



Migration and development in development cooperation

2024–2026

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Migration is a key development issue with its opportunities and challenges. This sub-strategy is intended to guide Sida's work to strengthen the focus on migration in development cooperation. The sub-strategy points out the direction for how the work should be developed within the framework of the agency's overall goal of creating conditions for better living conditions for people living in poverty and oppression.

This sub-strategy will guide Sida's work to sharpen the focus on migration in development cooperation. The interaction between humanitarian aid, peace-building and long-term development cooperation is central in this regard. However, Sida's humanitarian assistance is based on humanitarian principles, humanitarian law and Sida's allocation model.

The Government's Reform Agenda, Development Assistance for a New Era - Freedom, Empowerment and Sustainable Growth, emphasizes *that global challenges linked to irregular migration and forced displacement, return and voluntary repatriation, require an increased focus on migration in development cooperation.*¹

The Swedish Government has decided to increase the number of migration-related objectives in several bilateral and regional strategies for development cooperation and has taken a decision on a new strategy for Sweden's Global Development Cooperation on Migration, Return and Voluntary Repatriation over the period 2024–2028.

Target 2026

1. **Sida will contribute to results which respond to the migration-related objectives in the governments strategies for development cooperation.**

Sida's strategic entry points are as follows:

- Address the root causes of migration and forced displacement.
- Contribute to safe, orderly and regular migration.
- Contribute to strengthened capacity in host countries and host communities for the dignified reception and inclusion of migrants and forcibly displaced persons.

- Contribute to durable solutions; inclusion in development and conditions for safe and dignified return and voluntary repatriation.
2. **Sida will strengthen its knowledge of- and interaction with key actors** in Sweden and internationally in the field of migration and development.
 3. **Sida will strengthen its internal capacity** to work with migration and development.

Operational guidance

- Sida integrates migration as a development issue and migrants and displaced persons as a target group in the country- and regional analysis and in Sida's development offers.
- Sida contributes to the fulfilment of international commitments and obligations.
- Sida cooperates within Team Sweden and with bilateral, regional and international actors.
- Sida supports interventions which build on synergies from strategies at national, regional and global levels and which are based on a nexus approach.
- Sida funds activities which contribute to the main objective of Swedish international development cooperation.
- Sida aligns with the OECD DAC principles and criteria for migration-related activities.

¹ The Government's Reform Agenda, Development Assistance for a New Era - Freedom, Empowerment and Sustainable Growth, 2023, p 22

1. Introduction

1.1 What is the sub-strategy about?

International migration is increasing in the world and more people are on the move than ever before. The Government's new Reform Agenda, Development Assistance for a New Era - Freedom, Empowerment and Sustainable Growth, emphasises that global challenges linked to irregular migration and forced displacement, return and voluntary repatriation require a sharpened focus on migration within development cooperation. To do this, Sida takes a broad approach, with interventions targeting both refugees or displaced persons in need of protection and people migrating for other reasons, within as well as beyond the borders of their country of origin.

Terminology

Sida uses internationally established terms relating to migration and development including for example; irregular migration, refugees, internally displaced persons, repatriation, return and other.

A list of key concepts is provided in section 6.

The 2030 Agenda states that migration is a key factor for achieving sustainable development. The two UN endorsed global frameworks on migration and refugees respectively² emphasize that challenges in these areas are best solved through collaboration across countries and regions. Therefore, there is a need to strengthen Sida's work on migration and forced displacement in development cooperation.

This sub-strategy describes the current state of play, sets a target for 2026 and provides guidance for Sida. This includes the capacities that Sida needs to further develop and the guiding principles that Sida should apply; to ensure that an increased focus on migration in development cooperation contributes effectively, efficiently and in a results-oriented manner to the goal of Swedish international development cooperation.

Key data

281 million international migrants in 2020, representing 3.6% of the world's population, including 168 million labour migrants and 28 million children.

117 million forcibly displaced persons* in 2022, including 35 million refugees and 71 million internally displaced persons.

** UNHCR estimates that the number of forcibly displaced persons has continued to increase to 120 million by April 2024.³*

The sub-strategy, together with Sida's Operational Strategy 2024-2026, provides a framework for Sida's organisational planning processes. Measures to implement the sub-strategy are to be incorporated into operational planning within the government's thematic and geographical strategies for Sida's operations. Monitoring takes place within the framework of Sida's operational monitoring.

1.2 Structure of the sub-strategy

The sub-strategy is structured in the following chapters:

1. External expectations on Sida (Chapter 1)
2. Description of the thematic area, the agency's strengths and areas for development (Chapter 2)
3. Target for 2026, what Sida aims to achieve and strategic entry points (Chapter 3)
4. Guiding principles for Sida's operations (Chapter 4)
5. Chapter 5 gives recommendations for operational implementation
6. Chapter 6 contains a glossary of concepts

1.3 External expectations on Sida

The Government's policy for development assistance

Swedish development cooperation should create pre-conditions for better living conditions for people living in poverty and under oppression. The Government's Reform Agenda – Development Assistance for a New Era - Freedom, Empowerment and Sustainable Growth – guides Sweden's work on international development.

The Government's Reform Agenda states that addressing global challenges related to irregular migration and forced displacement, return and re-integration, requires an increased focus on migration within development cooperation. The Government gives particular priority to countering irregular migration and its risks, promoting return, voluntary repatriation and sustainable re-integration, as well as reducing the root causes of irregular migration and forced displacement. Development cooperation plays an important role in strengthening the positive development contributions of returning or repatriated migrants in low- and middle-income countries. The Reform Agenda states that Swedish international development cooperation is classified as Official Development Assistance (ODA), according to the OECD DAC.⁴

² Global Refugee Framework and Global Compact on Migration

³ Source: McAuliffe, M. and L.A. Oucho (eds.), 2024 World Migration Report 2024, International Organization for Migration (IOM), Geneva

⁴ For operations that fall within the scope of the Strategy for Sweden's Global Development Cooperation in Migration, Return and Voluntary Repatriation 2024-2028, the starting point is that Swedish development assistance is classified as ODA according to the OECD's Development Assistance Committee's (DAC) rules for international development assistance framework. To the extent necessary to achieve the objectives of the strategy, limited exceptions may be made.

