



SWEDEN'S DEVELOPMENT ASSISTANCE FOR GENDER EQUALITY

– STATUS REPORT 2026

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Introduction

The world is in a period of growing backlash against women's and girl's rights. Democratic backsliding, armed conflict, and humanitarian crises hit women and girls especially hard, while feminist movements and women's rights organisations work under increasingly difficult conditions. In this context, international official development assistance (ODA) is a decisive resource for defending and strengthening gender equality.

At the same time, global ODA is declining. Reductions from several major donor states particularly risk the funding for work on gender equality, including support for sexual and reproductive rights and efforts to combat gender-based violence.

Sweden has long been a leading voice for gender equality within ODA. Gender equality remains emphasised as a core Swedish value and a prioritised area in development cooperation. However, in a time when the need for international leadership is greater than it has been for a long time, it is crucial to assess how Sweden's actual funding for gender equality is evolving.

This review provides a status report of Sweden's gender equality ODA. The purpose is to identify key trends and contribute to an evidence-based discussion on how Sweden can live up to its political commitments to stand up for gender equality and for the rights of women and girls in a time of global backlash.

Methodology and Limitations

We have primarily examined the share and volume of Sweden's bilateral ODA which has been assigned the marker of gender equality – either as a principal or significant objective – according to the OECD-DAC's system for ODA classification, over the past ten years. We have also looked at support to women's rights organisations and support for efforts to eliminate gender-based violence against women and girls. These areas have specific sector codes which enables them to be tracked. We have also looked specifically at ODA to Ukraine. Ukraine is now, by a wide margin, the largest recipient state of Swedish ODA.

This is a limited methodology. Only looking at bilateral ODA does not provide a comprehensive picture; however, it is not possible for us to obtain data on multilateral ODA that is comparable over time.

The OECD-DAC's policy markers for gender equality – gender marker 1 and 2 – have also been criticised for not adequately capturing how much funding goes to ODA that promotes gender equality. Reviews of the policy markers and reporting to the OECD-DAC have shown that there may be problems with both over- and under-reporting, in addition to the markers themselves not portraying an accurate picture. The purpose of this analysis is to show development over time as a basis of discussion about the current state of Sweden's gender equality ODA. For this purpose, the policy markers and sector codes are the comparable data available. We have requested data on the share and volume assigned the gender equality markers from Sida's statistics unit. These figures do not always apply over time when adjustments can be made retrospectively, and there is also a certain discrepancy with the figures reported in the OECD-DAC system.

What is Gender Equality ODA?

Gender equal ODA can mean many different things. The largest categories within Sida's gender equality ODA include work to strengthen enabling conditions for gender equality, sexual and reproductive rights, efforts to combat gender-based violence, the economic empowerment of women and girls, and the rights and freedoms of women and girls.

Some examples of where gender development assistance goes:

- Support to institutions and public authorities in low-income countries to improve their work in reaching women and girls.
- Support to UN agencies working with gender equality, e.g. UN Women.
- Support to gender equality projects and programs within other parts of the UN system, such as climate action, support to refugees, or agricultural assistance.
- Support to civil society organisations, international or local, that implement gender equality projects on local levels.
- Support to feminist and women's rights organisations that work specifically with gender equality on a local, national, or global level.

Principal and significant objectives – what do gender markers 1 and 2 mean?

All countries that are members in OECD's Development Assistance Committee (DAC) are required to track their bilateral ODA with gender equality policy markers when they report their annual ODA figures to the OECD-DAC. The markers are used to track if an ODA project has gender equality as an objective. Today, around 92% of all bilateral ODA is coded with the policy marker and is, therefore, assigned a score of 0, 1, or 2 according to the following criteria:

- **Gender marker 2 (principal):** Gender equality is the primary objective of the project/programme and is fundamental to its design and expected results. The project/programme would not have been undertaken without this objective.
- **Gender marker 1 (significant):** Gender equality is an important and intentional objective, but not the primary objective of the project/programme. This is often described as gender equality being integrated (mainstreamed) into the project/programme.
- **Gender marker 0 (not targeted):** The project/programme has been controlled against the policy marker but was assessed to not include any objectives that promote gender equality.

OECD, DAC Gender Equality Marker, (2024)

“Women also take trains” – How should we measure gender equality ODA?

Following the publication of this review last year, a discussion emerged about the measurability of gender equality ODA. Particularly, in relation to the figures showing a then sharply reduced level of gender equality ODA to Ukraine (according to the gender markers), state officials and politicians argued that the numbers were misleading and that the ODA to Ukraine was gender-mainstreamed to a greater extent than our review suggested.

It was argued that ODA which, for instance, went to infrastructure projects also should count as gender equal ODA since women benefitted from them as well. Further, that much of the ODA to Ukraine channelled through large funds, e.g. through the World Bank, had a strong gender equality focus, but that the threshold for achieving the gender markers was “too high”. The criteria for gender marker 1 (gender equality as a significant objective) are that the project's design has been informed by a gender analysis, includes at least one objective aimed towards increased gender equality, and has a results framework which tracks this.

As presented in last year's review and again here, there are significant challenges with tracing and measuring gender equality ODA. OECD's gender marker has several fundamental shortcomings: it is self-reported, many donors do not report against them at all, and they miss large parts of multilateral ODA.¹ It is an imperfect system; however, it is the most comprehensive one available today and gives the opportunity to measure trends over time.

