On Equal Footing

POLICY FOR GENDER EQUALITY AND THE RIGHTS AND ROLE OF WOMEN IN SWEDEN’S INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION 2010–2015
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Summary

Gender equality is both a goal in itself as well as a prerequisite for long-term democratic development and an equitable and sustainable global development. This policy presents the Government’s fundamental positions concerning the promotion of gender equality and the rights and role of women in Sweden’s international development cooperation. In addition, it establishes the basic points of departure and principles for how this work is to be carried out.

The overall objective of Sweden’s work is: gender equality, greater influence for women and greater respect for women’s rights in developing countries. To achieve this objective, efforts are to focus primarily on the following four areas:

- women’s political participation and influence;
- women’s economic empowerment and working conditions;
- sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR); and
- women’s security, including combating all forms of gender-based violence and human trafficking.

The policy applies to Sweden’s bilateral and multilateral development cooperation, using gender mainstreaming as the basic approach. The principles of aid effectiveness are to be followed, in line with the Paris Declaration and the 2008 Accra Agenda for Action. Close cooperation between various actors in Sweden, in partner countries and internationally is essential.

The policy applies for the period 2010–2015. A mid-term review will be carried out no later than 2013, and will be focused on how the policy has been applied in relevant strategies and document experiences gained and lessons learned. A follow-up of the policy’s implementation will be conducted at the end of the policy period. The Government will then determine the policy’s validity and whether it should be replaced or renewed.
1. Introduction

Gender equality and the role of women in development are one of the Swedish Government’s three thematic priorities in international development cooperation.

Gender equality is achieved when women and men, and girls and boys, have equal rights, life prospects and opportunities, and the power to shape their own lives and contribute to society. Equality between the sexes is a question of a fair and equitable distribution of power, influence and resources in everyday life and in society as a whole. A gender-equal society safeguards and makes use of every individual’s experiences, skills and competence.

Gender equality is both a goal in itself as well as a prerequisite for long-term democratic development and an equitable and sustainable global development. Moreover, studies by the World Bank and others show that there is a strong link between gender equality and poverty reduction, and that poverty tends to reinforce gender discrimination and unequal relations between the sexes. Sweden will therefore continue its strong, committed, informed and responsible leadership in international work to promote gender equality. Sweden will work actively to make gender equality and measures that help strengthen the rights and role of women an integral part of, and point of departure for, all its development cooperation.

Poverty is manifested in a number of ways. Its many dimensions include a lack of income and material resources, as well as a lack of security, education, opportunities, power and influence. The majority of people living in deepest poverty in the world are women and girls. They are subjected to discrimination based on sex and perceptions of gender to a much greater extent than men, and generally have much less power, worse living conditions, and fewer life prospects and opportunities than men and boys. Women’s and girls’ lack of power relative to men and boys means that their voices are not heard and their contribution to the development of society is marginalised and less visible, for example in statistics. Women usually have a lower income than men and seldom have property and capital of their own at their disposal. At the same time, they are often responsible for both paid and unpaid work, including as providers of maintenance and care work in the household for children, the sick and the elderly.
Gender equality is not only an issue about or for women. It concerns and must involve both women and men, and boys as well as girls. Gender equality takes time. Political will and leadership as well as adequate resources are essential to effectively combat gender disparities and promote gender equality. Efforts must target all groups of people and have as their objective the transformation of institutions and societal structures that underpin poverty in its many manifestations.

Savings clubs of various kinds have helped give women financial opportunities to start a business or get an education, for example. Pictured is a savings club in Cambodia.

Photo: Sean Sprague/Phoenix
2. Aim of the policy

This policy presents the Government’s fundamental positions concerning the promotion of gender equality and the rights and role of women in Sweden’s international development cooperation. In addition, it establishes the basic points of departure and principles for how this work is to be carried out.