Strategy for Sweden's Global Development Cooperation on Migration, Return and Voluntary Repatriation for 2024-2028

This strategy will contribute to counteracting irregular migration and stimulate well-functioning return that can contribute to sustainable growth and development in receiving countries, and effective action for voluntary repatriation.

Development assistance will also contribute to effective measures to strengthen migrants' and refugees' enjoyment of their rights in partner countries, support host communities, and strengthen asylum and migration management in partner countries.

The strategy will contribute to the following objectives:

1. Enhanced conditions for increased return, including forced return, voluntary repatriation and sustainable re-integration, including through strengthening local capacity and infrastructure in countries of origin and transit.
2. Enhanced capacity for migration and asylum management in partner countries, including border controls, with a focus on counteracting irregular migration.

The strategy includes a total of 3 billion SEK over the period from October 24, 2024 until December 31, 2028.

International commitments

The implementation of development cooperation rests on the premises of international law, and Sida's operations are carried out within the context of international commitments, agreements and frameworks. This clarifies the link between migration as a priority thematic area and the Swedish development cooperation goal of creating conditions for better living conditions for people living in poverty and under oppression.

Development assistance activities are implemented in an established context of conventions, treaties and charters to which Sweden is a signatory. The international framework and the international commitments and political obligations entailed, set the context within which Sida carries out its mission. These frameworks underpin, legitimise and give viability to a strengthened and expanded migration portfolio at Sida.

International commitments and frameworks that Sida must relate to include, but are not limited to:

Agenda 2030

The 2030 Agenda recognises that migration is a critical factor in achieving sustainable development and serves as a comprehensive framework to address the complex and dynamic relationship between migration and development. Goal 10 of the 2030 Agenda is about



reducing inequalities within societies and between countries. Target 10.7 specifically emphasises the need to facilitate safe, orderly, regular and responsible migration and mobility of people.

The approach to migration in the 2030 Agenda reflects one of the strengths of the SDGs: that they are mutually reinforcing and interdependent. A sharpened focus on migration and migrants in development cooperation is crucial to comply with the principle of leaving no-one behind.

International agreements and normative frameworks for migrants and forcibly displaced persons

People who migrate are holding the same human rights as any other person. These rights are set out in the UN's human rights instruments, international humanitarian law and refugee law. In practice, however, the access to- and exercise of human rights can vary greatly for different individuals and groups of migrants. The legal classification of migrants can be of great importance, as different groups are granted different rights. The term 'migrant' itself is not defined in international law and is used differently by different actors. In addition to the legally binding human rights instruments, there are several specific international agreements and normative frameworks that apply to migrants and displaced persons. These are:

The Refugee Convention and its Protocol

Refugees are persons outside their country of origin who are in need of international protection due to a serious threat to their lives, physical integrity or freedom in their country of origin due to persecution, armed conflict, violence, natural disasters or serious disturbances of public order. The 1951 Refugee Convention and its 1967 Protocol establish the right to international protection for those fleeing persecution. The principle of non-refoulement is an important aspect of the Refugee Convention. This principle means that refugees should not be returned to a country where they face serious threats to their lives or freedom. The 1951 Convention not only regulates the legal status of refugees, but also establishes a set of legal rights for refugees and asylum seekers, who have reached a safe country. An asylum seeker is a person who seeks protection in another country but who is not necessarily a refugee. The UNHCR is responsible for implementing and managing the 1951 Refugee Convention.

UN Guiding Principles for the Protection of Internally Displaced Persons

The Guiding Principles for the Protection of Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) are a normative framework for the protection of IDPs. The Guiding Principles consist of 30 standards that describe the protection available to IDPs. They describe in detail the rights and guarantees relevant to protect IDPs from forced

displacement: the right of protection and support during displacement and until a durable solution. In contrast to refugees, there is no international framework regarding IDPs.

The Guiding Principles are consistent with and reflect international law, including the human rights, the international humanitarian law and the refugee law. The Principles interpret and apply these existing standards to the situation of displaced persons. Although the Principles are not legally binding instrument, they have gained considerable authority since they were adopted in 1998.

ILO Framework for Migrant Workers

The International Labour Organisation framework for migrants contain two conventions that specifically focus on the rights of migrant workers, including the Migration for Employment Convention (No. 97) and the Migrant Workers Convention (No. 143). In addition, the ILO's normative and other work cover a range of important aspects of the right to employment and decent work conditions that are also of interest to migrant workers, such as social protection.

Global Refugee Framework (GRF)

The UN Global Refugee Framework was adopted by the General Assembly on December 17, 2018 (A/RES/73/151) to further address the global challenges related to refugee situations and forced displacement. The implementation of the GRF focuses on support to states and communities hosting refugees, inclusion of refugees in host communities and in development, durable solutions in refugee situations and internal displacement, including voluntary, dignified and safe return.

Global Compact for Migration (GCM)

The UN Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration (A/RES/73/195), adopted by the General Assembly on January 11, 2019, is the first inter-governmental agreement to address international migration in a comprehensive manner. The implementation of the Global Migration Framework means that measures for well-functioning regular migration can increase social and economic gains, reduce poverty and inequality and promote inclusive sustainable development. Sida contributes by reporting back to the Government on the implementation of the priority sub-goals.