An equal gender distribution in outcomes – meaning that the result of a project benefits both women and men – is not necessarily a gender equality-promoting project. Gender equality ODA is not only about women as a target demographic; it is about using ODA to drive change in gender equality. Naturally, ensuring that both women and men benefit fairly can be part of this. But doing so requires measurement, analysis, and projects to identify differences in living conditions between women and men, and to reduce those gaps. It is through this kind of analysis that gender perspectives become real drivers of development, even in broad sectors such as infrastructure, the economy, and society-building.

¹ ODI (Overseas Development Institute) (2024). *A blurred picture: three global gender data gaps that need plugging*. <https://odi.org/en/insights/a-blurred-picture-three-global-gender-data-gaps-that-need-plugging/>

Commitments and International Frameworks

The OECD-DAC Recommendation on Gender Equality ODA

The OECD (Organisation for Economic Cooperation Development) is an intergovernmental organisation with 38 member states that produces analyses, evaluations, and comparisons to promote economic development. DAC is OECD's Developmental Assistance Committee, which decides on collective rules for donor states' ODA – e.g. what can be counted as ODA – and analyses what constitutes effective ODA. 32 states are members of this committee, including Sweden.

In May 2024, OECD-DAC issued a new recommendation on gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls. It states that all adherent members should work to increase financing of gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls through ODA and other forms of financing. The recommendation also affirms that members should integrate gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls in sector-specific policies and strategies – especially in sectors where gender mainstreaming is currently low.²

EU Gender Action Plan III

Gender Action Plan III (GAP III), the EU's policy framework for “external action” – that is, the EU's foreign and development policy – has been extended and will apply until the end of 2027. It sets the target that 85% of new EU projects and programmes in partner states should have gender equality as a principal or significant objective. However, this

target has been criticised, among other things because the percentage refers to the share of projects, not the share of the budget allocated to them. This means that the target can be met by funding many small projects with gender equality objectives, while large portions of the budget can go towards projects that lack gender equality objectives.³ The latest available figures (for 2021-2023) show that 78.4% of the EU's external actions have gender equality as a principal or significant objective, up from 64.7% in 2019.⁴ Major global shifts in ODA since 2021-2023 suggest that these figures likely look different today.

In March 2025, the EU Commission presented “A Roadmap for Women's Rights”, which reaffirm the targets of GAP III. The Commission reiterated the overarching goal that all women and girls wholly and completely should enjoy their human rights and empowerment, and that this “requires strong political will, leadership and prioritisation of gender equality at the highest levels”.⁵ In March 2026, the EU Commission presented a new gender equality strategy which asserts gender equality as a fundamental right and a core value of the EU.⁶

Commitments within the United Nations

The importance of financing the global work on gender equality is already affirmed in the 1995 Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action. Since then, many UN documents have reiterated the importance of meeting ODA targets in order to implement the Platform. During the Gender

² OECD, (2024). *DAC Recommendation on Gender Equality and the Empowerment of All Women and Girls in Development Co-operation and Humanitarian Assistance*

³ Kvinna till Kvinna, (2023). *EU's Gender Action Plan III: Halfway there? Observations at the midterm of the GAP III*

⁴ European Commission (2023). *Gender Equality Report*. https://commission.europa.eu/document/download/055fdbab-5786-425e-a072-652bf53d8fe4_en?filename=Gender%20Equality%20Report.pdf

⁵ European Commission, (2025). *En Färdplan för Kvinnors Rättigheter*

⁶ European Commission, (2026). *Gender Equality Strategy 2026-2030*

Equality Forum in 2021, the international community committed to doubling the annual rate of growth in funding for women's rights organisations and feminist movements by 2026.⁷

The Reform Agenda

In the Swedish government's ODA reform agenda, adopted in December 2023, "Strengthening the freedom and empowerment of women and girls" is stated as a prioritised thematic area. It affirms that gender equality is a core Swedish value – both as a

goal in its own right, and as a means to achieving other objectives. Swedish ODA should be a clear force for gender equality, with particular emphasis on strengthening the freedom, rights, empowerment, and opportunities of women and girls.⁸ The 2026 Statement of Government Policy on Foreign Affairs highlighted gender equality and women's empowerment as a focus area. Gender equality is a prioritised area for Sweden within the UN and in development cooperation and is a matter of human rights.⁹



Photo: Maya Janssens/Ifjira

International Women's Day in Skopje, North Macedonia.

Developments during 2025–2026

Global Developments

The Trump administration's drastic cuts to American ODA have hit gender equality funding particularly hard. Total cuts in March 2025 were estimated to 38%, while cuts to maternal and child health, family planning, and reproductive health were over 90%. The US also expanded the so-called Mexico City Policy, or global gag rule, to prohibit all recipients of US health ODA – including multilateral organisations and other states – from speaking on abortion.¹⁰ Close to 80% of funding for efforts to prevent and respond to gender-based violence has disappeared.^{11 12}

This is happening against the backdrop of a sharp decline in global ODA overall. The OECD estimates that ODA fell up to 23% in 2025, after already decreasing by 9% in 2024. This is the largest annual drop ever recorded.¹³ The four largest donor states – the US, France, Germany, and the UK – have all reduced their ODA.¹⁴ The least developed countries in the world, and countries in sub-Saharan Africa, are expected to be hit the hardest by the ongoing cuts.

