



IN BRIEF...

Improved farming reduce rural poverty

Most of the world's poor live in rural areas in Africa and Asia. Farming, which is to say production that depend on what the land has to offer, is the most important source of income for many of them. If the international community is to achieve its goal and dramatically reduce poverty by 2015, the development of rural areas and farming must begin in earnest. Sida pursues these issues internationally, and supports research as well as programmes and projects in the partner countries.

Why does Sweden support rural development?

Despite the growth in rural poverty, most of the world's poor (approximately 75 per cent) live in rural areas. Many are severely undernourished and have no access to clean water or sanitation. Conflicts over land rights also cause serious problems. Poor rural inhabitants are often totally dependent on what nature can supply: Farming—i.e. agriculture, forestry, animal husbandry and fishing—are therefore important production to them.

Without rural development, there can be no economic growth or poverty reduction in most of Sida's partner countries, particularly in sub-Saharan Africa.

Usually, the poorer a country, the more important the farming—whatever the scale. Projects designed to create a more efficient production without overexploiting natural resources are therefore crucial to reducing poverty and helping poor people improve their living conditions—the primary goal of development cooperation.

Increased productivity, particularly

in farming, is one of the reasons for the drop in poverty in Asia. However, in some areas there this has caused considerable environmental problems, which could eventually reverse the trend.

In Africa, rural productivity has not made such progress. When populations increase, as they are doing in many African countries—particularly in the cities—the demand for sustenance also increases, and accordingly more food must be produced. This can easily lead to the over-exploitation of natural resources.

The natural disasters of recent years have shown us how human activities can bring about long-lasting changes to the environment.

When opportunities for survival decline, the risk of conflict grows. Violent conflicts are today much more common within countries than between them, and are considered most likely to erupt when renewable resources such as land, forest and water begin to run out.

Seen from a global perspective, food production has generally kept pace

with population growth, and there are still sometimes relatively heavy surpluses on the world markets. Despite this, malnourishment is common, and on the rise, in many countries today. In Africa, the need for food is expected to have almost tripled by 2025.

However, more needs to be done than just promoting environmentally sustainable farming. Several other changes are also often necessary, such as helping people learn more about trade and markets (local and international), redistributing farmland, extending infrastructure, developing and using new methods of cultivation, removing red-tape, and orientating production towards sales rather than only for self-sufficiency.

The rich countries must also be prepared to make changes. For example, we could make our markets more open for products from developing countries.

The Millennium Goals —a joint commitment

One of the departure points for Sida's work is the Millennium Goals that the world's countries agreed upon in order to halve poverty by 2015.

Although all eight goals can be linked to some extent to rural development, the most obvious connection is with the first: to halve poverty and dramatically reduce famine.

The sixth goal concerns ensuring environmentally sustainable growth and safeguarding global resources—such as climate stability and biological diversity.

How long has Sweden been supporting rural development?

Sida has been supporting this area since inception in the early 1960s.

What does Sweden do to promote rural development?

Sida gives extensive support to rural development. This involves contributing to growth and improved life conditions in rural areas by using natural resources in a long-sighted, sustainable and productive way. Key themes are agriculture, forestry and water use, as well as domestic water supplies and sanitation. Sida also contributes to other resources supplies.

Sida works on the basis of a general rural development plan by supporting research and pursuing relevant issues in international contexts, at times in association with other Swedish institutions. One such issue is how water resources and biological diversity can be safeguarded now and for the future.

Sida also finances a large number of global and regional projects outside the bilateral programmes it has with its partner countries. Support is often given jointly with other donors.

The following is just a selection of projects to show the geographical spread and some of the problems that development cooperation is trying to resolve.

There are some issues, like environmental impact, HIV/AIDS and equality, that are given particular attention in all projects.

Agricultural support in Zambia

In Zambia, Sida is supporting a project for rural development in four regions. The Agricultural Support Programme (ASP) is now in its second phase and is expected to reach up to 200,000 people (roughly 40,000 families).

The main target group is small-scale farmers who are seeking to improve their businesses. The project trains them in more sustainable cultivation methods, in how markets and trade operate, and in how to suit production to the needs of the market (e.g. by growing new crops in demand locally).

The goal is to improve the living conditions of rural people through more secure access to food and higher incomes.

Working on several fronts in Mozambique

In Mozambique, where 80 per cent of the population live off the land, Sida is supporting a national programme for the development of the agricultural sector as a whole. The programme, to which a number of donors are contributing, is called ProAgri, and is being run by the Mozambiquean Ministry of Agriculture.

Sida is also financing a separate project designed to help investors invest in enterprises based on natural resources in Niassa—one of the least developed parts of the country. The goal is to give impetus to rural development there.

Support for small coffee and milk producers in Nicaragua

FondeAgro is a programme that targets its operations towards poor farmers in

two regions: Matagalpa and Jinotega. The programme comprises five parts that together are intended to stimulate the production and quality of the participants' most important products: milk and coffee.

Most importantly, the farmers receive technical advice and loan facilities at competitive rates.

FondeAgro's successes include higher incomes and stronger land-use rights for the farmers.

Support for rural development in Vietnam

About 90 per cent of the population of Vietnam live in rural areas. Many factors contribute to poverty there, including inefficient cultivation methods, lack of healthcare and education, and poor infrastructure.

Sida is financing the Chia Se programme, which encompasses some 460 villages in the poorest regions of Vietnam. Chia Se operates on the basis of the local people's wishes and active engagement.

Support for land-surveying in the Balkans

Whoever has the right to land naturally has greater opportunities for developing a farming business. Unclear land ownership is also often a source of conflict. Sida therefore is supporting property registration and land-surveying activities in many countries of the region, including Macedonia, Kosovo, Serbia and Croatia. The main objective of Sida's work is to bolster the authorities that deal with land issues.

The 20 countries that received the greatest support from Sida in 2006	Costs (SEK)	Rural population	Less than 1 USD per day to live on (%)	Agriculture value added (% of GDP)	Ranking in Human Dev. Report 2006
Tanzania	819 093 000	76,2	57,8	45	162
Mozambique	663 825 000	66,3	37,8	23	168
Uganda	461 384 000	87,5	**	34	145
Kenya	382 942 000	79,5	22,8	27	152
Russia	359 289 000	26,9	18,8	6	65
Westbank/Gaza	345 859 000	28,5	**	**	100
Zambia	356 306 000	65,1	75,8	19	165
Afghanistan	335 028 000	**	**	**	***
Sudan	326 616 000	60,2	**	34	141
Vietnam	315 218 000	74,0	**	22	109
Ethiopia	305 885 000	84,3	23,0	48	170
Serbia & Montenegro	300 075 000	**	**	16	***
Bosnia-Herzegovina	284 070 000	54,8	**	11	62
Bangladesh	282 721 000	75,3	36,0	21	137
D. R. Congo	259 585 000	68,4	**	46	167
Nicaragua	244 665 000	41,3	45,1	19	112
Guatemala	240 622 000	53,2	13,5	23	118
Mali	2187 180 000	70,1	72,3	36	175
Laos	264 782 000	79,7	27	46	133
Indonesia	164 782 000	53	7,5	14	108
<i>Sverige</i>	<i>15,9</i>	<i>0</i>	<i>2</i>	<i>5</i>	

* Data relate to the period 1999–2003. ** Information not available or has stated income of less than USD 4 a day. *** Not ranked.

Sources: 2005 Sida Annual Report, Human Development Report 2006 (UNDP), World Development Indicators (World Bank)

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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