Guidelines from the OECD DAC for migration related activities

The OECD DAC members have agreed on guidelines with principles and criteria for assessing which migration-related activities can be recognized and reported as Official Development Assistance (ODA). The development of the guidelines lasted two years and were adopted on December 21, 2022.⁵

The basic principle of OECD DAC for assessing ODA eligibility is based on whether the main objective of a development assistance operation is to promote the economic development and welfare of the recipient country. The directives state that ODA should not be used to promote the migration policy objectives of the donor country. The directives also state that the objectives and frameworks for development cooperation, humanitarian aid, human rights and the Global Goals for Sustainable Development must be adhered to. In addition, it is clarified that migration interventions to ODA countries (low-income countries) can be financed through development cooperation, while interventions that restrict migration to the donor country are not ODA-eligible.

The OECD DAC Sector Code for Migration

The Migration Sector Code contains definitions for which activities can be reported as Official Development Assistance (ODA).

The activities covered by the Migration Sector Code relate to the financing of, inter alia:

- Capacity building
- Policy development
- Planning and analysis
- International protection and the right to asylum
- Support to prevent and combat human trafficking

2. Current situation and background

2.1 Current situation

Within the framework of the agency's development cooperation, Sida has worked with long-term objectives focusing on migration in seven development cooperation strategies during the period 2022-2023. These have mainly focused on protecting the human rights of migrants and refugees through a wide range of initiatives, and largely in collaboration with multilateral actors. In 2024, the Government decided on new and amended objectives focusing on migration in a number of bilateral and regional strategies. In addition, the Government has decided on a new strategy for Sweden's Global Development Cooperation on Migration, Return and Voluntary Repatriation for 2024-2028.

⁵ OECD DAC, 2022. DCD/DAC(2022)53/FINAL, Clarifying the ODA eligibility of migration-related activities.

Strategies with migration objectives as of December 2024

- Sweden's Global Development Cooperation on Migration, Return and Voluntary Repatriation for 2024-2028
- Strategy for Sweden's Global Development Cooperation in Environment, Climate and Biodiversity 2022-2026 (updated objective 2024)
- Strategy for Sweden's Regional Development Cooperation with Africa 2022-2026 (updated objectives 2024)
- Strategy for Sweden's Regional Development Cooperation with Latin America 2021-2025 (updated objectives 2024)
- Strategy for Sweden's Regional Development Cooperation with Asia and Oceania 2022-2026 (updated objective 2024)
- Strategy for Sweden's Regional Development Cooperation with Eastern Europe 2021-2027 (updated objectives 2024)
- Strategy for Sweden's Regional Strategy for the Syria crisis 2024-2026
- Strategy for Sweden's Regional Development Cooperation with the Middle East and North Africa 2024-2027
- Strategy for Sweden's Development Cooperation with Kenya 2021-2025 (updated objectives 2024)
- Strategy for Sweden's Development and Reform Cooperation with Ukraine 2023-2027
- Strategy for Sweden's Development Cooperation with Iraq 2022- 2026 (decision to phase out)
- Strategy for Sweden's Development Cooperation with Uganda 2018-2023 (new strategy decided 2025 with no objectives but steering in the text)

Both long-term development cooperation and humanitarian aid support displaced people and vulnerable migrants, within their respective mandates and funding. Humanitarian aid has a needs-based approach and aims at providing protection and relief through emergency life-saving interventions in conflicts and disasters, in accordance with humanitarian principles and international humanitarian law.

The interplay between humanitarian aid, development cooperation and peace-building has been of particular importance in developing Sida's broad work on migration and forced displacement. Activities have focused on processes for durable solutions for refugees and internally displaced persons, through support for inclusion or integration into host communities and voluntary return when the situation is sufficiently secure. Mine action and reconstruction work has also been important to enable safe return.

Targeted migration interventions reported against the sector code for migration, enable the implementation of the sub-goals of the Global Migration Framework (GCM) to ensure safe, orderly and regular migration and Sida has been tasked with reporting upon these.

For the implementation of the Global Refugee Framework (GRF), Sida has made commitments in 2019 and 2023 in areas where Sida as a development financing actor can support host countries and receiving communities with long-term efforts, such as integration into social sectors, inclusive economic development and sustainable energy use.

Sida has also worked to integrate migration issues into strategy implementation where this has been deemed relevant to the strategy objectives, for example based on conclusions from Sida's country analysis, where multi-dimensional poverty analyses and a rights-based approach are key instruments.

Sidas strengths

Distinctive strengths of Sida's work in this area are:

- Sida's experience and lessons learned from several years of work in **long-term development cooperation and humanitarian aid** to support displaced people and vulnerable migrants through targeted interventions and integration of migration issues.
- Sida's experience of working to address the root causes of forced displacement through conflict prevention, **peace-building**, poverty reduction and **climate adaptation**, which can also contribute to the conditions for safe voluntary return, voluntary repatriation and re-integration.
- Sida's experience of working with a **rights-based approach** in operations concerning migration and migrants and forcibly displaced persons.
- Sida's capacity includes taking into account the **different conditions, needs and rights of the target group**. Issues of age, gender, sexual orientation, ethnic or religious affiliation, and other social factors that determine the most vulnerable influence how Sida's programming and aid interventions are designed for sustainable results.
- Sida's capacity to **mainstream migration** in strategy implementation, based on findings from Sida's analysis of multi-dimensional poverty in **regional and country analyses**.
- Sida's ability to apply a **systems approach** and work to ensure that different parts and actors in a system work together to create sustainable development results.
- Sida's long-term presence and partnerships in fragile and conflict-affected countries and regions that often have refugee- and IDP populations and are part of migratory routes.