The policy applies to Sweden’s bilateral and multilateral development cooperation, i.e. international development cooperation with the poorest countries, reform cooperation in eastern Europe, as well as activities related to conflict prevention, management and resolution, and to the promotion of peace and security. It also provides guidance for Sweden’s humanitarian assistance. The policy shall be operationalised through geographic and non-geographic strategies for cooperation with countries, regions and organisations, and will also guide and serve as the basis for Sweden’s positions, standpoints, statements and other interventions in the EU and multilateral organisations, as well as in relevant international negotiations, work with international conventions and treaties, and other intergovernmental processes.

The policy applies for the period 2010–2015.
3. Policy context and basic points of departure

The main point of departure for this policy is Sweden’s policy for global development\(^1\) and its overall objective – to contribute to equitable and sustainable global development. The objective of Swedish international development cooperation is to contribute to the creation of conditions and a development environment that is supportive of poor people’s own efforts to improve the quality of their lives. The objective of reform cooperation in eastern Europe is strengthened democracy, equitable and sustainable development, and closer ties with the EU and its core values.

Two fundamental perspectives comprise the guiding principles for implementing Sweden’s policy for global development, and thus also international development cooperation: the perspective of poor people on development and the rights perspective. These perspectives complement and support each other, and partially overlap. The perspective of poor people on development means that the starting point for poverty reduction should be poor women’s, men’s and children’s own realities, needs, circumstances, interests and priorities, as they experience them. The rights perspective is defined more clearly in the Government’s policy for democratic development and human rights\(^2\), and places the freedom and rights of the individual at the centre of development in a country.

The UN conventions on human rights represent a globally agreed and legally binding framework and set of basic values that establish the state’s responsibility to protect and promote each individual’s right to a life free from oppression and discrimination. These rights are universal, interdependent and indivisible. All individuals should be able to enjoy their rights to the full – regardless of sex, age, disability, ethnic origin, religion or other belief, sexual orientation or gender identity. By adopting the UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), states indicate their commitment to ensure the equal right of women and men to exercise and fully enjoy their civil, political, economic, social and

\(^1\) *Shared responsibility – Sweden’s policy for global development* (Govt. Bill 2002/03:122, Committee Report 2003/04:UU3); *Global challenges – our responsibility* (Govt. Communication 2007/08:89); *Meeting global challenges* (Govt. Communication 2009/10:129)

cultural rights. The role of culture in promoting women’s creativity and strengthening their ability to make their voices heard is to be highlighted.

Other international commitments are also important starting points for Sweden’s work to promote gender equality in the context of development. Moreover, the international development goals in the area of gender equality, including in the Millennium Declaration and the Millennium Development Goals, are also important bases, as are relevant regional commitments and frameworks. For initiatives concerning women and security in conflict, post-conflict and crisis situations, an important point of

3 These include international agreements containing objectives for global gender equality work, such as the UN Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women (1993), the declarations and action programmes from the UN Conference on Population and Development (1994), the UN’s Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing (1995) and their respective follow-ups, as well as EU agreements.
departure is Sweden’s national action plan for the implementation of UN Security Council Resolution 1325 on women, peace and security.4

The societies of the world are characterized to varying degrees by social systems marked by an unequal distribution of power, that assign people fixed roles in the family and in society on the basis of sex and perceptions of gender. These discriminate against and are to the disadvantage of women and girls, but also men and boys. People of both sexes who do not fit in with existing norms and cultural perceptions – e.g. lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) people, or people with disabilities – are often particularly vulnerable to discrimination. The unequal distribution of power based on sex and gender can vary nationally as well as locally. In addition to the de facto distribution of power in a society, factors such as legislation, the rule of law, as well as people’s legal empowerment and access to justice have an important role to play in gender equality work, as do the existence and workings of social protection systems and institutions. Attitudes and values concerning gender roles as well as the distribution of power perpetuate discrimination based on sex and gender. Gender-oppressive behaviour – e.g. various forms of gender-based violence against women, men and children – is upheld and reproduced by both women and men.

Women and men, and girls and boys are not homogenous groups. They are groups or categories of people that are made up of individuals with differing identities, perspectives, circumstances, needs, opportunities and degrees of power and influence, even though they may and do also have, defend and pursue collective economic, political, social and/or cultural interests as a result, for example, of similarities in ethnic identity or social position relative to other groups. People’s circumstances and life prospects are affected by the interplay between various social hierarchies that – in addition to sex and gender – are based on, e.g., age, descent, class or social status, caste, sexual orientation, gender identity and gender expression, disability, ethnic origin, and religion or other belief.

