateral channels over an extended period, in the event of developments preventing a transition to forms of cooperation that contain further significant elements of local ownership.
- Cooperation with different actors in implementing development assistance: central government and public administration, civil society and the private sector.

There should be a preparedness for further, and if necessary, increased humanitarian contributions.

In view of the changeable situation of Afghanistan and of the risk of further negative security developments, annual follow up and at least one major review will be conducted during the strategy period. In this context there should be a preparedness for changes in the direction and extent of cooperation and the channels used.

Other considerations

During the strategy period Sida will strive to strengthen the administrative systems for development assistance in the field, thereby creating the conditions for increased delegation of decision-making power to the field level.

Parts of the Afghan diaspora, especially people who have returned, represent a potential resource for strengthening Afghan society, and account should be taken of this potential.

3.1 Cooperation with other donors, including multilateral actors

Sweden shall cooperate with other donors and multilateral actors to increase the effectiveness and impact of the support.

Sweden will intensify its cooperation with the World Bank within the framework of the ARTF by means of a strengthened dialogue in the area of gender equality and other matters, and by extending its commitment to reforming the ARTF.

The UN system will also continue to be an important cooperation partner as regards coordination (UNAMA) and within the sectors. This applies particularly to the UNDP (democratic governance), UNICEF (education), UNIFEM (gender equality) and UNOPS (transport).

The Nordic countries are important cooperation partners in Afghanistan. Joint Nordic contributions and joint monitoring are to be sought, particularly when they help increase impact or make the implementation of development cooperation more effective. Efforts should also be made to cooperate with the large donors, such as USAID and the European Commission.

Active efforts must be made to cooperate with the European Commission, particularly in the area of democratic governance, as part of establishing a close relationship. During the strategy period, Sweden will monitor and be involved in the Commission's work on its country strategy (2007–2013) for Afghanistan.

3.2 Alignment, harmonisation and coordination

The overall process objectives for Afghanistan are improved donor coordination, including a stronger role for the UNAMA and better performance monitoring of the implementation of the *Afghanistan Compact* and the ANDS. This will be achieved via a deepened dialogue with the Afghan government, including through the *Joint Monitoring and Coordination Board* (JCMB) and strengthened Afghan ownership and capacity, by channelling a greater proportion of Swedish development assistance through mechanisms that use the Afghan administrative system, including the ARTF.

At present, there is 'donor congestion', poor coordination, weak Afghan leadership and ownership and development assistance that is fragmented. Great emphasis must be given to coordination of contributions with other actors and countries and to efforts to improve and coordination under Afghan leadership, in accordance with the *Paris Agenda*, the *EU code of conduct for complementarity and division of labour in development policy* and the *OECD/DAC principles for good international engagement in fragile states*. Through the EU, Sweden will also promote better coordination in the EU circle and with other donors. Using the available channels, Afghan ownership will be strengthened to help implementation of the *Accra Agenda for Action* as well.

4. Monitoring

The task of the JCMB is to monitor the implementation of the *Afghanistan Compact* and the ANDS. At present, however, there is scope for improvement, and further reforms are necessary. Sweden will therefore work towards improving the JCMB and aligning and

supplementing the coordinating and monitoring instruments, so that adequate monitoring can be undertaken.

During the first part of the strategy period, Swedish performance monitoring will be developed – based as far as possible on the frameworks used by other actors in Afghanistan. There is a great lack of reliable statistics and information, which makes monitoring more difficult.

PART 2. BACKGROUND

1. Summary country analysis

The conflict in Afghanistan is rooted in many factors and is multifaceted. It contains humanitarian, security policy, development, ethnic and cultural aspects, both national and regional. The Taliban movement and other groups that are hostile to the government have gained influence in increasingly large parts of the country. The conflict limits access to parts of the country and reduces scope for further political, administrative, economic and social progress. The interplay between the illegal drug industry, the arms trade, corruption and a culture of impunity further complicates the situation.

The *Afghanistan National Development Strategy* (ANDS) builds on the *Afghanistan Compact* and the objectives on which it is based: (1) security, (2) democratic governance and human rights, and (3) economic and social development. The ANDS is an ambitious programme and its implementation requires the strong back-up of the international community and forceful political leadership on the part of the Afghan government. The difficulties are numerous: the number of programmes and investments to be implemented are huge in relation to the present capacity of the Afghan state. Its political will and capacity to deal with such issues as corruption, the opium economy and the lack of respect for human rights, particularly the rights of women, is open to question.