The latest figures on gender equality ODA, which included all donors in the OECD-DAC, are from 2024. After a decade of growth in gender equality ODA, it fell by 13% between 2023 and 2024, and the OECD expect that it will continue to fall in 2025–2027.¹⁵ The OECD's data also show that women's rights organisations are under immense

pressure. They have long received less than 1% of gender equality ODA, and this already small sum fell by 28% between 2023 and 2024 – from around \$800 million to around \$580 million. The OECD also warns that ODA aimed at ending violence against women and girls is expected to decline by 17-20% in 2025. They further note that humanitarian ODA – which has increased in the last decade – still has very low levels of gender mainstreaming (21%), despite that humanitarian assistance, such as emergency food ODA, is not gender-neutral: women and girls face greater barriers in accessing urgent food support.¹⁶

Swedish Developments

In May 2025, the government decided on a new Strategy for Gender Equality and the Freedom and Empowerment of Women and Girls for 2025-2028. This replaces the previous Strategy for Sweden's Development Cooperation for Global Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women and Girls, which was due to run until 2025. The new strategy allocates SEK 800 million over four years, i.e. SEK 200 million per year. This is a reduction compared with the previous strategy, which provided SEK 260 million per year. The new strategy also no longer includes a dedicated objective on support to women's rights organisations and women human rights defenders.¹⁷

In the government's appropriation directions (regleringsbrev) to Sida for 2026, there were no

⁷ UN Women, Generation Equality Forum, (2021). *Global Acceleration Plan* s. 132

⁸ Swedish Government (2023). *Development assistance for a new era – freedom, empowerment and sustainable growth*. <https://www.government.se/reports/2024/02/development-assistance-for-a-new-era--freedom-empowerment-and-sustainable-growth/>

⁹ Swedish Government, (2026). *Stödet till Ukraina, säkerhetspolitiskt samarbete och jämställdhet i fokus i årets utrikesdeklaration*. <https://www.regeringen.se/pressmeddelanden/2026/02/stodet-til-ukraina-sakerhetspolitiskt-samarbete-och-jamstalldhet-i-fokus-i-arets-utrikesdeklaration/>

¹⁰ Center for Global Development (CGD) (2025). *Women have been disproportionately harmed by Trump administration aid, migration and trade policies*. <https://www.cgdev.org/blog/women-have-been-disproportionately-harmed-trump-administration-aid-migration-and-trade-policies>

¹¹ OMFIF (2026). *International Women's Day says give to gain – Washington says otherwise*. <https://www.omfif.org/2026/03/international-womens-day-says-give-to-gain-washington-says-otherwise/>

¹² Stern, E., Doyle, K., Levitov, R. & Heise, L. (2026). *Unravelling progress: how US foreign aid cuts undermine global efforts to end violence against women*. *BMC Public Health*, 26, 847. <https://doi.org/10.1186/s12889-026-26438-w>

¹³ <https://www.oecd.org/en/about/news/press-releases/2026/04/international-aid-fell-sharply-in-2025-says-oecd.html>

¹⁴ OECD (2025). *Cuts in Official Development Assistance*. https://www.oecd.org/en/publications/cuts-in-official-development-assistance_8c530629-en/full-report.html

¹⁵ OECD (2026). *Development finance for gender equality*. <https://www.oecd.org/en/data/dashboards/development-finance-for-gender-equality.html>

¹⁶ OECD (2026). *ODA for gender equality is plummeting – how can we protect it?* <https://www.oecd.org/en/blogs/2026/03/-ODA-for-gender-equality-is-plummeting--How-can-we-protect-it.html>

¹⁷ CONCORD Sverige (2025). *Regeringen trappar ner det globala jämställhetsarbetet*. <https://concord.se/regeringen-trappar-ner-det-globala-jamstalldhetsarbetet>

specific earmarked initiatives or assignments related to gender equality. The core funding to UN Women and UNFPA remains at the same level as the previous year.¹⁸

Following the US' dramatic ODA freezes and cuts in early 2025, the government and the Minister for International Development Cooperation made several statements about Sweden's opportunities to help cover some of the lost ODA and expressed that the rights of women and girls is a possible prioritised area.¹⁹ Nevertheless, this has not been translated into any specific allocations in the autumn budget, despite Sweden's SRHR ODA being at record-low levels.²⁰

When the government announced a substantial reduction in Sida's funding at the end of 2025 – at

around SEK 4 billion or 20% of Sida's budget – the Minister for International Development Cooperation claimed that "even if we make major changes to the ODA budget, we are maintaining our life-saving projects, efforts for democracy, and support for young girls and women around the world".²¹

In response to the questions from parliament on gender equality ODA, the Minister has emphasised that it is crucial to prioritise gender equality in a time like this, such as by strengthening women's economic empowerment through Swedish support to the World Bank and assigning Sida to work with the UN Women's Generation Equality initiative. The Minister also mentioned the increased support to women's rights organisations as key actors in advancing gender equality and development, as well as support to UN Women and UNFPA.²²