Girls and boys learn early on what is expected of them and what opportunities and limitations they are regarded to have based on their sex and the perceptions of gender in the culture and society they grow up in. Gender equality is promoted by increasing opportunities for both girls and

4 UF/2009/9890/SP
boys to make life choices that go beyond limiting norms about gender, sexuality, identity and sexual orientation, for example through education and opportunities and the ability to make vocational choices that combat gender divisions in the labour market. Also required is, e.g., that more men take responsibility for the provision of maintenance and care in the home, including care of children, the sick and the elderly. In addition, systematic and sustained efforts must be made to increase society’s acceptance and support of women’s and girls’ ability to exercise and fully enjoy their rights, including their constitutional and legal rights.
4. Overall objective and focus

The overall objective for work to promote gender equality and the rights and role of women in Sweden’s international development cooperation is: *gender equality, greater influence for women and greater respect for women’s rights in developing countries.*

To achieve this objective, gender mainstreaming shall be applied as a basic approach, i.e. this means Sweden shall work actively to ensure that gender equality and measures that promote the rights and role of women become an integral part of, and basis for, all development cooperation. This will be done through the three basic components of and instruments for gender mainstreaming: targeted measures, integrated measures and dialogue. Both the practical needs and long-term strategic interests of women and girls are to be highlighted.

Work will focus primarily on four complementary and interrelated areas that are important prerequisites for one another, and are also mutually reinforcing:

- women’s political participation and influence;
- women’s economic empowerment and working conditions;
- sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR); and
- women’s security, including combating all forms of gender-based violence and human trafficking.

Work in each one of these areas can be used as an entry point for catalytic actions and measures that can contribute to progress and effective results within one or more of the other three areas.

Democracy, peace and stability are necessary conditions for effective and successful gender equality work, as are functioning social institutions and public administration systems at national and local levels, as well as access to social safety nets. The rule of law and the state’s responsibility to protect and strengthen women’s and girls’ ability to exercise their legal rights are fundamental. Sweden will therefore take action to ensure that legislation protecting women’s rights is complied with. Sweden shall also take action to promote change in discriminatory legislation as well as in unwritten and informal structures that prevent women and girls as well as boys and men from enjoying their rights and availing themselves of
opportunities. In addition to formal legislation and poor people’s legal empowerment, efforts must include attention to traditions, customs, attitudes and values about sex and gender, including about marriage and divorce. Women and girls must know about their rights and be able to claim and exercise them. Men and boys must also have knowledge of, and respect for, women’s and girls’ rights.

Equal opportunities for women and girls in terms of access to relevant, adequate and usable skills, education and training at various levels (from primary schooling to higher education and vocational training) – technology, information and communication technology (ICT), information, culture and media – are also key to achieving this policy’s objectives.

### 4.1 Women’s political participation and influence

A basic condition for and feature of democracy is that it encompasses all citizens.\(^5\) The democratic form of government is the political system that makes best use of and best safeguards people’s fundamental rights, including equal rights for women and men. Women and men must have equal opportunities and ability to participate in and exert influence on political processes and policy content, and to be represented in formal and informal decision-making forums and processes at all levels. Political representation includes both the proportion of women as well as their de facto ability to exert power and influence when it comes to decision-making, legislation and conflict management. Greater equality between women and men in politics at national and local levels is particularly crucial to fair representation and increased democratisation in the context of conflict management. Women’s political representation and participation must increase if they are to act effectively as drivers and agents of change to the same extent as men. Political systems must enable and promote women’s participation in policy design, assessment and monitoring.

