



# SWEDEN

## “ Towards a new low for Swedish ODA. ”

CONCORD Sweden

### Main trends

Sweden's development assistance is decreasing. The 2023 ODA figures show an increase on a technicality, due to reporting rules on multi-year credits .

Newly announced budget cuts will bring Sweden, the first country to reach 1% of GNI for ODA, below the global 0.7-target and towards a projected 0.67-0.68 % of GNI in 2028. Lower ODA outcomes than projected levels are also probable, since non-ODA eligible items were included in the recent aid budget proposal.

In 2023 and 2024, Sweden's development cooperation has been reshaped according to a new overarching policy document. So far, ten new geographic and thematic strategies have been adopted, and five bilateral partnerships have so far been phased out, among them several of the most fragile states in the world.

The main political priorities are supporting Ukraine and the neighbourhood; finding synergies between export promotion and development spending (tied aid); and synergies with migration policies. Other priority areas exist on paper in the development policy document but have not received a similar budgetary or political focus as the aforementioned.

Sweden, unlike most OECD DAC members, includes in-donor refugee costs in its ODA budget, thus offsetting other development priorities. There have been large unused funds from in-donor cost outcomes. In 2022 the unused 2,1 billion SEK were not returned to the development budget. For 2023, the smaller parties in the government coalition managed to negotiate a return of unused funds of 1,4 billion SEK.

Reported ODA: EUR 5291.3 million  
**0.91% GNI** (↓ from 0.89% in 2022)

Non-inflated ODA: EUR 4917.9 million  
**0.84% GNI** (↑ from 0.81% in 2022)

Total inflated ODA: EUR 373 million  
**7% of total**



### Government's relationship with civil society

Swedish public institutions have a tradition of including civil society in dialogue. Several ministers in the current government have been criticised by multiple stakeholders for scaling down meetings with CSOs to mere information sessions and refraining from dialogue on issues which might significantly impact the work of CSOs or development policy as a whole. The frequency of meetings did improve somewhat after the government finished its internal drafts of policy priorities in April.

In the end, the turbulence in CSO funding resulting from the government's internal negotiations about the new civil society strategy and the lack of clarity throughout the process still affects all Swedish CSOs and their partnerships. Main changes are a significant increase in own contribution funds, disruptive change in the implementation model for subgranting organisations, plus new rules to limit advocacy in segments of the strategy. 90% of partnership grants were earmarked for Swedish organisations international partnerships.

### The Swedish government should:

- **Urgently revert the current downward trend of the ODA budget and set a plan for how to return Sweden to an ODA of 1% of GNI.**
- **Focus Sweden's cooperation on people in the most vulnerable situations and places, and defenders of human rights and the environment. Build all reforms on development effectiveness principles, contextual knowledge, and impact assessments with meaningful participation of people living in poverty and under oppression.**



- Use private sector instruments only where development impact and transparency can be credibly improved, choosing mechanisms which do not negatively offset public development finance available for health, education, social protection and strengthening democracy.
- Ensure that all costs in Sweden's ODA budget adhere to the OECD DAC reporting directives and remove non-eligible costs.