Afghanistan is one of the world's poorest countries. A large majority of the population does not have access to sanitation, clean drinking water or electricity. Drought, poorer harvests and increasing food prices have contributed to a serious humanitarian situation. The threat of mines and unexploded ammunition adds to the difficulties. Young people (under 25 years of age) make up almost 70 per cent of the population. The majority of these lack opportunities for education and employment.

Unemployment and the lack of opportunities to make a livelihood feed the conflict.

Between 2002 and 2006, over five million Afghan refugees returned to Afghanistan. The flow has declined over the past two years at the same time as new flows of migration from and within Afghanistan have begun

to be apparent. Those returning experience problems with housing, employment, health, education and other services.

At all levels, public administration lacks functioning institutions and the capacity to provide even rudimentary public services and utilities. Corruption within the administration is extensive. The lack of a functioning legal system makes independent, impartial justice impossible. The situation regarding human rights is very distressing and developments are worrying. The situation of women is especially serious. Freedom of expression is being increasingly limited and people with disabilities lack support for ensuring that their rights are provided for. Access to effective channels for accountability and influence are extremely limited.

It is estimated that 14 per cent of women and 42 per cent of men are able to read. Almost half of all children, some six million, attend primary or secondary schools today. Some 65 per cent of these are boys and only 35 per cent are girls. The lack of female teachers and distances to school are the greatest obstacles to the right of girls to education, and ultimately to women's and girl's opportunities for participation and influence. Education is of a low standard and there is a lack of infrastructure and of a democratic culture in the education system. Afghanistan's own priorities are increased access to education for all children and better standards of education.

Access to health care has made great progress but is unevenly distributed and clearly insufficient in rural areas. The situation is particularly difficult for women since women are traditionally not allowed to move freely to any great extent outside the home, or to be treated by male health care staff. Maternal mortality is the second highest in the world.

Since the fall of the Taliban regime, economic development has been relatively good but this partly depends on the high level of development assistance flows, which is not sustainable in the long term. The majority of the country's population has not been reached by growth. Poverty continues to be enormous, incomes are low and the situation has deteriorated recently. The lack of employment and opportunities to earn a livelihood create good conditions for recruitment to groups hostile to the government. The private business sector is weakened, its production equipment, human resources and infrastructure having been partly destroyed. Corruption and red tape impede economic activity. Agriculture is one of the largest industries and of central importance to the poor population. Here, women have the greatest chance as entrepreneurs and in the labour market. Improved access by developing infrastructure and communications is of key importance in developing the economy of rural areas. The transport industry also generates many jobs and small entrepreneurs.

Security in the four provinces in which Sweden leads the provincial reconstruction team is relatively good compared with other parts of

Afghanistan. The poverty situation in the four provinces varies a good deal, with Balkh and parts of Jowzjan as the most developed provinces and Samangan and Sar-e Pul as the most deprived, although there are also local differences within provinces.

2. Summary performance assessment

A performance assessment has been conducted for the period 2006–2008. During this period, total, long-term support amounted to SEK 973 million, support via Swedish NGOs to SEK 61 million and humanitarian support to SEK 136 million. The cooperation areas that were prioritised during the strategy period were education, health, infrastructure and democratic governance.

The results analysis shows that Sweden's development cooperation has supported Afghanistan's needs and own priorities, and that it has been in line with the *Afghanistan Compact* and the (*interim*) ANDS. It also shows that the deterioration in the security situation has had an adverse effect on the implementation of development cooperation, inter alia, because of the difficulties of reaching areas affected by conflict. The results analysis draws the conclusion that Swedish development assistance has helped improve the situation of people in rural areas in the fields of education, health and roads. Support to elections and the parliament has also given positive results.

Support to the education sector has contributed to increasing the number of trained teachers and to increasing the number of children attending school to almost six million, compared with around one million children in 2001, when, in addition, very few girls attended school. In the health sector, support has helped ensure that there are now more trained midwives. Sweden's support via the ARTF has contributed to the salaries of civil servants and other recurrent costs. Support to the *National Solidarity Program* (NSP) has helped to create over 20 000 elected village councils which have implemented over 20 000 projects, mainly related to transportation, water and sanitation. The NSP has helped create a link between rural and central areas, and has created over 17 million working days.

The ARTF was evaluated in 2008 and found to be an effective, flexible channel. It was noted that the ARTF is a step towards a more realistic and better prioritised national agenda and that the national programmes, the NSP and the *Microfinance Investment Support Facility* (MISFA), have shown impressive results at the output level. However, the evaluation states that there is greater scope for donors to become involved in the ARTF and that the increasing proportion of earmarked funds undermines the basic principle of this fund.

