



Ministry for Foreign Affairs

## Strategy for Sweden's development cooperation with Liberia 2021–2025

### 1 Direction

The objective of Sweden's international development cooperation is to create conditions to improve the lives of people living in poverty and oppression. Swedish development cooperation is based on the principles of aid and development effectiveness, the 2030 Agenda, the Addis Ababa Action Agenda and the Paris Agreement.

The strategy is applicable from 2021 to 2025 and comprises a total of SEK 1.85 billion, of which SEK 1.8 billion is intended for the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida) and SEK 50 million for the Folke Bernadotte Academy (FBA).

This strategy directs the use of funds under appropriation item 1:1.9 'Africa' in the appropriation directions for Sida for each budget year, and funds under appropriation item 1:1.4 'Development Cooperation' and appropriation item 1.4.1 'Folke Bernadotte Academy' concerning administrative costs associated with implementation of the strategy in the appropriation directions for the FBA for each budget year.

Sida's activities will contribute to the following objectives.

#### **Human rights, democracy, the rule of law and gender equality**

- Strengthened conditions for human rights, democracy and the rule of law, including reduced corruption
- Greater gender equality, including reduced gender-based violence, and access to, and respect for, sexual and reproductive health and

rights (SRHR)

**Peaceful and inclusive societies**

- Strengthened conditions for sustainable peace and social cohesion

**Inclusive economic development**

- Strengthened conditions for productivity and access to domestic and international markets
- Increased opportunities for productive employment and decent work

**Environment, climate and sustainable use of natural resources**

- Sustainable management and use of natural resources, including biodiversity
- Greater access to renewable energy and increased energy efficiency
- Reduced climate impact and increased resilience to climate change

The FBA’s activities will contribute to the following objectives.

**Human rights, democracy, the rule of law and gender equality**

- Strengthened conditions for human rights, democracy and rule of law

**Peaceful and inclusive societies**

- Strengthened conditions for sustainable peace and social cohesion

**2 Country context**

Poverty in Liberia is widespread, and the country is one of the poorest in the world. The economy is largely oriented towards the extraction of natural resources and the country remains heavily dependent on aid. There are fears of negative economic growth due to factors including low world market prices of Liberia’s principal export goods and the COVID-19 pandemic. The pandemic also threatens the livelihood opportunities of a large proportion of the poor population that relies on income from the informal sector. Numerous factors hamper agricultural and trade reform. Productive employment for the poor, women and young people is lacking.

Liberia is rich in natural resources and ecosystems with high biodiversity. The tropical forests of West Africa are an important global source of oxygen and carbon sinks. However, the sustainable management of natural

resources is weak, putting considerable pressure on ecosystems. Environmental and climate change impacts are affecting biodiversity, for example, and making the country vulnerable.

Since the signing of the peace agreement in 2003, Liberia has made significant democratic progress but many challenges remain. Corruption is widespread, the institutions are weak, and political and administrative power is centralised. In addition, many of the factors that led to the civil war – such as inequalities and conflicts over land rights – remain. The uncontrolled spread of small arms and light weapons continues to be a challenge.

The State's ability to ensure the political, economic and social rights of all its citizens is inadequate. Liberia is among the least gender-equal countries in the world, and women's and girls' enjoyment of human rights and women's equal participation in political and decision-making processes are limited. Sexual and gender-based violence is widespread and access to, and respect for, SRHR is poor. Discrimination against certain groups, such as LGBTIQ people, is widespread. The situation of young Liberians is difficult and their future prospects are limited. Failures of the justice system, including impunity, not least to try crimes committed during the civil war, are an additional challenge. Female genital mutilation is not criminalised and the death penalty has not been formally abolished.

### **3 Activities**

Sida and the FBA will carry out, monitor and report on activities in accordance with the Government's guidelines for Swedish development cooperation and humanitarian assistance strategies (UD2017/21053). The guidelines state inter alia that activities will be actively directed towards achieving the objectives and that the actual results should be monitored based on the objectives. The annual strategy report will be comprehensive and among other things include a presentation, analysis and assessment of the results of the activities in relation to the defined objectives. Results information will be used for decision-making, learning and accountability, and for ensuring transparency for the general public. Monitoring will produce reliable and useful information about results in both the short term and the long term by using both qualitative and quantitative information, where possible. The follow-up of results will primarily establish whether the activities made a difference, how and for whom. Follow-up based on

existing conditions will determine the extent to which development cooperation made a difference.