Sweden's Gender Equality ODA Today

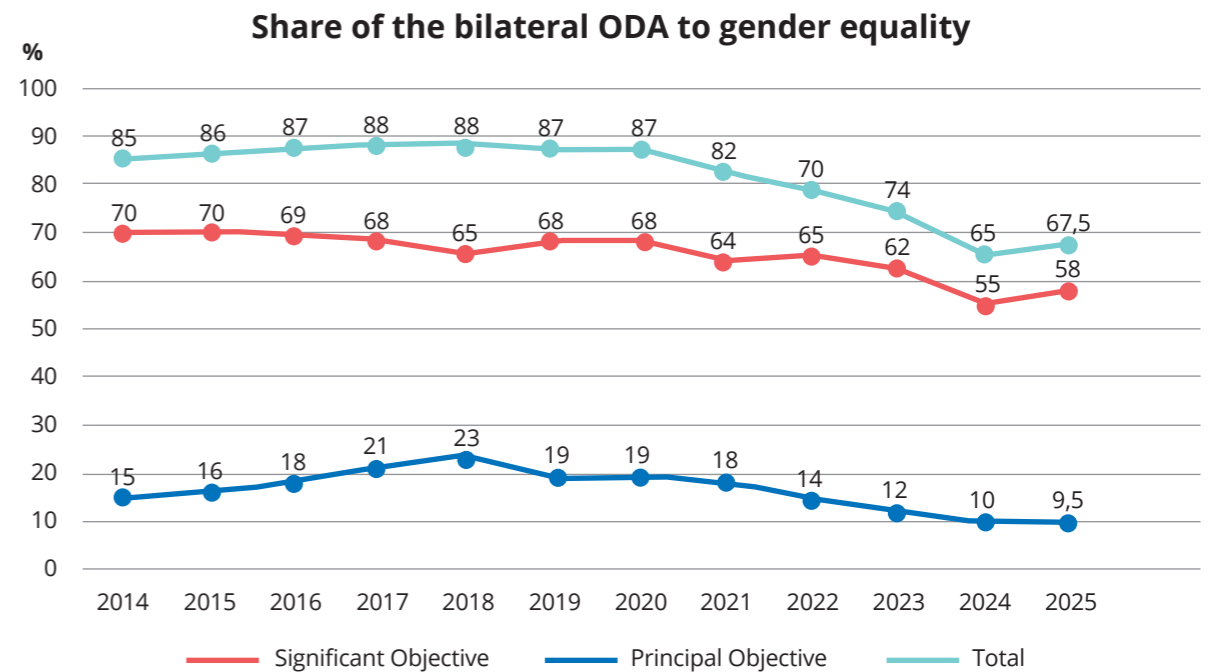
Gender Equality as a Principal and Significant Objective

The share of bilateral ODA with gender equality as a significant objective increased from 55% to 58% between 2024 and 2025. The share with gender equality as a principal objective has, meanwhile, decreased somewhat from 10% to 9.5%. This is the lowest percentage in 16 years.

Overall, the share of ODA with gender equality as a principal or significant objective has increased slightly, from 65% to 67.5%. However, the actual amount is lower because the total bilateral ODA budget is smaller. This represents a decrease of

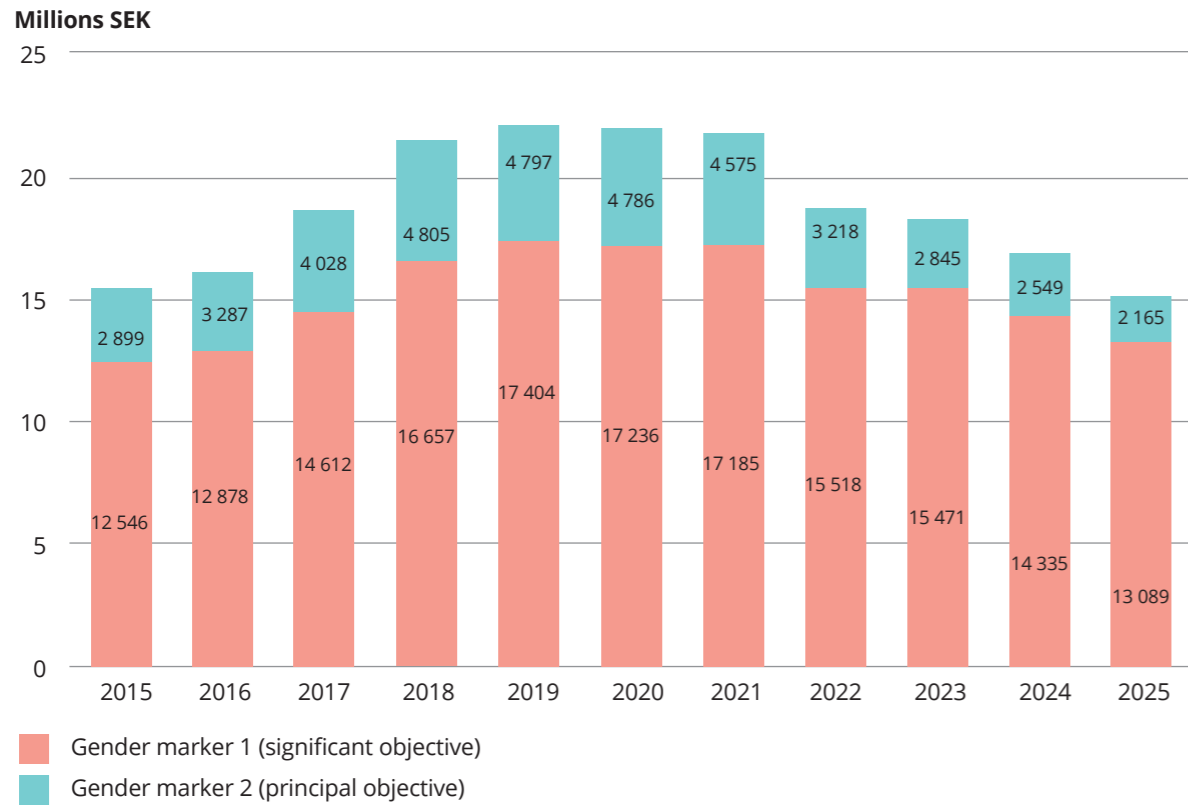
approximately SEK 1.6 billion from 2024 to 2025 in ODA allocated to gender equality. ODA where gender equality is the principal objective has decreased from SEK 2,549,627,689 in 2024 to SEK 2,165,176,859 in 2025 – a decrease of roughly SEK 400 million.