Support to education via the UN children's fund, UNICEF, was evaluated in 2008. This evaluation showed that UNICEF has satisfactorily achieved the targets set. UNICEF has worked successfully

on strengthening the Ministry of Education and in its work on lobbying for the education of girls.

An evaluation was conducted of the activities of the Swedish Committee for Afghanistan (SCA) in 2008. This evaluation shows that the targets set at output level were largely achieved. However, the evaluation was critical of the SCA's activities and organisation on a number of points, such as capacity development and the gender equality perspective. The SCA's work on midwife training colleges was highlighted as a successful activity.

Humanitarian support has increased towards the end of the strategy period. Support has primarily been channelled via the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), for protection, cooperation with the local community and capacity development. Support has also been given via the UN World Food Programme (WFP) and the Food and Agricultural Organisation (FAO) to people who have been affected by drought and the food price crisis. This has taken the form of food deliveries, cattle vaccination and fodder supplies.

The results analysis recommends that Swedish support should retain its focus, and build on the results previously achieved within the fields of democratic governance, education, health and transport. It is also recommended that advantage be taken of scope for increased dialogue, particularly in the field of education. Despite the fact that gender equality and the rights of women and girls are reflected in the preparation of contributions, there is scope for strengthening implementation. The analysis also states, in connection with support to northern Afghanistan, that geographical allocation requires a careful dialogue with the Afghan government, to ensure that resources are distributed in accordance with national strategies and priorities.

3. Summary analysis of other donors' actions and role in the country, including multilateral actors and the European Commission

Development cooperation in Afghanistan is marked by the large international military presence in the country and the division of Afghanistan into regional provincial reconstruction teams. Several nations implement their development assistance directly via these teams.

In principle, all the traditional donors are present in Afghanistan. In addition, many non-traditional donors are present, such as Afghanistan's neighbours and the above-mentioned military actors. The result is 'donor congestion' and fragmentation of development assistance, which makes coordination and harmonisation a major challenge.

The largest single donor is the USA, which dominates the donor situation in Afghanistan and is active in virtually all areas. Funds are channelled through the United States Agency for International Development, USAID, but the military also finance development

cooperation, particularly in eastern and southern Afghanistan. The dominant position of the USA means that its interests in, and need for, coordination and harmonisation have hitherto been limited.

The World Bank administers the ARTF and focuses on building up state capacity, rural development and private sector development. The ARTF has the potential to serve as a forum for strengthened coordination.

In the UN family, UNICEF and Sweden are working together in the field of education. The UN Development Programme (UNDP) is an active actor in the field of democratic governance and will continue to be a cooperation partner of Sida. There is the potential, together with the UN Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM), to strengthen efforts on women's rights.

The European Commission is primarily working in the fields of rural development, democratic governance and health.

Under its mandate, the UNAMA plays a central role in coordinating development assistance that is in harmony with strong ownership on the part of the Afghan government. The UNAMA needs to be strengthened in its role and to be given increased resources.

Like Sweden, several other like-minded donors are active in Afghanistan, including the Nordic countries. There are good prospects for cooperation between the Nordic countries in such fields as democracy, human rights and gender equality.

4. Summary analysis of Sweden's role in the country

Although Afghanistan is one of Sweden's largest partners within development cooperation, Sweden is a comparatively modest actor in the country in terms of volume. Sweden accounts for a few per cent of development assistance to Afghanistan. Total development assistance from the international community is also small compared with the total of military resources allocated to Afghanistan.

4.1 Conclusions from Swedish and EU political decisions and processes that are relevant to the cooperation

The European Commission's Country Strategy Paper for Afghanistan (2007–2013) is in line with the *Afghanistan Compact* and the ANDS. The Commission supports several programmes that are also supported by Sweden within the framework of joint funding mechanisms such as the ARTF/NSP. It also supports the elections.

4.2 Coherence for development

The Swedish commitment in Afghanistan consists of political dialogue, security contributions and development cooperation among other things. The links between these areas are close and together they form a

holistic approach. Taken as a whole, the Swedish presence in Afghanistan should be sustained, long-term and coordinated. Migration policy and the promotion of Sweden are also included as parts of Sweden's total efforts in Afghanistan.

Sweden's security effort in Afghanistan consists of a provincial reconstruction team which also contains a civilian component that includes development advisers. This mission is conducted within the framework of the NATO-led *International Security Assistance Force* (ISAF) and also includes contributions for building up the Afghan army. The Swedish security contribution also consists of the EU-led police mission *EUPOL Afghanistan*. The Folke Bernadotte Academy is leading a training project together with Nordic agencies to support EUPOL efforts in the legal sector. The Swedish Civil Contingencies Agency is also running some minor projects in Afghanistan.

