

SUMMARY OF THE 2026 PROGRESS REPORT ON EFFECTIVE DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION

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KEY MESSAGES

The 2026 Progress Report on Effective Development Cooperation finds that progress has largely stalled or declined since 2018. While stakeholder engagement has become more established and alignment with partner countries' development objectives has improved slightly, the use of partner countries' own systems, funding predictability, transparency, and country ownership remain weak or are deteriorating.

Sweden stands out for its consistently negative trends across the indicators of **alignment** with partner-country systems and priorities, **predictability** of aid and **transparency**, with a particular decline in the short-term predictability of aid. Sweden's results are better when it comes to the newly introduced indicators on the Leave No One Behind principle and how marginalized groups are included in donor strategies. Among major EU and DAC donors, Sweden is the only provider with a downward trend across all the indicators which are comparable to 2018. This raises questions on how to improve the adherence to international principles of effective development cooperation.

INTRODUCTION

The Global Partnership on Effective Development Cooperation (GPEDC) has published a [2026 progress report](#), measuring commitments to internationally agreed effectiveness principles such as: country ownership, results focus, inclusive partnerships and transparency. The 2026 progress report is the first report of its kind since 2018/19.

Contribution to the monitoring of the Sustainable Development Goals

The GPEDC progress reports are sources of data for three SDG indicators in the 2030

Agenda:

- **17.16.1** Number of countries reporting progress in multi-stakeholder development effectiveness monitoring frameworks that support the achievement of the sustainable development goals.
- **17.15.1** Extent of use of country-owned results frameworks and planning tools by providers of development cooperation.
- **5.c.1** Proportion of countries with systems to track and make public allocations for gender equality and women's empowerment.

A quick summary of what the progress report indicates is the following:

- **17.16.1** is showing **mixed progress with a majority signaling a decline** in their progress on monitoring frameworks for effective development cooperation (62 per cent of 52 countries total, 28 partner countries and 24 bilateral development partners)
- **17.15.1** The use of country results frameworks **has stagnated**, and the use of country data and some systems (such as procurement) **is limited and declining**.
- **5.c.1** More countries have **better systems to track and publish allocations for gender equality** and women's empowerment. However, there are **fewer gender equality allocations** available on public budgets.

Background on the aid and development effectiveness agenda

Aid Effectiveness was the headline of three high level forums in Paris (2005), Accra (2008) and Busan (2011), which formed the basis for the international principles for effective development cooperation. There was also an initial high-level forum in Rome (2003) on harmonizing aid. Even before this, at the first international conference on Financing for Development in Monterrey in 2002, one theme of discussion was the need for development assistance to become more coordinated and aligned with local priorities. Both partner countries and donors were frustrated by issues such as a lack of coordination of efforts as well as examples of weak governance, which were negatively affecting the quality of international cooperation and its results.

At the high-level forum in Busan, the Global Partnership for Effective Development Cooperation (GPEDC) was formed. It is a multi-stakeholder partnership made up of partner country governments, bilateral donors, international organisations, civil society, private

sector, etc. A key task of the Global Partnership is to monitor how stakeholders live up to the agreed principles for effective development cooperation. To date, there have been four monitoring rounds: 2014, 2016, 2018 and most recently 2023-2026. Before the latest monitoring round there was a restructuring of the process and methodology to introduce a rolling schedule of monitoring over a period of several years.

The same indicators have been assessed in each round of monitoring. Two new areas were added in the 2023-2026 monitoring round: a voluntary assessment of the so-called Kampala Principles on effective engagement with the private sector in development, and a new assessment of the 2030 Agenda principle of Leave No One Behind. Participation is voluntary, so not all countries have participated in all rounds.

The 2023-2026 Monitoring round

The 2026 progress report is based on reporting from 44 partner country governments, 93 national and multilateral development partners, CSOs in 37 countries, trade unions in 16 countries and private sector representatives in 20 countries. Data was collected during the 2023-2026 monitoring round. The monitoring process at partner country level took place between 2023 and 2025, with final dialogues at country level extending into 2026. At the time of publication, 22 of 44 countries had completed these final dialogues.

The progress report shows collective partner country and donor performance, but not the individual progress of donors. However, the 2026 Development Cooperation Profiles published by the OECD DAC contains information on donor-specific indicators. This summary combines information from the 2026 Progress Report and the Development Cooperation profiles to give an overview with a particular focus on Sweden's results.

INVOLVEMENT OF STAKEHOLDERS IN DEVELOPMENT POLICIES AND STRATEGIES

More partner countries and providers consistently engage a range of development stakeholders in dialogue when developing national development plans and country strategies. Generally, there has been progress since the start of the development effectiveness agenda on engaging a broader range of stakeholders in partner countries.

In over 95 per cent of national development plans, governments have dialogue with the private sector, development partners and civil society organisations (CSOs). To a lesser extent, but still in 86-91 per cent of cases, those stakeholders are also engaged in dialogue on results and priorities in the implementation stage. Parliaments, subnational governments, trade unions and philanthropic organisations are other examples of groups involved in national planning, but to a lesser extent especially in follow-up dialogues on implementation.