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\(^5\) In *Change for Freedom – Policy for democratic development and human rights in Swedish development cooperation 2010–2014* (UF2009/33076/UP), the Government sets out its view of efforts to achieve the objective of democratic development and greater respect for human rights in developing countries.
Sweden will take action to:

- strengthen women’s rights, opportunities and ability to exert influence on public decision-making and policy content at all levels, including by voting and putting themselves forward as electable candidates for political positions, including in post-conflict situations;
- promote the right of women to meet, organize and form associations, e.g. civil society organisations and political parties, as a means of improving their ability to defend their rights;\(^6\)
- increase women’s and girls’ physical mobility and freedom of movement; and
- promote safety, protection and security for politically active women.

\(^6\) The Government’s position concerning support to civil society is set out in its policy *Pluralism – Policy for Sweden’s support to civil society in developing countries in Swedish development cooperation* (UF2009/23647/UP).
4.2 Women’s economic empowerment and working conditions

The ability of women to support themselves, regardless of marital status, and their economic participation and empowerment are fundamental in strengthening their rights and enabling them to have control over their lives and exert influence in society. In most societies, existing norms dictate that girls and women bear the main responsibility for the care of children, the elderly and the sick, as well as for running the household including provision of water and energy supplies. Women and girls carry out most of the unpaid work, which can undermine their chances of going to school or their being able to translate returns on their own productive work into effects such as increased and more secure incomes, and better working conditions.

In many developing countries, it is through managing business enterprises of their own and entrepreneurship – in the informal and unregulated sector as well as in the formal sector – that women have access to an income. Trade policy and private business sector development play an important role both for women’s entrepreneurship and for women’s opportunities for income-earning through paid employment.

Poverty is reduced when women participate in the economy and have secure access to resources such as land. Women in rural areas have a particularly important role in food production, food security and development processes in rural areas, but they often lack access to and control over resources to be able to invest, as well as access to functioning markets. Women often also have skills and experience that are valuable for strengthening the resilience of local societies and reducing their vulnerability to natural disasters, environmental and climate-related disasters and conflicts.

One very important part of the work to promote gender equality involves eliminating legal and cultural obstacles to women’s property rights, access to natural resources, equality of rights with respect to divorce and inheritance, and to a non-discriminatory labour market. In this context, it is essential to support women’s organizing. Forming special interest associations can enable them to pursue common economic issues and collective

interests, e.g. through entrepreneurial organisations and business networks in the formal as well as the informal sector.

Sweden will take action to:
• combat gender discriminatory and gender-segregated labour markets, and strengthen women’s professional skills and employability;
• highlight and help to change attitudes and values that put the main responsibility for the home and care of children, the sick and the elderly on women and girls;
• strengthen girls’ right to education and support non-traditional education, training programmes and occupational choices for girls and boys respectively, including higher education and vocational training courses;
• promote equal access for women and men to employment under decent working conditions, including the possibility of combining family and paid employment in keeping with the ILO’s Decent Work Agenda, the OECD Guidelines for Multinational Enterprises, the UN Global Compact, and the Government’s Globalt Ansvar initiative (Swedish Partnership for Global Responsibility) on corporate social responsibility (CSR), working conditions, environmental considerations and anti-corruption;
• strengthen the role of women in agricultural production and increase their opportunities of making a living and earning an income from food production, agriculture and sustainable natural resource management;
• strengthen the right of women and girls to use, inherit and own land and other property, including in post-conflict and crisis situations;
• strengthen women’s entrepreneurship and improve business development and financial service systems so that they meet the needs of women entrepreneurs; and
• strengthen women’s opportunities and capacity to organize themselves, form associations and act collectively for common interests in the labour market, including in the informal sector.
4.3 Sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR)

Sweden’s policy for global development establishes that sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR) are of particular importance in efforts to achieve the policy’s overall objective of equitable and sustainable global development. The right to decide and exercise control over one’s own body, sexuality and reproduction is fundamental for all people. The primary point of departure for work to promote SRHR is comprised of international agreements and commitments, e.g. those contained in the declarations and action programmes from the UN International Conference on Population and Development in Cairo in 1994, and the UN World Conference on Women in Beijing in 1995. Work to promote SRHR in development is also based on national instruments such as *Sweden’s international policy on*
Men taking their share of responsibility for children and the home is a prerequisite for gender equality.