Ongoing conceptual development in the ISAF and other organisations regarding issues concerning the future shape of the international military presence, including northern Afghanistan, may affect the conditions for development cooperation during the strategy period.

Agency collaboration will be important during the strategy period to achieve synergies and to obtain the greatest impact possible for the total Swedish contribution. It will be fundamentally important for the different agencies to have a good understanding of the various policy areas, and of each other's different activities and mandates. Synergies must be aimed for, but an important principle is to maintain an appropriate division of labour based on the specific competencies of these agencies, and not to mix up security-building contributions with development cooperation. There must also be an openness for contributions that are associated with and strengthen measures in such fields as migration.

4.3 Other Swedish relations

The Swedish Committee for Afghanistan is the Swedish actor that has been involved with Afghanistan for the longest time. The organisation's long commitment to Afghanistan and its information work in Sweden help to increase interest in Afghanistan among Swedes. Save the Children Sweden and the Swedish Red Cross are also active in Afghanistan and conduct information activities in Sweden.

4.4 Sweden's comparative advantages

The performance assessment states that Sweden is considered to be a respected actor, primarily with regard to driving forward issues on the basis of a poverty perspective, gender equality and human rights. Sweden's comparative advantages include that of being regarded as a flexible, pragmatic partner.

Sweden shows more progress in the field of gender equality than most other countries. This experience means that Sweden is credible and enjoys a strong international reputation with regard to gender equality issues. It allows Sweden to pursue issues such as sexual and reproductive health and rights and violence against women. Since few donors are actively pursuing these issues, there is scope for strengthening Sweden's role.

Sweden has relatively long experience of work in the education sector with well established channels, which is important at a time when support should be striving to move away from direct implementation to programme support with increased Afghan ownership. A further area in which Sweden has special knowledge is work for people with disabilities.

4.5 Conclusions about Sweden's role

In terms of volume, Sweden is a comparatively modest actor in Afghanistan. Given this, it is vital that Sweden actively works to focus on sub-areas and issues where the returns on Swedish development assistance contributions are greatest, both at the overall level and within sectors. Further, as a main principle, support shall therefore be channelled via joint donor mechanisms, to strengthen the coordination and effectiveness of cooperation.

5. Considerations concerning objectives and direction of future cooperation

Afghanistan is one of the world's very poorest countries and it faces enormous problems with an escalating conflict, a dependence on development assistance, a weak administration and rule of law, a lack of respect for human rights, discrimination against women, and major deficiencies in education, health, the business sector and infrastructure. The ANDS provides the basis of cooperation with Afghanistan, but the political will to address vital issues, such as corruption, the opium economy and the lack of respect for human rights, is open to question and the priorities of the ANDS are not sufficiently clear.

Swedish support has been relevant and the performance assessment recommends that Swedish support retain its direction, but that the dialogue and implementation of the rights of women and girls could be strengthened. Sector concentration means that Sweden will phase out the areas of health and infrastructure as independent sectors. On the basis of previous experience and Sweden's comparative advantages, knowledge investments, democracy and human rights are key areas for Afghanistan's development towards a peaceful society to which Sweden can contribute. In addition to this, a new sector is introduced in the form of private sector development, since there is a great need for poverty reduction-oriented growth and employment in Afghanistan and this is a pre-condition for successful, sustainable stabilisation of the country.

Development cooperation is marked by the international military presence in the country and the division of the country into provincial reconstruction teams. The donor situation is fragmented and coordination problematic; there are many actors in all areas and Sweden is, in the Afghan context, a modest donor. This is why it is important that Sweden cooperates with others, seeks joint channels for support and takes part in cooperation where Sweden has added value. It is also important to have a well-coordinated, concentrated portfolio with a small number of larger contributions that can be supplemented by smaller, flexible and strategic initiatives.

While the needs in Afghanistan are substantial and immediate, the aim of international development contributions is to create the long-term conditions for Afghanistan itself to deal with the challenges facing the country. It is therefore important to have a good balance between contributions that provide rapid, concrete results and long-term contributions for capacity development and strengthened institutions.

In view of the changeable situation and the danger of continued negative security developments, great risks are associated with implementing the strategy, which will require calculated risk-taking and flexibility when doing so. Development assistance should therefore support capacity development of Afghan actors, be prepared to continue to use multilateral channels in areas that are difficult to work in, and to cooperate with a range of implementation partners so as to have different courses of action available should the situation deteriorate. Annual follow up and at least one major review will also be needed during the strategy period, with a preparedness for changes in the direction, extent and channels of cooperation.



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