Private sector engagement in development cooperation is an area that all stakeholders, especially development assistance providers, give increasing importance. Private sector actors report some difficulties in engaging with development partners, with cumbersome procedures being listed as a key barrier. Three quarters of partner countries have organized dialogues on private sector engagement, and around two thirds have policies in place for private sector engagement. For providers, around three quarters have developed both policies and dialogues. The report highlights scope for improvement when it comes to the extent of clearly defining target groups in such policy frameworks, including vulnerable and marginalized populations.

Disadvantaged, marginalized and discriminated groups are in the majority of cases reflected as priorities in national development plans and donors' country strategies. Especially women and girls, youth and children and the poorest of the poor are highlighted in a majority of plans. However, both partner country governments and donors do not engage these groups in dialogue as often as they are mentioned in plans. For bilateral donors, they engaged organisations representing women and girls (in 60% of country strategies reported on), youth (54%) and marginalized groups (52%). Multilateral donors and partner country government were more likely to engage with these organization when preparing their plans. For example, governments engaged with organisations representing children and youth in 84% of cases reported.

Some groups receive less consistent attention in plans and strategies than others. People with disabilities and the elderly are more often targeted by governments but to a lesser extent by donors. Ethnic minorities, indigenous peoples, internally displaced people, LGBTIQ+ people, refugees and stateless people are targeted by significantly fewer national development plans as well as donors' country strategies.

Sweden's results are well over average for the newly introduced indicators on the *Leave No One Behind* principle. It scores 100% on the indicator for *Country Strategies Include Priorities for Vulnerable Groups*, compared with 91% among average DAC members, and 75% on the indicator for *Engagement of Vulnerable Groups in Country strategies*, compared with 46%. However, engagement varies considerably across Sweden's 16 partner countries, ranging from 100% in countries such as Bangladesh and Kenya to 0% in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Guatemala. This suggests that Sweden is generally successful in identifying vulnerable groups and reflecting their needs in strategic priorities, but that their involvement in shaping country strategies is less consistent.

Sweden also scores highly on the indicator for distributional analysis for beneficiary targeting (98%, compared with 79% among DAC members) and the indicator for data-based assessments informing country strategies (78%, compared with 65%). Taken together, the results indicate that Sweden has strong processes for identifying vulnerable groups,

assessing their needs and incorporating these into its strategies. The comparatively lower score for engagement, however, points to a potential gap between addressing vulnerable groups in policy and ensuring their active participation in the development of country strategies. Strengthening this participation could therefore be an area for further improvement.

Civil society and enabling environment

According to the report, CSOs express that the quality of stakeholder engagement has room for improvement. In particular, the inclusiveness and substantiveness of dialogue processes can be improved. The enabling environment for civil society is key to the ability of CSOs to contribute to both policy dialogue and development itself. Interestingly, CSOs, development partners and partner country governments have different assessments of the four indicator areas of an enabling environment:

- Legal and regulatory
- Space for CSO dialogue
- CSOs' effectiveness
- Development cooperation with CSOs

Interestingly, CSOs are the most critical across all four indicators, even the most self-critical of their own effectiveness. Partner country governments rate their legal and regulatory environment as well as their space for CSO dialogue more positively than either development partners or CSOs, who have quite similar assessments on those two indicators. Development partners rate their development cooperation with civil society more positively than CSOs, who signal among other things that funding priorities could be more open and aligned with local organisations' priorities, and that development partners can use their influence to advocate with government for a more enabling environment for CSOs.

STRENGTHENING AND USING COUNTRIES' OWN SYSTEMS

The 2023-26 monitoring round highlights a persistent gap between development partners' commitments to country ownership and their practical use of partner countries' own systems. Although most partner countries have comprehensive national development plans containing development priorities, targets and result indicators, weaknesses remain in progress monitoring, budget transparency and the use of national data. Development partner's alignment with national development objectives has improved (91 per cent of interventions draw objectives from national development plans compared to 83 per cent in 2018), while use of country-owned results framework has stagnated.

Public financial management (PFM) systems have improved in some areas, but progress is uneven. Across the monitoring sample, only 51% of development funding disbursed to the public sector used partner country PFM systems. Procurement is a particular weakness: use of national procurement systems fell from 50% in 2018 to 34% in 2026. The report emphasizes the need for joint action by partner governments and development partners,

including addressing institutional policies and constraints that discourage the use of national systems.

Sweden's performance deteriorated across the country-system indicators examined. Its use of country results frameworks was the only indicator where Sweden had relatively stable progress with only a small decline from 57.5% in 2018 to 54.6% in 2023-26. Funding recorded in national budgets fell from 59.2% to 31.3%, while the use of partner-country public financial management systems declined from 65.5% to 41.6%. These changes suggest that Sweden's decline is not limited to one technical aspect of co-operation, but affect the alignment of funding, financial management and results monitoring with partner-country systems.

DATA GAPS

Development partners' use of partner countries' statistical systems is limited and has declined, and the report suggests that this in part is due to the quality of national statistical systems. There is a need for reforms to improve the quality and timeliness of data.