Sweden's development cooperation contributes to sustainable development in accordance with the 2030 Agenda, the financing for development commitments in the Addis Ababa Action Agenda and the Paris Agreement. The activities are expected to specifically contribute to the following sustainable development goals (SDGs) of the 2030 Agenda: no poverty (SDG 1), zero hunger (SDG 2), quality education (SDG 4), gender equality (SDG 5), affordable and clean energy (SDG 7), decent work and economic growth (SDG 8), reduced inequalities (SDG 10), responsible consumption and production (SDG 12), climate action (SDG 13), life below water (SDG 14), life on land (SDG 15), peace, justice and strong institutions (SDG 16) and partnerships for the goals (SDG 17). Strategy reports to the Government will include references to how activities contribute to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda in relation to the strategy's priorities. As a whole, Swedish development cooperation will contribute to poverty reduction in the country, better conditions for democratic development and respect for human rights.

Activities will contribute to strengthened conditions for accountability. Support for decentralisation and public administration reform may be included. Anti-corruption will be integrated into activity implementation. Support to strengthen civil society and the media is a priority and may include support to change agents and cultural life. Liberia is a member of the 'Friends in Defence of Democracy' initiative, initiated by Sweden as part of its Drive for Democracy. The FBA's activities will focus on strengthening respect for the rule of law.

Gender equality promotion will include activities that contribute to strengthening respect for, and increasing access to, SRHR and to combating sexual and gender-based violence.

As Chair of the Liberia Configuration of the Peacebuilding Commission (PBC), Sweden plays an important role in the work to address Liberia's long-term peacebuilding challenges. An inclusive national reconciliation process may be supported if initiated during the strategy period. Sida's activities will focus on managing the root causes of conflict, such as socio-economic marginalisation and land conflicts. The FBA's activities will focus on conflict

prevention, conflict management and security sector reform. They may include activities that contribute to dialogue and mediation and to increasing the participation of young people and women in conflict prevention, management and resolution. Support to Liberia's security architecture may also be provided.

Inclusive and sustainable economic development will be promoted, for example through activities that remove trade barriers and improve access to domestic and international markets, including for small-scale agriculture and forestry. Activities will also contribute to improved opportunities for decent work, including through technical and vocational education and training and trade union rights, focusing specifically on women and young people.

Sweden will contribute to environmentally and climate-resilient sustainable development, strengthened resilience to climate change and increased health protection. Activities will promote the sustainable management and use of natural resources, the conservation and restoration of biodiversity and its marine and terrestrial ecosystem services, including sustainable agriculture and forestry. Activities will also promote increased production of, and access to, renewable energy and energy efficiency aimed at, among other things, reducing greenhouse gas emissions and deforestation.

Sweden's development cooperation will be relevant and effective. An integrated approach in all Swedish support to Liberia will be ensured. The linkages between long-term development cooperation, peacebuilding and humanitarian action will be harnessed. Synergies will be sought between the different strategy areas and with activities within the framework of other relevant strategies for Sweden's development cooperation and humanitarian assistance.

Sweden's development cooperation will lay the foundation for broader and more self-sustaining relations between Sweden and Liberia, and cooperation with the Swedish resource base will continue to be prioritised. Where relevant, the potential of digital transformation and innovation will be harnessed as a tool for achieving the objectives. Mobilising other financial resources should be explored.

Development cooperation will be adapted to prevailing circumstances and will be flexible and effective.

Sweden will promote coherent and effective development and aid coordination in the country, not least through active participation in EU Joint Programming and in cooperation with relevant multilateral actors

*This is a translation of a Swedish Government decision. In the event of any inconsistencies or discrepancy between this version and the Swedish original, the latter will prevail.*