In 2019, SEK 22,201,580,450 went to gender equality ODA. In 2025, the corresponding figure was SEK 15,254,966,972 – a decrease of SEK 7 billion. During the same period, ODA to gender equality as a principal objective decreased by about SEK 2.6 billion, from SEK 4.8 billion to SEK 2.2 billion.



¹⁸ CONCORD Sverige (2026). *Analys: regleringsbrev till Sida för 2026*. <https://concord.se/analys-regleringsbrev-till-sida-for-2026>
¹⁹ Sveriges Television (SVT) (2025). *Bistandsminister Benjamin Dousa om Trumps bistandsbeslut*. <https://www.svt.se/nyheter/inrikes/bistandsminister-benjamin-dousa-m-om-trumps-bistandsbeslut-tiotusentals-riskerar-att-do>
²⁰ RFSU (2025). *Rekordlåg andel av biståndet går till SRHR – ny rapport avslöjar oroande trend*. <https://www.rfsu.se/om-rfsu/press/pressmeddelanden/2025/rekordlag-andel-av-bistandet-gar-till-srhr--ny-rapport-avslor-oroande-trend/>
²¹ Sveriges Television (SVT) (2025). *Regeringen presenterar förändringar av svenskt bistånd*. <https://www.svt.se/nyheter/inrikes/regeringen-presenterar-forandringar-av-svenskt-bistand>
²² Riksdagen (2026). *Skriftlig fråga: Jämställdhetsbiståndet*. https://www.riksdagen.se/sv/dokument-och-lagar/dokument/skriftlig-fraga/jamstalldhetsbistandet_hc111090/

Bilateral gender equality ODA 2015-2025



Gender Equality as a Thematic Area and Strategic Objective

“Strengthening the freedom and empowerment of women and girls” is a distinct thematic area within Sida’s ODA, encompassing both targeted and mainstreamed projects. The total ODA within this area fell from approximately SEK 1.5 billion in 2024 to around SEK 1.24 billion in 2025. This represents a slight decrease from 6% of Sida’s total ODA to about 5.5%. The largest strategic goals within the area continued to be “strengthening enabling conditions for gender equality” and “sexual and reproductive rights”.

Funding for Women’s Rights Organisations

In 2025, approximately SEK 622 million was disbursed in support to women’s rights organisations (sector code 15170), which corresponds to 3% of the bilateral ODA. This is a decrease from 2024, when the amount was SEK 818 million (3.1%). In the bilateral ODA administered by Sida, SEK 196 million less went to women’s rights organisations than in previous years.

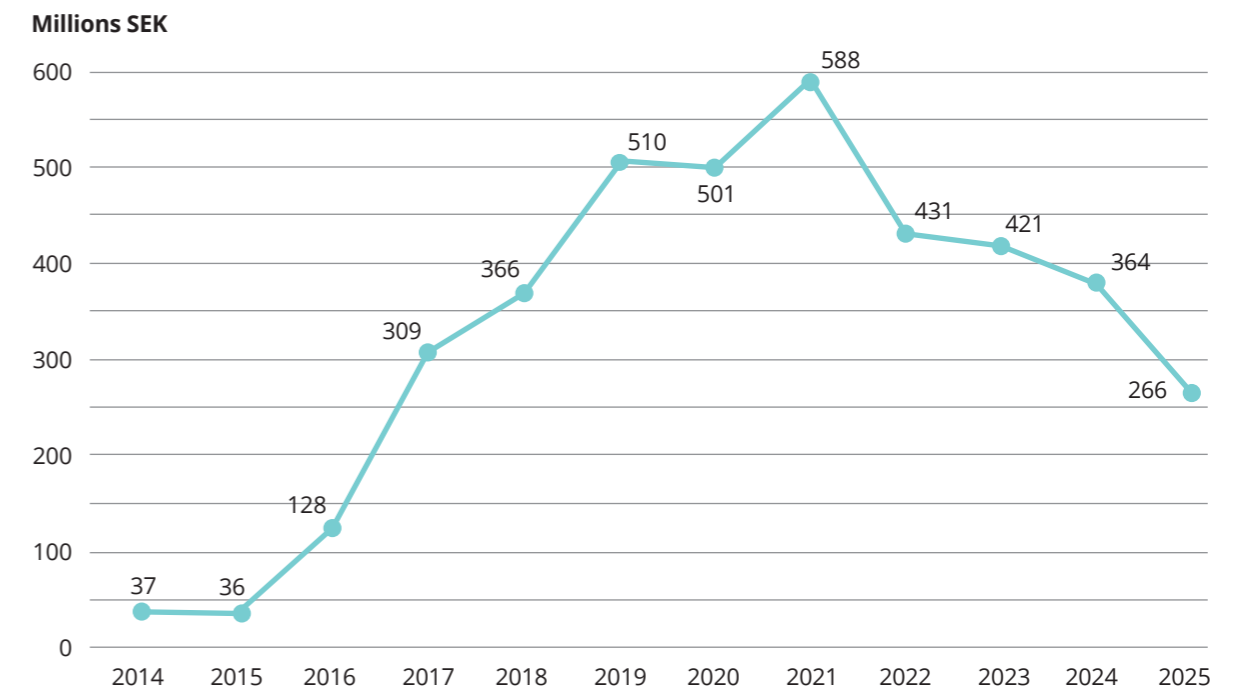
Support for Work to Eliminate Gender-Based Violence Against Women and Girls