Photo: Sean Sprague/Phoenix

sexual and reproductive health and rights, and The right to a future – Policy for Sweden’s international HIV/AIDS efforts.

Maternal mortality as a consequence of complications during pregnancy and childbirth remains high in developing countries, and is a major obstacle to gender equality and women’s empowerment. A large proportion of maternal deaths occur due to an unmet need for family planning services, lack of access to contraceptives and adequate maternal health care, as well as a result of unsafe and illegal abortions. Maternal mortality is also a result of the fact that women’s and girls’ health is not a priority in many countries. Most at risk are those women and girls who are young and poor, and who lack contacts and access to information and other resources.

8 UD2006/6626/MU
9 UD2008/36396/MU
Sweden will take action to:

- strengthen the physical integrity of women and girls and their right to decide and exercise control over their own body, sexuality, reproductive health and child-bearing, regardless of marital status, disability, HIV status, sexual orientation and gender identity;
- improve women’s, men’s and young people’s access to information and education about sexuality, sexual relationships and contraception, as well as information about sexually transmitted infections (STIs), including HIV and AIDS;
- highlight the gender equality aspects of the high maternal mortality rate and women’s lack of access to adequate maternal health care as an integral part of their sexual and reproductive health and rights, including in conflict and crisis situations;
- safeguard women’s access to safe and legal abortion;
- strengthen the role of men as fathers, and men’s and boys’ ability to combat negative male gender roles and stereotypical images of masculinity linked to the use of violence and a lack of respect for sexual and reproductive rights;
- draw particular attention and provide support to young people and LGBT people as important target groups and actors in the work to promote SRHR; and
- highlight the gender equality aspects of sexual orientation, gender identity and gender expression, and protect the human rights associated with these.
4.4 Women’s security, including combating all forms of gender-based violence and human trafficking

Human security places the safety and security of all people in focus. It concerns inter alia freedom from and protection against all forms of violence and threats of violence. Human security is also about the rule of law, a functioning judicial system and access to justice, as well as physical and socio-psychological security in a society. High levels of violence and a lack of human security are a threat to stability and contribute to a general rise in social unrest in a society. At both individual and national levels, such situations in themselves represent obstacles to gender equality and equitable and sustainable development. Among other things, violence and threats of violence lead to restrictions on women’s physical mobility so that they have difficulties meeting one another, getting an education and working outside the home.

Security for women and girls, including freedom from sexual and other gender-based violence, is essential if they are to be able to pursue an education and take part in society’s economic and political life. Crimes such as rape, other forms of sexual violence, and sexual torture are common in conflict, post-conflict and crisis situations but also occur to a significant degree in politically stable situations. For far too many women and girls, for example, sexual relations – including their first sexual encounter – occur under coercion. Sexual violence thus has strong links to both to sexual and reproductive health as well as to the possibility of enjoying one’s human rights, including the right to participate in economic and political spheres.

In its efforts for women and security in conflict, post-conflict and crisis situations, Sweden will take action to:

• prevent and combat rape and other forms of sexual violence and sexual torture within the framework of broad measures to address situations such as general lawlessness, impunity, lack of the rule of law and a functioning judicial system, and inadequate access to justice;
• ensure that women can take an active part in work to prevent and combat violence against women and girls in conflict, post-conflict and crisis situations;
• ensure that women have the opportunity to meet with one another, and that the knowledge, skills and activities of women’s organisations concerning conflict resolution are put to use at all levels;
• ensure that post-conflict processes for disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration (DDR), security sector reform (SSR), peace-building and reconstruction are characterized by broad and integrated measures and a clear gender equality perspective; and
• strengthen work to reach women combatants and incorporate them in rehabilitation, compensation and employment measures.

In its efforts to promote the security of women and girls in general, and in politically stable situations, Sweden will take action to:
• prevent and combat all forms of violence against women and girls, including violence in the home and family, and violence and oppression in the name of honour;
• prevent and combat all forms of violence in the form of customary practices that are harmful to women and girls, such as female genital mutilation, child marriage, forced marriage and acid attacks, as well as violence in connection with a cultural preference for sons;
• strengthen efforts to prevent and combat discrimination, harassment and violence against LGBT people and their families; and
• ensure that the Palermo Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, especially Women and Girls that supplements the UN Convention against Transnational Organized Crime, is complied with and monitored.
5. Implementation

This policy applies to Sweden’s bilateral and multilateral development cooperation through the Government Offices, Sida and other relevant government agencies.