- Sida's experience in the **interplay between humanitarian aid, development cooperation and peace-building** relevant to durable solutions and sustainable re-integration for IDPs, refugees and returnees in contexts with large populations of forcibly displaced persons.
- Sida's experience in **capacity development** as a methodology for developing institutions within a wide range of issues involving key actors in the management of migration.
- Sida's experience of **cooperation and dialogue** with multilateral actors such as the EU, the UN system and the multilateral development banks.
- Sida's established cooperation with the **Swedish resource base** within civil society and governmental authorities, including the Swedish Migration Agency.

Areas for development for Sida

In order to accelerate the implementation of migration-specific interventions and increase the focus on migration in development cooperation, Sida intends to develop the following areas:

- **Integrate migration issues into Sida's country, regional and global/thematic analysis** as a point of departure for Sida's development offer at these levels. Sida has many instruments in the form of strategies, financing tools and analytical models that can be used to strengthen the work on migration and development in different geographical contexts.
- **Strengthened coordination within Team Sweden.** This applies together with the Government Offices and other relevant authorities, including the Swedish embassies. Collaboration between Sida and the Swedish Migration Agency, through the cooperation agreement between the agencies, should be enhanced.
- **Increased donor coordination** with other donors and actors for development effectiveness in migration. In particular, coordination with other Nordic countries should be given greater priority. Fragmented funding and governance of migration-related interventions at country level, pose challenges to the four principles of effectiveness set out by the Global Partnership for Effective Development Cooperation: ownership, focus on results, inclusive partnerships, and transparency and accountability.
- **Expanding the overall portfolio of migration-related interventions** requires a well-developed and well-resourced organisation. Expectations of quick results need to be balanced against development cooperation that contributes to the objectives of the strategies.
- **Coordination between strategies at the national, regional and global levels** must be strengthened in order to take advantage of synergies.
- **Methods for migration in development cooperation**

need to be strengthened within Sida and with relevant partners. The external evidence on what types of development interventions in the migration field that produce sustainable results, is generally weak. Sida needs to deepen its work on developing theories of change and harness best practice, in order to provide results-focused development cooperation in the field of migration.

- **Knowledge of international conventions and mandates, nexus and a conflict-sensitive approach** to migration needs to be strengthened. Risks such as 'do-no-harm' and corruption risks need to be highlighted.

2.2 Background

Migration is a development issue. The UN estimates that there are currently around 281 million international migrants in the world, representing 3.6% of the global population. Migration is mostly regular, safe and orderly - regionally focused and linked to work. However, an increasing number of people are displaced, within and outside their country of origin. This is due to conflicts, violence, political or economic instability, climate change and other disasters. In 2022, there were around 117 million forcibly displaced people in the world, of which around 71 million were internally displaced.⁶ Of the world's displaced people 76% are in low- and middle-income countries and 70% in countries bordering their country of origin.⁷

Human mobility is one of the oldest human development strategies. Migration has been a major contributor to development throughout history. At the same time, migration and refugee situations present both challenges and opportunities from a development perspective. Many of these are summarized in the targets of the two UN frameworks on refugees and migration (GRF and GCM). The frameworks also clarify the rights of migrants and refugees. They are based on international human rights and the Sustainable Development Goals. International cooperation at both regional and global levels is needed to achieve results in the work on migration and development.

Natural disasters and environmental and/or climate-related crises increase pressure on vulnerable communities. The slow effects of climate change, such as water and arable land shortages, will continue to force people to leave their homes.

Many migrate under unsafe and insecure conditions. International migration continues to increase worldwide. Much of this migration takes place under unsafe conditions and can lead to violations of people's

⁶ McAuliffe, M. and L.A. Ouchou (eds.), 2024. World Migration Report 2024. International Organization for Migration (IOM), Geneva.

⁷ United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), 2023. Global Trends: Forced Displacement in 2022

protection and rights. Migrants and refugees are also more vulnerable to crises, as they have fewer safety nets and are more likely to fall into vulnerability and poverty.

Irregular migration increases the vulnerability of migrants. For those without legal migration routes, the only option may be to pay a smuggler to cross borders without permission. People who have migrated irregularly may be more vulnerable to exploitation and indebtedness. Violence, especially sexual violence, affects women and children to a high degree. Trafficking in human beings often affects irregular migrants or people in war and conflict situations and involves serious violations of people's protection and rights.

Labour migration can provide access to essential labour and employment. The number of people migrating internationally is increasing, with around 50% of them estimated to be labour migrants by the UN International Labour Organisation (ILO). For many people, labour migration is an important livelihood strategy that can bring economic development. But it can also increase the risk of tensions within groups in host communities, increase vulnerability and rights violations in various ways. Migrants typically strengthen both the economy of the new country and that of the home country, as they send money to family and relatives back home. For low- and middle-income countries, remittances are the largest external financial flow, larger than for instance foreign direct investment and development cooperation.⁸ In 2022, international remittances amounted to USD 831 billion, of which USD 647 billion went to low- and middle-income countries.⁹

Safe and orderly migration can drive development. More and more countries see safe and orderly migration as a driver of economic development. Well-managed migration can contribute to sustainable development and the reduction of inequalities, both within and between countries and for people. It involves border management that ensures the security of states, communities and migrants, enables the safe and regular cross-border movement of people, while preventing irregular migration.

More and more people are forced to flee. The number of armed conflicts has increased and violence affecting civilians increases forced migration and displacement. Of all those displaced, more than half are displaced within their own country. Data on conflict-related displacement shows that many of the countries of origin of the largest number of refugees, are also the

countries with the largest number of internally displaced persons.¹⁰

Low-income countries host the largest number of displaced people. More and more people are forced to flee their homes due to conflict, violence and climate-related reasons. Most of them flee within their own countries or to nearby low-income countries. Today, the situation of displaced people is increasingly protracted, often lasting over five and up to twenty years. Protracted wars and conflicts limit the possibility of returning home safely. The principle of non-refoulement is an international principle that prohibits states from expelling or returning a refugee (or person in need of protection) if it poses a threat to their life or freedom. The number of refugees has increased over time and the needs and vulnerabilities of the areas hosting refugees are increasing. The issue of integration in the host country is central and an important point of departure for durable solutions.