The ODA towards efforts to end gender-based violence against women and girls (sector code 15180) has decreased from approximately SEK 364 million in 2024 to about SEK 266 million in 2025. This corresponds to 1% of Sida’s total ODA, with a reduction of about SEK 100 million. This figure is the lowest it has been in 10 years and is less than half of what Sweden provided at its peak in ODA towards combating violence against women.

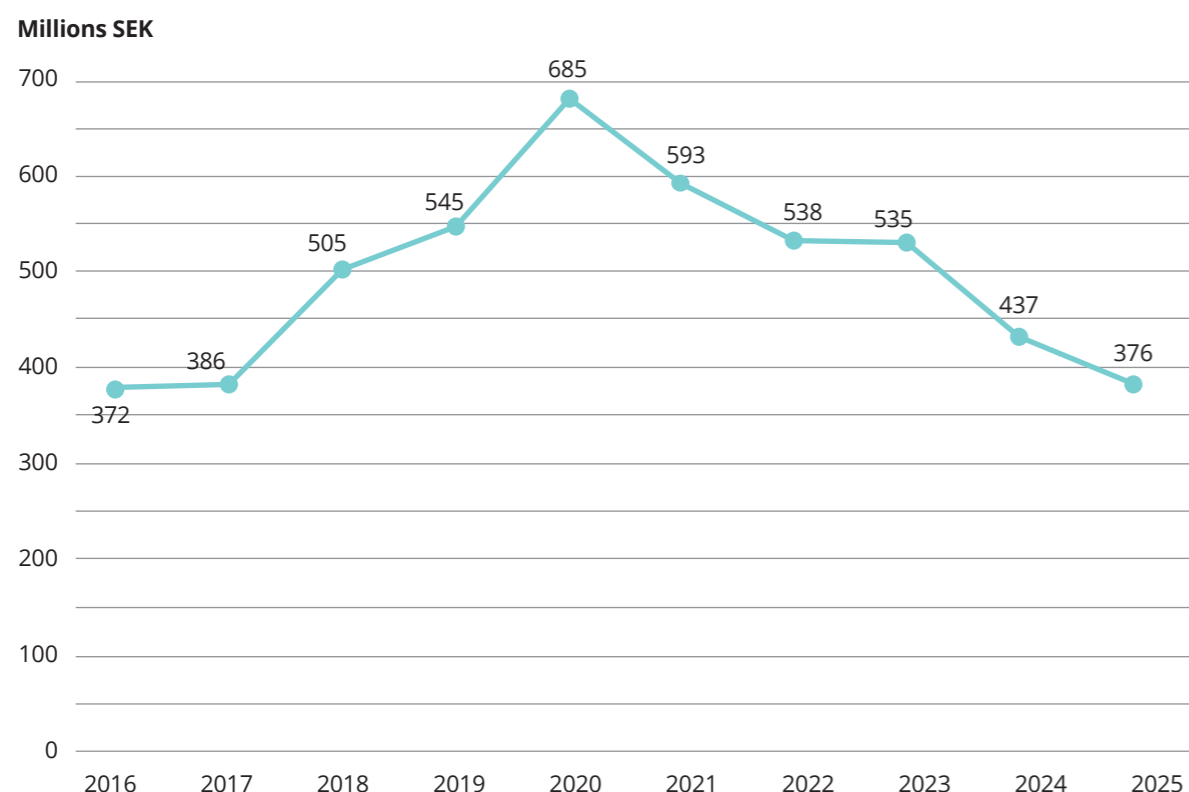
Funding for women's rights organisations



ODA for support to ending gender-based violence against women and girls



Swedish ODA to UN Women



Swedish ODA to UNFPA



ODA to UN Women and UNFPA

The total ODA to UN Women decreased by approximately SEK 61 million: from SEK 437 million in 2024 to SEK 376 million in 2025. The core ODA – i.e. the non-earmarked ODA – did, however, increase from SEK 54 million in 2024 to SEK 90 million in 2025.²³

The total ODA to UNFPA decreased from SEK 1.23 billion in 2024 to SEK 1.02 billion in 2025. Here, the core ODA also decreased, from SEK 480 million in 2024 to SEK 374 million in 2025.²⁴

