



## IN BRIEF...

# Middle East and North Africa

Development cooperation with the Middle East and North Africa has, with some exceptions, been rather limited up until now. With Sweden's membership of the EU conditions have partly changed and co-operation in such fields as research and culture will increase progressively over the next few years.

### Why does Sweden give support to this area?

Compared with many of the countries in Asia and Sub-Saharan Africa, the countries in what is known as the MENA region (Algeria, Egypt, Iraq, Iran, Yemen, Jordan, Lebanon, Morocco, Syria, Tunisia, the West Bank/Gaza and Yemen) are, with the exception of Yemen, relatively rich. They therefore do not fit with the main thrust of development cooperation combating poverty. On the other hand, many of the countries in the MENA region are grappling with a series of other development problems such as shortcomings in democracy and human rights, particularly those of women.

Gender equality is one of the flagships of Swedish development cooperation. In many of these countries the status of women and girls is traditionally inferior to that of men. This manifests itself in such things as a large proportion of female illiterates and a high maternal mortality rate. Few women have jobs and neither do they have the same opportunities as men to become politically involved.

The environment and increased respect for human rights are other important issues in Swedish development cooperation. In these areas too there is much to be done to improve the situation in the region.

### How long has Sweden been providing support?

Sweden has been providing support to some of the countries in the MENA region ever since aid began in the 1960s but only to a limited extent. The exceptions are Tunisia and Egypt, which received a lot of support during the 60s and 70s.

### What does Sida do in this area?

The aims of the Swedish development cooperation with the MENA region are to:

- Promote democracy and respect for human rights, especially greater equality.
- Promote peace and security.

The cooperation is to facilitate and pave the way for more contacts between Sweden and the countries in the region. The West Bank/Gaza

receives more than half the aid to the MENA region (see separate fact sheet).

A large part of the aid to the region goes to humanitarian initiatives. Iraq in particular receives a great deal of humanitarian aid.

For the rest Sida supports initiatives in such fields as human rights, democratisation, culture and research.

### *Contract-financed technical cooperation*

Six of the countries – Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, Morocco, Syria and Tunisia – are eligible for contract-financed technical cooperation (KTS). Sida and the country concerned jointly finance contracts between their authorities and Swedish experts in order to develop knowledge and methods.

Some examples:

#### • *Business training*

In order to strengthen the standing of women in Tunisia and Morocco and increase their opportunities to earn an income, Sida contributes to around 2,000 female entrepreneurs receiving basic business training in invoicing and marketing, for example.

#### • *Road safety*

In Morocco there are reported to be approximately 40,000 traffic accidents involving personal injury every year. At the same time motor traffic is increasing. With the help of the Swedish National Road Administration, Morocco is to develop a strategy for safer roads. Lebanon and Syria also receive support from Sida for initia-

tives to improve road safety. In Syria this forms part of more wide-ranging support for the road sector.

#### • Land use planning

Given an expanding population, there is an urgent need to ensure that best use is made of agricultural land, a scarce asset in Egypt. GOPP, the General Office of Physical Planning, is responsible for land use planning in Egypt. With the help of Swedish experts from SSPA Sweden AB the authority is to acquire the necessary skills.

#### Credits

Over the last ten years Sida has granted development loans of just over SEK 770 million to countries in the MENA region. Development loans are loans on very favourable terms. They are intended for urgent investments in infrastructure and are often, but not always, used to finance supplies from Swedish companies.

Tunisia has received the most development loans, mainly to develop water and sewage purification schemes. Egypt and Morocco have received development loans for investments in the telecommunications sector.

#### Humanitarian aid and conflict management

A large part of the support to the MENA region goes to humanitarian aid and conflict management.

The objective is to protect human life in accordance with international humanitarian law and to alleviate the consequences for those affected by armed conflicts and natural disasters. The aid is channelled through independent organisations and via the UN and other international agencies. Swedish aid goes mainly to three conflict zones within the MENA region where the civilian population has been particularly badly hit, Iraq, the West Bank and Gaza and Western Saharan refugees in Algeria.

#### Support for democracy and human rights

Sida is planning regional initiatives on these topics area with participation by as many countries in the region as possible. These may involve training in human rights, projects for improved governance, support for the legal system or for the rights of women and children.

#### Cultural collaboration

Sida is planning to increase collaboration with the region in the fields of dance, drama and music. A wider-ranging collaboration in the cultural

area will promote cultural diversity and sustainable development based on human rights.

#### Research

A research collaboration has been started in order to promote joint research between Swedish research workers and those in the MENA region. The programme is a collaboration between Sida, the Swedish Research Council and the Swedish Institute in Alexandria.

#### Non Governmental Organisations

The majority of the support to the MENA region goes via NGOs – Swedish, international or local. The Swedish NGOs work mainly in the West Bank/Gaza, Yemen, Egypt and Lebanon. The projects are for the most part made up of initiatives to promote democracy, highlight violations of human rights and to work for peace and reconciliation.

#### The future

Development Cupertino with the MENA region is planned to increase by approximately SEK 20 million a year over the period 2002–2004. It is reckoned that the need for humanitarian aid will remain, as will that for peace promotion initiatives.

## Swedish aid 2001 – payments

Sidas total payments, all countries and regions 11,537,407,000

\* ppp = purchasing power parity (purchasing power taking into account exchange rates, price levels, etc.)

\*\*\* No information available

Country	GNP/capita USD ppp*	HDR Ranking From total of 173 countries	Average Life Expectancy (Years)	Swedish support 2001 2002 payments
Algeria	5,308	106	69.6	17,295,000
Egypt	3,635	115	67.3	11,286,000
Iran	5,884	98	68.9	0
Iraq	***	Not ranked	58.7	35,389,000
Jordan	3,966	99	70.3	6,892,000
Lebanon	4,308	75	73.1	8,836,000
Morocco	3,546	123	67.6	5,464,000
Syria	3,556	108	71.2	930,000
Tunisia	6,363	97	70.2	3,698,000
WestBank/Gaza	***	Not ranked	71.5	226,398,000
Yemen	893	144	60.6	6,280,000
Middle East Regional				36,422,000
North Africa Regional				4,670,000

Human Development Report 2002. LIS Database, Sida

*Halving poverty by 2015 is one of the greatest challenges of our time, requiring cooperation and sustainability. The partner countries are responsible for their own development. Sida provides resources and develops knowledge and expertise, making the world a richer place.*



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