



IN BRIEF...

Sweden's Development Co-operation with Tajikistan

Why Swedish Assistance to Tajikistan?

Tajikistan became an independent state when the former Soviet Union disintegrated in 1991. During the Soviet era, Tajikistan was one of the poorest Soviet republics. A civil war, in the wake of the independence further aggravated the situation. In recent times, the security situation has improved. The country is still, however, in the early stages of economic and political transition. It faces the challenges of mass-unemployment, a collapse of the social system and insufficient food supplies. A majority of the population live below the poverty line.

The overall objective of Sweden's development co-operation world-wide is to create the necessary conditions for reducing poverty and for preventing conflict, primarily by promoting sustainable development and improved standards of living. It is also to contribute to the development of democratic structures and respect for human rights.

Sweden's Strategy for Central Asia, covering the period 2003–2005, envisages a focus on Tajikistan, the poorest country in the region. It is argued that a further stabilisation of the situation there will benefit security throughout the region. The aim of Swedish development co-operation with Tajikistan is to create means of support and faith in the future among the poor. Priority will be given programmes that lead to concrete, visible results, and that are in accord with Tajikistan's own Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP).

The History of Sida in Tajikistan

Sida has been active in Tajikistan since 1997. To date, the outside world, including Sweden, has primarily focused on humanitarian assistance. Between 1997–2002, Sweden has allocated approximately SEK 68 million to Tajikistan. Aid has been channelled via the UN and Red Cross movement and concerned security of food supply, primary health care, programme planning/co-ordination and disaster preparedness. Tajikistan is currently moving from humanitarian to long-term aid. The aim of the current Swedish development co-operation is thus to facilitate a gradual transition, whereby long-term assistance is linked to the humanitarian aid programme.

What will Sida do in Tajikistan, 2003–2005?

Between 2003–2005, Sweden aims to increase its assistance to Tajikistan quite significantly. It is expected to amount to approximately SEK 70 million in 2005. A Section for Development Co-operation will be established in the capital Dushanbe in early 2004.

It is envisaged that Swedish assistance during this period will have a strong focus on agriculture, as this sector is of crucial importance in preventing starvation and generating income for poor people. Activities will cover such areas as rural development, veterinary services, seed development and support to the Land Reform process. Sida frequently collaborates with

international partners in this endeavour, such as the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the Food and Agricultural Organisation (FAO). In the social sector, Sida works with authorities and NGOs in order to improve public health. Other activities in this sector are aimed at addressing the situation of children in institutions and raising awareness around the problem of human trafficking.

Given the vulnerable position of women and large number of female-headed households, all activities have a gender component.

Together with its partners, Sida will further examine the possibility of introducing certain targeted measures in the fields of education and local governance.

The Region

Regional co-operation is deemed to be of vital importance for the prosperity and stability of the Central Asian region.

Through the UNDP, Sida supports initiatives to create a positive cross-border dialogue between civil society representatives and local authorities in the Fergana valley.

Sida's international courses, as well as the programmes and scholarships of the Swedish Institute bring together journalists and other professionals from the region.

All these efforts serve to promote openness, dialogue and co-operation, and will hopefully help the populations of the region to formulate their own goals for a better future.

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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