Support for Work on Women, Peace and Security

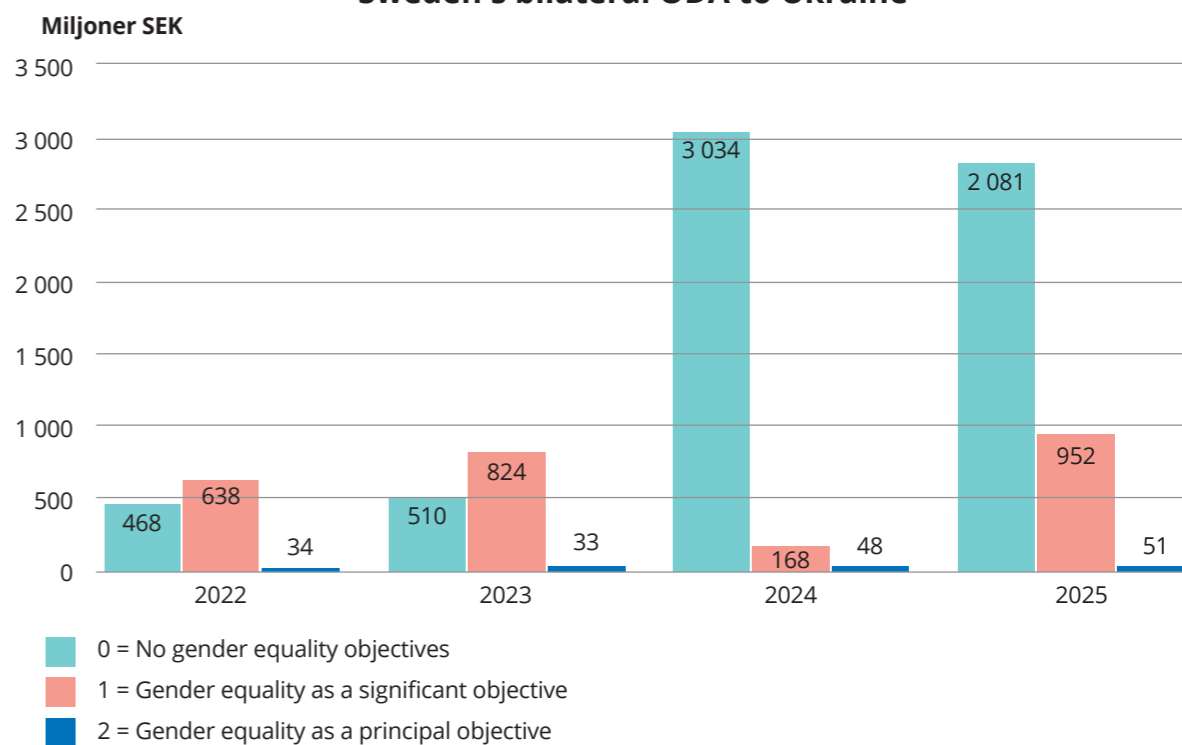
We have also reviewed the amounts and share of the bilateral ODA which contribute to the objectives of the Women, Peace and Security National Action Plan, and how many projects this has involved. Sida estimates that about 6% of the agency's total ODA in 2025 – distributed across 155 projects under 31 strategies – supported work which in some way relates to the objectives of the WPS action plan. This is slight-

ly more than in 2024 (146 projects) and the same number of strategies as 2024, but it represents a decrease compared to 2023 when about 7% of Sida's total ODA when to similar work, delivered through 35 strategies and 172 projects.

Gender Equality ODA to Ukraine

Sweden's ODA to Ukraine remains substantial, as the government's most important ODA and foreign policy priority. It is by a wide margin the country which received the most Swedish ODA. In 2025, Sweden's bilateral ODA to Ukraine amounted to around SEK 3.1 billion – a slight decrease from SEK 3.25 billion in 2024. Of this, 1.66% had gender equality as a principal objective and 30.74% had it as a significant objective. The bilateral ODA with gender equality as a significant objective thereby increased significantly since 2024, from 5% to nearly 31%, representing an increase from approximately SEK 170 million to SEK 952 million. ODA with gender equality as a principal objective remained at roughly the same level, rising from 1% to 1.66% - SEK 48 million and SEK 51 million, respectively.