Internal displacement situations are a major challenge for achieving sustainable development. Many countries that host internally displaced persons will not be able to achieve the Global development goals in Agenda 2030 without fully addressing the situation of internally displaced persons. IDPs are often forced to move on and at risk of becoming refugees or migrating irregularly in the absence of durable solutions.

Durable solutions, such as local integration or voluntary repatriation, are challenging but important. There is a need to focus on barriers to return in a holistic and sustainable way. This includes, inter alia, support to civil documentation (identification, marital status, birth certificate etc), support to vulnerable families, employment opportunities, psycho-social support and social cohesion to prevent tensions with host communities. Formal legal exclusion of refugees from labour markets, basic social services and civil rights, is the rule rather than the exception. The risk of forced return is high, and rhetorics has hardened against refugees in many contexts often in the context of economic downturn. Peaceful co-existence with host communities is central in order to reduce inequalities and social tensions.

Well-managed re-integration of returnees is linked to sustainable development. In most return contexts, there are needs that may be related to lack of economic opportunities and lack of access to basic social services. Lack of security, livelihoods and lack of access to basic social services, are major obstacles to re-integration and return. The same applies to legal issues such as access to property, housing and land, and lack of civil documentation. Many return contexts

⁸ Dilip Ratha, Vandana Chandra, Eung Ju Kim, Sonia Plaza, and William Shaw, 2023. "Migration and Development Brief 39: Leveraging Diaspora Finances for Private Capital Mobilization." World Bank, Washington, DC.

⁹ McAuliffe, M. and L.A. Ochoa (eds.), 2024. World Migration Report 2024. International Organization for Migration (IOM), Geneva.

¹⁰ IDMC, 2017. "Global Report on Internal Displacement". Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre (IDMC), Geneva.

are also vulnerable to the effects of climate change and environmental degradation.

Re-integration in the country of origin is a central part of the return process. In post-conflict contexts, the social cohesion of communities of origin of migrants can be significantly eroded. These needs and threats - which often contribute to individuals' decisions to migrate in the first place - affect returning individuals as much as other members of a society. In summary, the above factors can have a negative impact on the re-integration of returning migrants, if not addressed.

3. Purpose and objectives of the sub-strategy

3.1 Purpose of the sub-strategy

The purpose of this sub-strategy is to provide a common and clear understanding of migration and development objectives and approaches, in order to facilitate the implementation of Sida's development assistance activities.

This sub-strategy does not cover humanitarian aid. Sida's humanitarian aid is based on the humanitarian principles, international humanitarian law and Sida's needs-based humanitarian allocation model.

This sub-strategy emphasizes the interplay between humanitarian assistance, long-term development cooperation and peace-building in addressing the root causes of forced displacement, contributing to durable solutions, and helping to create the conditions for return, voluntary repatriation and sustainable re-integration.

It also aims to help Sida to respond to the assignments the agency receives from the Government on an ongoing basis. The sub-strategy also expresses approaches and entry-points for Sida's operational development. Furthermore, it provides a basis for communication with external parties and Sida's partners.

The sub-strategy is based on Sida's Operational Strategy 2024-2026 and guides the planning of activities within the framework of the organisational planning. Follow-up of the activities takes place within the framework of the operational follow-up, where the effects of the sub-strategy is evaluated every three years.

3.2 Target 2026

This sub-strategy aims to contribute to the achievement of the objectives for work on migration and development, as expressed in Sida's Operational Strategy 2024-2026:

Development cooperation creates conditions for better living conditions for people living in poverty and oppression and thereby affects the root causes of irregular migration and forced displacement. Sida counter-acts the root causes of forced displacement through peace-building efforts. Operations in countries of origin, transit and host countries strengthen the capacity of partner countries and contribute to safe, orderly and regulated migration, increase return and contribute to sustainable re-integration. In collaboration with Swedish and international actors, Sida develops innovative approaches to use its development assistance to promote the positive contribution of returning migrants to development in partner countries.

By increasing the focus on migration in development cooperation, Sida contributes to stronger synergies between development and migration policies.

To achieve this, Sida will prioritise the following work during the period 2024-2026:

1. Increase the results responding to the objectives in the Government's strategies for development cooperation. Sida's strategic entry points are:

- Address the root causes to migration and forced displacement
- Contribute to safe, orderly and regular migration
- Contribute to strengthened capacity in host countries and host communities for dignified reception and inclusion of migrants and forcibly displaced persons.
- Contribute to durable solutions; inclusion in development and conditions for safe and dignified return and voluntary repatriation.

2. Strengthened stakeholder engagement. Sida will increase awareness of- and interaction with key actors in the field of migration and development.

3. Development of skills and methodology. Sida will strengthen its internal capacity to work with migration and development.

1. Increase the results responding to the objectives in the Government's strategies for development cooperation

Sida's regional and country analyses will include migration, migrants and displaced persons with a view to integrate these into the overall objectives and portfolios of the strategies.

Sida will work to ensure that the interaction between humanitarian aid, development cooperation and peace-building continues to be developed and prioritised in aid implementation.

In order to increase focus on migration in development cooperation to achieve results, Sida's work on migration needs to be resourced within the organisation. For effective implementation, Sida also needs to expand the portfolio of development assistance to relevant implementing actors and geographical areas.

Sida's operational activities are based on current strategy goals and international frameworks and can be summarized in four strategic entry points:

Address the root causes of migration and forced displacement

Sida's broad development cooperation against poverty and oppression contributes to addressing the causes of migration and forced displacement, for example by preventing conflict and social unrest, increasing economic and social opportunities, reducing humanitarian needs, adapting to climate change, increasing gender equality, and safeguarding human rights (2030 Agenda).