A lack of disaggregated data is a barrier to tracking progress on the commitment to leave no one behind. Data is more available for disaggregation levels like sex, age and geographic area. The least available disaggregated data on who is reached by development efforts concerns migration status, ethnicity and indigenous peoples. Health status, income status or more specific territorial units are areas where disaggregated data are starting to become more available but often remain limited.

PREDICTABILITY OF DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION FUNDING

Predictable funding enables partner countries to plan public spending, allocate resources and integrate development co-operation into national budgets. The report finds, however, that medium-term predictability has not meaningfully improved. The share of development partners providing forward expenditure plans averaged 52% in both 2018 and 2026. While 67% provided plans one year ahead, this fell to 48% for two years ahead and 41% for three years ahead. This limits governments' ability to plan investments and co-ordinate development programmes over time.

Annual predictability presents a more mixed picture. Globally, the proportion of development funding disbursed to the public sector according to schedule within the fiscal year has increased slightly but consistently since 2011 and remains relatively high. Deviations from agreed schedules can disrupt implementation, and performance varies between development partners.

Sweden's result differs from the broader pattern. Its annual predictability fell by 33.9 percentage points from 93.1% in 2018 to 59.2% in 2023-26. Medium-term predictability

also declined, from 61.9% to 57.1%, i.e. less sharply. Sweden's substantial decline in annual predictability merits closer examination. The decline should not automatically be attributed to a single cause and can vary slightly across partner countries. The indicator reflects the relationship between scheduled and actual disbursements, and may reflect changes in country portfolios, implementation or planning and disbursement practices.

TRANSPARENCY

The report finds limited overall progress in transparency and mutual accountability. Although more development partners report to global information systems and standards, improvements in the availability and usefulness of information at country level remain uneven. Only 63% of development partners make their country strategies publicly available. Among partner countries, 39 publish their national development plans, but only 22 make the results of related progress reports publicly available.

A particularly significant concern is the declining share of development co-operation recorded in national budgets. This fell from 61% in 2018 to 41% in 2026, weakening governments' ability to integrate external resources into national planning and limiting opportunities for parliamentary oversight. Parliaments in partner countries tend to receive information on development co-operation on request rather than systematically.

The picture for global reporting is not uniformly negative: development partners' reporting to global systems has increased in some respects. However, the overall assessment is that transparency has not improved since 2018. Forward-looking information remains a particular weakness, and reporting to the International Aid Transparency Initiative (IATI) has declined in quality.

For Sweden, the results point to a mixed transparency profile. Sweden's reporting through country-level information management systems was relatively high at 90.6%, which was comparable to the other Nordic countries and many other DAC members. However, the assessment of the quality of Sweden's reporting to the OECD Creditor Reporting System (CRS) changed from "Excellent" in 2018 to "Good" in 2023-26. Its IATI result was "Excellent" in 2018, but the later result was incomplete. The evidence supports a differentiated assessment, with concerns about declining quality of some data reporting.

SWEDEN IN COMPARISON WITH OTHER DAC AND EU DONORS

Compared to the 20 largest development assistance providers in the DAC plus the EU institutions, Sweden is the only provider in the 2023-2026 monitoring round which has a consistently negative trend across all of the following indicators:

Sweden	Indicator	2023-2026 monitoring round	2018 monitoring round	Trend
Alignment and ownership by the partner country (%)	Use of country-led results frameworks (SDG 17.15)	54,6	57,5	↓
	Funding recorded in countries' national budgets	31,3	59,2	↓
	Funding through countries' public financial management systems	41,6	65,5	↓
Predictability of funding (%)	Annual predictability	59,2	93,1	↓
	Medium-term predictability	57,1	61,9	↓
	Reporting to [country-level] information management systems	90,6	N/A	
Transparency	Reporting to OECD CRS	Good	Excellent	↓
	Publishing to IATI	N/A	Excellent	

Source: OECD DAC Development Cooperation Profiles 2026

In an EU overview, there are more downward than upward trends in total. However, Sweden is the only country among the twelve largest bilateral EU donors where all indicators point downward compared to 2018.

EU donors' effectiveness: number of indicators with positive, negative or unchanged development				
Member state	↑ Up	↓ Down	• Similar	Net ↑-↓
Austria	5	1	1	4
EU institutions	4	3	0	1
Belgium	3	2	1	1
Ireland	3	2	2	1
Germany	1	3	3	-2
Denmark	2	4	1	-2
France	2	4	1	-2
Italy	2	4	1	-2
Netherlands	2	4	1	-2
Finland	2	5	0	-3
Luxemburg	1	4	2	-3
Spain	1	5	1	-4
Sweden	0	6	0	-6
Total:	24	44	14	-20

Source: Concord Sweden, calculations based on OECD DAC Development Cooperation Profiles 2026

Possible causes of Sweden's notably downward trajectory on predictability, alignment, and transparency are not discussed in the Development Cooperation Profiles 2026 nor in the 2026

Progress Report on Effective Development Cooperation. There is scope for further discussion of possible reasons for Sweden's more negative than average results on for example annual predictability.