The normative as well as the operative work is to be characterised throughout by the systematic integration of a distinct gender equality perspective, i.e. application of a gender mainstreaming approach, whereby the situation, conditions and opportunities of women and girls are highlighted and taken into consideration in relation to those of men and boys.

5.1 Gender mainstreaming as a strategic approach for quality assurance and sustainable results

The policy is to be applied through gender mainstreaming, with the three components of targeted measures, integrated measures and policy dialogue, in line with the Council of Europe’s definition (1995), which is: “Gender mainstreaming is the (re)organisation, improvement, development and evaluation of policy processes, so that a gender equality perspective is incorporated in all policies at all levels and at all stages, by the actors normally involved in policy-making”. The three components of gender mainstreaming can be implemented in different combinations, depending on specific contexts and conditions, and are to be applied both in work on the four main areas presented in the policy as well as work within other sectors, activities or thematic areas.

The starting points for gender mainstreaming are contained in both Swedish and international frameworks. Also applicable in addition to this policy are the relevant parts of Sweden’s national gender equality policy objectives, work to combat men’s violence against women, violence and oppression in the name of honour and violence in same-sex relationships, (Govt. Comm. 2007/08:39) and work to combat prostitution and human trafficking for sexual purposes (Govt. Comm. 2007/08:167), as well as relevant components of the Government Offices’ work on gender mainstreaming.

Knowledge about issues such as a partner country’s specific situation and history concerning gender equality is fundamental to
Being able to support oneself is a first step towards liberation and making one’s own choices in life.

Photo: Trygve Bølstad/Phoenix

effective gender mainstreaming. All activities concerned with poverty reduction and the promotion of equitable and sustainable global development must therefore be based on gender equality analysis or a gender impact assessment where the two supplementary PGD perspectives as well as analyses of power relations and structures are factored in. The results of the analysis are to act as the guiding principle in the design of programmes and operational measures, and are to form the basis and point of departure for dialogue, monitoring and evaluation of results and impact.
It is not always necessary or relevant to carry out a separate gender equality analysis. However, all analyses are to reflect a clear gender equality perspective and include experience gained and lessons learned from the work. Gender analyses require access to and use of statistics, research findings and other data. Context-specific qualitative and quantitative indicators for the monitoring of gender equality work must be developed wherever possible and relevant. These can for example be based \textit{inter alia} on the Millennium Development Goals and on the work being carried out by the World Bank, the OECD, the DAC and other actors. Effective systems for reporting on operations and measures should be established as an integral part of the management and administration of Sweden’s development cooperation.

Important dimensions to be taken into account in the context of gender mainstreaming are \textit{inter alia}:

- perceptions of women and girls as agents of change and driving forces behind the development of society to the same extent as men and boys;
- highlighting those women and girls who may be particularly vulnerable to multiple discrimination, abuse and injustices, and who may also be difficult to reach in development cooperation. These include, for example, elderly women, lesbian women, widows, women migrants, HIV-positive women, as well as women and girls with disabilities, or who belong to indigenous peoples or minority groups;
- highlighting the role and responsibility of men as parents, husbands, citizens and decision-makers, and the role of boys as brothers, classmates and boyfriends, as well as men’s and boys’ joint responsibility for gender equality in partnership with women and girls;
- attention to diversity among women and girls, and men and boys respectively, because in specific contexts, factors such as age, class or social status, sexuality and sexual orientation, gender identity and gender expression, ethnicity, disability and religion or other beliefs interact with the sex of individuals in different ways. Moreover, differing and sometimes competing views of femininity and masculinity often co-exist in societies.
– attention to the importance that work to promote gender equality can have in helping to change attitudes and values in society, for example so that women and men have equal opportunities to share responsibility for the home and the care of children, the sick and the elderly, as well as for supporting themselves and their families, including through paid work.