Contribute to safe, orderly and regular migration

Contribute to efforts for the protection of the **human rights of migrants and refugees**, such as for ID documents, protection, information, health, education (GRF).

Contribute to efforts on **countries' responsibility and capacity** to ensure safe, orderly and regular migration for example support during migration/refugee routes reception capacities, migration and asylum management border management (GCM, GRF)

Contribute to strengthened capacity in host countries and host communities for dignified reception and inclusion of migrants and forcibly displaced persons

Contribute to **capacity building and dignified reception in host countries** and host communities, for example through support national or regional refugee response plans access to social services, social protection, local cohesion, livelihoods (GRF).

Contribute to durable solutions; inclusion in development and conditions for safe and dignified return and voluntary repatriation

Contribute to **durable solutions for displaced persons and migrants** through inclusive economic and social development and integration for refugees and migrants (2030 Agenda, GRF, GCM).

Contribute to **conditions for safe and dignified return and voluntary repatriation**, and sustainable re-integration of migrants, refugees and internally displaced persons in countries of origin (2030 Agenda, GRF, GCM).

2. Strengthened stakeholder engagement

Sida's sharpened focus on migration in development cooperation is implemented within the framework of international commitments, agreements and frameworks. Effective development cooperation in the field of migration is based on international law, including human rights and international humanitarian law. With this as a starting point, Sida can increase the focus on migration and forced displacement in development cooperation in relevant arenas and in cooperation with other actors.

Sida needs enhanced knowledge of the current context and relevant actors in relation to migration. This includes the ability to draw on the expertise and experience of Swedish and international stakeholders from both the public- and the private sector, including civil society and the research community.

Sida will focus on:

- Actively broaden the composition of implementing partners in the area of migration, forced displacement and development.
- Contribute to strengthening the Swedish resource base, including through cooperation with the Swedish Migration Agency.
- Further develop forms of cooperation with relevant actors, including donors, international organisations, the EU, IOM, UNHCR and the World Bank. This contributes to Sida's knowledge exchange in the area and enables development results.
- Seize opportunities that may arise in the context of the EU's more geopolitically oriented external relations (The Global Gateway and Team Europe initiatives).
- Contribute to the mobilisation of capital for financing refugee crises in low- and middle-income countries by exploring, for example, private sector partnerships, the use of Sida's guarantee instruments and cooperation with new donor countries.
- Continue to contribute to secondments to strategic multilateral actors in the field of migration.
- Take a stronger role in the implementation of the Global Compact on Migration, for instance through the active participation in the UN Network on Migration, the Global Forum on Migration and Development (GFMD) and, where appropriate, the inter-regional dialogue processes on migration.
- Use the experience, presence and credibility of relevant civil society organisations and local actors.
- Explore experiences of refugee-led initiatives and other actor-led approaches.

3. Skills and methodology development

Sida needs to have good thematic expertise within the broad field of migration. In addition, Sida should have good knowledge of processes, commitments and actors in the field of migration. In particular, Sida needs to deepen its thematic capacity regarding strengthening conditions for increased return, voluntary repatriation and sustainable re-integration, as well as a rights-based focus in work on strengthening capacity in partner countries for migration and asylum management, with a focus on countering irregular migration.

Sida will focus on:

- Develop internal methodologies and tools to ensure a basic level of knowledge for Sida's staff on migration issues, including continuous learning and in-depth capacity building and to further develop the Agency's internal thematic networks on migration and development.
- Systematise and apply the integration of migration issues in analysis for strategy implementation, including through Sida's country and regional analysis, in order to contribute to an increased focus on migration in development cooperation, as appropriate.
- Strengthen approaches to the integration of migrants, refugees and internally displaced persons, in the context of implementing aid strategies, for example by using migration data and statistics.
- Deepen the analysis and knowledge of the structural factors that force people to migrate or flee their homes, and identify what constitutes obstacles to return and re-integration, and how these can be systematically identified in Sida's partner countries.
- Develop - in collaboration with Swedish and international actors - new and effective approaches to promote migrants' positive contribution to development in partner countries.
- Improve working methods for applying existing data, evidence and analysis in the field of migration as a basis for strategy implementation, and identify knowledge gaps, including risks.
- Document and communicate learning on what works and what does not work at strategy and intervention levels in order to scale up and streamline strategy implementation activities.
- Continue to develop implementation tools, such as a migration and development help-desk.
- Monitor the work of the OECD DAC on migration-related activities within ODA.
- Implement a skills upgrade as part of Sida's competence management plan. The existing skills of Sida's employees are utilized and further developed, whereas recruitment with migration-specific expertise may also be required.

4. Guiding principles

The Guiding Principles will contribute to achieving the objective of Sida's Operational Strategy 2024-2026 of strengthening synergies between development and migration policies, taking advantage of Sida's added-value as an expert agency in development cooperation and where cooperation with other relevant actors in the field is strengthened to achieve results.

Sida's development offer should be based on the conclusions of analysis of the specific development context - at country and regional levels.

The conclusions of Sida's analysis should clearly guide the areas to be prioritised, the selection of interventions and how the work on migration and development should work synergistically with other target areas in the specific country/regional context. Sida's Multi-dimensional Poverty Analysis (MDPA) and the internationally recognised Human Rights-Based Approach (HRBA) tool are elements in this work. In both of these analytical models, the rights and realities of migration and migrants are a cross-cutting issue that provides additional knowledge about the needs and rights of a country, region and target group. The models take into account the rights and different needs of people that vary due to gender, age, ethnicity, religion, disability, etc.

Sida finances activities that contribute to the overarching goal of development assistance.