This policy shall be operationalised through geographic and non-geographic strategies, guidelines and implementation plans for cooperation with countries, regions and organisations. A gender equality perspective is to be mainstreamed in all forms of support, including budget support, programme-based support and donor funds, and in support to all sectors.

The policy also constitutes a point of departure for Sweden’s work on and contributions to international policy development and normative activities in the EU, the UN, the World Bank and other international financial institutions. The policy will guide and serve as the basis for Sweden’s positions, standpoints, statements and other interventions in the EU and multilateral organisations, as well as in relevant international negotiations, work with international conventions and treaties, and other intergovernmental processes.

Knowledge, expertise and awareness about the linkages between gender equality and development are a prerequisite for the policy’s application, monitoring and evaluation. Capacity development and the ability to make use of current research, including policy analytical studies, evaluations and experience accounts are key to this work.

Collaboration with and dialogue between various actors in Sweden, in partner countries, regionally and globally, are essential for the implementation of this policy. These actors include individual governments, multilateral and intergovernmental organisations, the private business sector, government agencies and local authorities, universities and research institutes, as well as civil society organisations – including youth and women’s organisations, religious communities and diaspora groups.

Swedish bilateral and multilateral development cooperation in the area of gender equality will follow the principles of aid effectiveness (i.e.
taking into account partner countries’ ownership and priorities, and use of countries’ systems as far as possible; harmonisation; mutual accountability; and results-based management) in line with the Paris Declaration and the Accra Agenda for Action (2008). For humanitarian assistance and cooperation with countries in conflict and post-conflict situations, as well as fragile states, the OECD/DAC ‘Principles for Good International Engagement in Fragile States and Situations’ shall apply, as shall the principles of Good Humanitarian Donorship (GHD).

The policy is to be operationalised through context-specific analyses and carefully-weighed considerations based on the realities, conditions, interests and priorities of the partner country and its inhabitants, as well as on an assessment of how synergies between this policy and other policies governing Sweden’s development cooperation can be promoted.

5.2 Division of roles and responsibilities

The Government Offices and the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida) are responsible for the implementation and monitoring of the policy.

The Government Offices is responsible for core budgetary support to, and management of, Sweden’s cooperation with the multilateral and inter-governmental organisations in the context of this policy. The Government Offices also has the overall responsibility for policy dialogue and cooperation in the EU and for normative work with international conventions and treaties, and other intergovernmental processes. In the Action plan for the Ministry for Foreign Affairs’ work to apply gender mainstreaming in its activities (UF2010/11208/EXPCH), the Ministry departments’ responsibility for gender mainstreaming with respect to their own activities where relevant – including through steering of agencies by means of instructions and letters of appropriation, is clearly spelled out. This also includes the responsibility to ensure that gender perspectives and gender equality dimensions of relevant issues are raised in negotiations in the Council of the European Union.

Sida is responsible for the application of this policy as regards the implementation of geographic and non-geographic strategies. Sida also has an important role to play in cooperation with multilateral organisations and in
the EU, and is to contribute its experiences and results concerning bilateral support to sectors, countries and regions, and its contributions to multilateral development cooperation and organisations.

Sweden’s missions abroad have a key role to play in the application of this policy in cooperation and dialogue with partner country representatives and other donors in the local setting, as well as for monitoring developments and results in countries and regions.

Agencies carrying out activities financed by state budget expenditure area 7 (‘International development cooperation’) are responsible for applying the policy within the framework of their respective mandates.
6. Follow-up

A mid-term review will be carried out no later than 2013. It will focus on how the policy has been applied in relevant strategies and document experiences gained and lessons learned. A follow-up of the policy’s implementation will be conducted at the end of the policy period. The Government will then determine the policy's validity and whether it should be replaced or renewed.
Policy for gender equality and the rights and role of women in Sweden’s international development cooperation is based on the objective of international development cooperation, to help create opportunities that will enable poor people to improve their conditions of life, and the Government’s policy for global development, with the overall goal to contribute to equitable and sustainable development.