Sida's mission is to contribute to the achievement of the international development assistance goal - to create conditions for better living conditions for people living in poverty and under oppression. Sida's strengthened focus on migration in development cooperation, in line with the Reform Agenda – Aid For a New Era - Freedom, Empowerment and Sustainable Growth, will contribute to the overall goal of development assistance.

Sida contributes to the fulfilment of international commitments and obligations.

Sida's strengthened focus on migration in development cooperation is implemented within the framework of international commitments, agreements and frameworks. Development assistance activities are implemented in an established context of conventions, treaties and frameworks to which Sweden is a signatory. The international framework - and the international commitments and political obligations this entails - sets the framework within which Sida implements its mission. In accordance with Regulation 2022/234 §1.2, Sida shall contribute to the implementation of the Government's international commitments regarding the Principles of Effective Development Cooperation.¹¹

¹¹ [The Effectiveness Principles | Global Partnership for Effective Development Co-operation](#)

Sida collaborates within Team Sweden and with international actors

Sida's increased focus on migration in development cooperation will be based on evidence, good practice and lessons learned from previous results of development assistance within migration and development. Sida will draw on the experience and expertise of Swedish and global actors within the agency's analytical work and its translation into operational implementation. The Swedish Migration Agency is a particularly important partner within Team Sweden in this thematic area. Through Team Sweden, Sida will work to create synergies for the best possible exchange of Swedish actors' expertise and at the same time relate to the mission of each actor and the purpose and objectives of each instrument. The EU, the UN and multilateral banks are important arenas for Team Sweden work. Team Sweden collaborations take place both in Sweden and abroad.

Sida uses the OECD DAC principles and criteria for migration-related activities

In December 2022¹², OECD DAC members agreed on guidelines for principles and criteria for assessing which migration-related activities can be accounted for and reported as official development assistance (so-called ODA eligibility). The OECD DAC's basic principle for assessing ODA eligibility is based on whether the main objective of a development cooperation operation is to promote the economic development and welfare of the recipient country. The guidelines state that the objectives and frameworks for development cooperation, humanitarian aid, human rights and the Sustainable Development Goals must be followed. The directives also state that ODA should not be used to promote the domestic migration policy objectives of the donor country. Similarly, operations that restrict migration to the donor country are not eligible for ODA.

5. Operational recommendations

Based on the development areas identified in section 2 and the focus areas highlighted in section 3 for achieving the 2026 target - focus on increased results, strengthened stakeholder engagement, and competence/methodology development - the operational recommendations aim to guide the implementation of the sub-strategy.

Improved theory of change - from analysis to development offer

An increased focus on migration in development cooperation means that migration and development are included in Sida's development offer. This needs to be preceded by the inclusion of migration as development

issue and migrants and displaced persons as a target group in Sida's country and regional analysis. With the purpose that development cooperation leads to results, Sida needs to develop theories of change for migration and development which is evidence-based and adapted to the specific geography and development context.

Starting from a systems approach

To design effective and sustainable aid, we need to understand the economic, political and social systems in which we work and how they affect our target population: people living in poverty and under oppression. Like all development cooperation, work in the field of migration aims at lasting and sustainable systemic change, within the framework of good and democratic governance. Sida therefore takes a systems approach and designs and implements interventions that take into account and strive to contribute to better living conditions for people living in poverty and oppression and where migration has affected countries, regions and the mobility of people.

Using a nexus approach - the interaction between humanitarian aid, long-term development cooperation and peace-building

Migration and forced displacement often occur at the intersection of development challenges, conflict and humanitarian needs, where Sida's work and experience in these areas has added value. A nexus approach should therefore continue to guide the work. The interaction between humanitarian aid, long-term development cooperation and peace-building should be highlighted in the work to counteract the root causes of forced displacement, contribute to durable solutions, and help create conditions for return, voluntary repatriation and sustainable re-integration.

Synergies between strategies at national, regional and global level

Migration is a transnational process and synergies between national, regional and global activities should be considered. The added value of each strategy varies depending on the challenge addressed. Where the focus is on the needs of a country, Sida always start from the country context to maximise the results. Regional initiatives are central to address a migration challenge that often involves several countries in a region. A route-based approach involves simultaneous action by states, multilateral organisations, civil society organisations and other relevant actors along the entire migrant routes - including countries of origin, transit and destination. Synergies between different approaches at national, regional and global levels may be particularly appropriate for development interventions in migration.

¹² OECD DAC, 2022. DCD/DAC (2022)53/Final, Clarifying the ODA eligibility of migration-related activities.

Assessment procedures to be consistently in line with OECD DAC guidelines

According to the OECD DAC, a key challenge is to determine whether the primary purpose of an intervention is to contribute to the economic development and welfare of the recipient country or the migration policy objectives of the donor country.

The OECD DAC identifies three areas where this is particularly challenging and where the integrity of development assistance risks being undermined. These are interventions that aim to:

1. Promote return and re-integration.
2. Efforts to counter irregular migration; such as strengthened capacity of border control, anti-trafficking and smuggling aimed at limiting migration to Europe, and;
3. The conditionality of assistance related to the migration policy objectives of the donor country.

The directives provide clarifications on how to assess ODA capacity (see box below).

Clarifications on how to assess ODA eligibility¹³

- That international legal frameworks for migrants and refugees should be taken into account.
- That the conditionality of development assistance relates to the donor country migration policy objectives is not ODA-eligible, unless the conditionality itself can be shown to primarily contribute to the development of the recipient country, for which there must be clear evidence.
- That there is clarity in of how the main objective of an operation is assessed to ensure ODA eligibility, including that the main objective should be to contribute to the development and welfare of the country of origin.
- That development assistance as regards financing border management for countering irregular migration is limited.
- That forced return costs are never ODA-eligible.
- That re-integration programmes in countries of origin are in principle ODA-eligible regardless of the status of the returnee, but only if it enables sustainable integration and contributes to the economic development and welfare of the country of origin and does not primarily promote the migration policy objectives of the donor country.
- That diaspora engagement in the donor country without a clear development or humanitarian focus is not ODA-eligible.

Combining targeted interventions and mainstreaming migration

Sharpening the focus on migration in development cooperation requires a broad approach. One part is to increase the number and total disbursement volume of targeted interventions, classified as migration interventions under the Sector Code for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration (Sector Code 15190). A complementary part is to integrate migration into strategy implementation and thus also contribute to other target areas in Sida's Operational Strategy 2024-2026. Sida has good experience of that the Multidimensional Poverty Analysis ensures this approach and relevance to the development cooperation objective.

6. List of concepts

Development cooperation is based on the terminology and definitions contained in International Humanitarian Law (IHL), the Refugee Convention, international human rights declarations and international frameworks and guidelines developed by the UN. From a legal or humanitarian perspective focusing on rights, protection and responsibilities, it is important to make a clear distinction between concepts such as refugee, internally displaced person, forcibly displaced person, asylum seeker. The Sida methodology document on HRBA and IHL elaborates on this¹⁴. In practice, a person may move between these categories over time and often forcibly displaced groups can be part of mixed migration flows.

Asylum seeker: The right to seek asylum is a human right. An asylum seeker is a person who claims to be in need of protection on the grounds of violence and persecution but whose application has not yet been ultimately determined. Protection needs are assessed on the basis of a well-founded fear and a request for protection in a country of asylum may be granted if the country of origin is unable or unwilling to provide protection. An asylum seeker is granted refugee status with a residence permit if he or she is granted asylum by the UNHCR or by the host country.

Refugee: A declaration of status under the UN Refugee Convention. Someone who is forced to flee their home and crosses a national border to seek protection from war, violence or persecution, and who cannot return until it is safe to do so, may be entitled to international protection status under the Refugee Convention. It is either the United Nations Refugee Agency (UNHCR) or the host country authorities that determine whether a person meets the criteria for international protection and grant the individual a residence permit as a refugee. Refugee status comes with

¹³ OECD DAC (2022), DCD/DAC (2022)53/Final, Clarifying the ODA eligibility of migration-related activities.

¹⁴ Sida, 2022, "Human Rights Based Approach And International Humanitarian Law" and Sida, 2022 "Human rights Based Approach and Migration".

the right to protection and assistance. Refugees may not be forced to return to their country of origin as long as the threat of violence and persecution persists and until the safety of their country of origin is assured (under the principle of non-refoulement).

Internally displaced person: Internally displaced persons are those who are displaced within their own country. According to UN guidelines, an internally displaced person is someone who has fled their home due to conflicts, human rights violations and other traumatic events and is still in their home country. The two most common causes of internal displacement are conflict and natural disasters. Those who are forced to flee their homes to protect their lives and health, usually start by seeking protection within their home country. IDPs do not have the international protection status of refugees. However, they are citizens of their country and enjoy both citizenship rights and universal human rights, such as the right to health care, education and livelihood. At the same time, the conflict or persecution that forces people to flee may be caused by the authorities of their home country. IDPs are therefore a particularly vulnerable group.

Irregular migration: Irregular migration refers to migration that takes place outside legal channels, without valid travel documents and permits, often through smuggling or outside regular migration systems. Irregular migration generally puts people at a higher risk of violence and abuse due to lack of security and protection.

Migration: There is no universally accepted definition of migration. It can be described as a collective term for the movement of people, across borders or within countries, for extended periods of time. Migration can be voluntary or involuntary. The most common reasons why people migrate are due to economic, environmental and social reasons. People who migrate do not enjoy the protection status of refugees, but they are covered by universal human rights such as the right to health, education and livelihood.

Trafficking in human beings: The exploitation of a person's vulnerability by means of threats, coercion or deception and the recruitment, transportation, harbouring or receipt of that person for the purpose of labour or financial exploitation, usually for the purpose of prostitution, military service or forced labour.

Smuggling of migrants: When a so-called smuggler intentionally and often for a fee helps a person to enter or pass through a foreign country without the necessary authorisation. It is considered a cross-border crime.

Non-refoulement: The principle of non-refoulement is an international principle that prohibits States from expelling or returning a refugee (or person in need of protection) if it poses a threat to the refugee's life or freedom. The prohibition of refoulement refers not only to actions that result in the return of the foreign national to the country of origin, but also to areas where the person is not protected against the risk of being returned to the country of origin.

Forcibly displaced: Forcibly displaced persons are people displaced from their homes (within a country or across a border) whether due to violent conflict, or disasters or natural events. Refugees, asylum seekers and internally displaced persons are included in the category of forcibly displaced persons.

Durable solutions: Durable solutions to refugee situations mean one of the following: local integration or inclusion; voluntary, safe and dignified return; or resettlement to a third country as a quota refugee. Integration and inclusion is the most realistic solution in many refugee contexts when security in the country of origin remains difficult.

Re-integration: Process of re-establishing a person's economic, social and psychosocial conditions in their country of origin after return or repatriation.

Re-admission: All States have an obligation under international law to readmit their own nationals who no longer have the right to stay in the country where they are present.

Repatriation: A refugee or migrant may, voluntarily and in safety and dignity, return to their country of origin. Repatriation should be an informed decision based on knowledge of the current circumstances in the place of origin. Repatriation is one of the three durable solutions often mentioned as the primary one, i.e. the desired outcome, but in reality many refugee situations are protracted due to protracted conflicts.

Return: Persons who are not granted a residence permit, for example through a refusal of asylum, must return to their country of origin. This can be voluntary or forced.





Handwriting practice lines consisting of 20 horizontal grey lines.

This is an unofficial translation from the document in Swedish:
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decided by Sidas Director General in December 2024

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