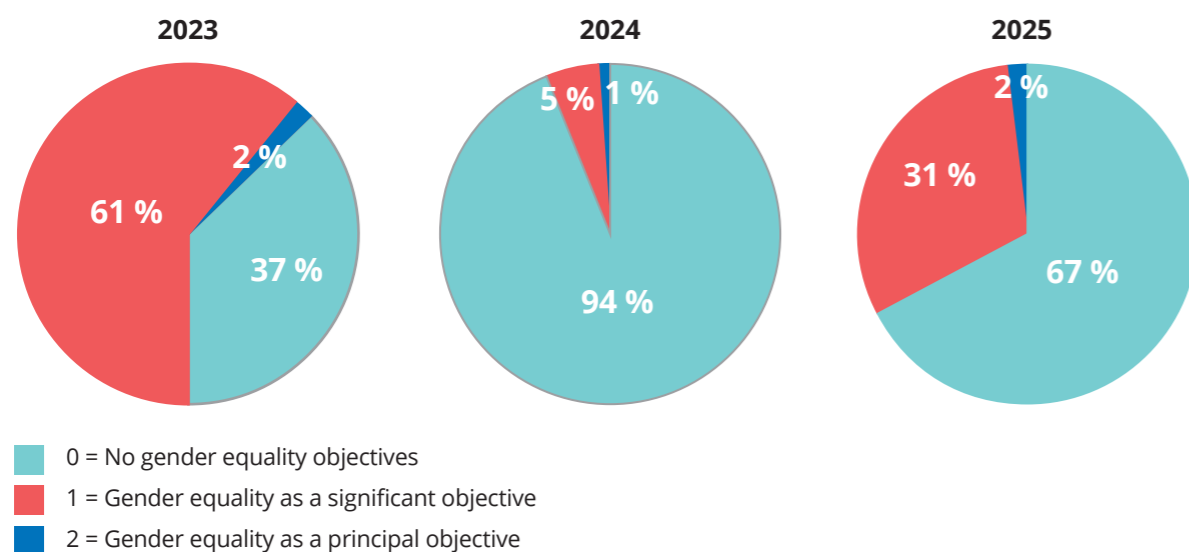
Sweden's bilateral ODA to Ukraine



²³ Openaid (2026). *Swedish aid contributions – UN Women*. <https://openaid.se/contributions/SE-0-SE-2-91055>

²⁴ Openaid (2026). *Swedish aid contributions – UNFPA*. <https://openaid.se/contributions/SE-0-SE-2-91057>

Sweden's bilateral ODA to Ukraine



Analysis and Conclusions

Who Should Sweden Be in a World in Crisis?

The global trend is clear: overall ODA is declining and funding for gender equality is falling even faster.²⁵ In this context, priorities of individual donor states become decisive. Global reports have highlighted that the combined cuts from the US, the Netherlands, and Sweden amount to one third of global ODA.²⁶ Sweden has long held a special position as a strong voice for – and a major funder of – gender equality in international development cooperation. The ongoing trends in Sweden's gender equality ODA, however, indicate that this position under threat.

The developments in the last years point toward a gradual deprioritisation of gender equality in practice. Despite that the share of ODA with gender equality as a significant objective has increased slightly, the actual resources are shrinking. Particularly striking is the decrease in ODA with gender as a principal objective, as well as ODA to women's rights organisations and the work to combat gender-based violence. This is happening at a time when the needs for such ODA are overwhelmingly rising.

Sweden is not alone in this development. Several of the world's largest donor states have made substantial cuts to their ODA, and the consequences for work on gender equality are already apparent. That is precisely why Sweden's role in this matters even more. In a time of global backlash, there is a need for states that not only maintain, but strengthen, their leadership on gender equality. This is an opportunity for Sweden to reverse the trend

and demonstrate that a different path is possible.

Our Greatest Concern

One of the most troubling trends in this review is the decline in support for women's rights organisations. These organisations are central actors in advancing gender equality, both as implementers of projects and as voices for change on local, national, and global levels. Meanwhile, they are often the most resource-constrained actors and are heavily dependent on international support.

When funding decreases, it therefore hits these actors disproportionately hard. This risks not only limiting the direct work to strengthen the rights of women and girls but also weakens the role of civil society more broadly. In a time of democratic backsliding, when the space for civil society is shrinking in many parts of the world, is this particularly alarming.

That support for women's rights organisations is declining at the same time as global backlash against gender equality is rising risks long-term consequences – especially when funding for anti-gender and anti-rights movements is increasing considerably.²⁷ This underlines the need to not only maintain, but actively strengthen, financing towards women's rights organisations. To support women's rights organisations is a wise long-term investment: strong women's movements are the single most important factor behind improved legislation and policy on gender equality.²⁸

²⁵ OECD (2026). *ODA for gender equality is plummeting – how can we protect it?* <https://www.oecd.org/en/blogs/2026/03/-ODA-for-gender-equality-is-plummeting--How-can-we-protect-it.html>

²⁶ FP Analytics & Mama Cash (2025). *Insight Brief*. <https://fpanalytics.foreignpolicy.com/wp-content/uploads/sites/5/2025/03/FPA-MamaCash-Insight-Brief-march-2025-interactive.pdf>

²⁷ European Parliamentary Forum for Sexual & Reproductive Rights (EPF) (2025) *The Next Wave: How Religious Extremism Is Reclaiming Power*. <https://www.epfweb.org/node/1152>

²⁸ Weldon, S. Laurel, and Mala Htun (2013). "Feminist Mobilisation and Progressive Policy Change: Why Governments Take Action to Combat Violence against Women." *Gender and Development* 21, no. 2 (2013): 231–47. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/24697245>.

Sweden's Engagement in Important Multilateral Processes Going Forward

Sweden's credibility as a voice for gender equality is not only determined by national budget decisions, but also by how Sweden acts in international and multilateral processes. In the coming years, several central processes will form the global work on gender equality, not least within the UN system and the EU.

Reforms of the UN system, including the so-called UN80 process, could have major implications for the mandates and financing of central actors like UN Women and UNFPA. It will be vital for Sweden to actively work to ensure that these organisations' mandates and resources are not eroded. At an EU level, important negotiations lie ahead, both on budget and future frameworks for gender equality and developmental cooperation. For Sweden to be a driving force in these processes, national ambitions need to be high. A strong international leadership requires domestic policy that is consistent and credible.

The Trend Can Be Reversed

At the same time, the analysis shows that development is not unambiguous. The figures for Ukraine demonstrate that it is possible to rapidly increase the share of ODA with gender equality as a significant objective. Governance and prioritisation matter.

This indicates that the trend is not inevitable. With clear political decisions, it is possible to strengthen the gender equality perspective in ODA, even in a period of shrinking resources. Simultaneously, the Ukraine example also highlights challenges, where large investments on a single country risk crowding out other priorities.

There is also a need to broaden the discussion on financing. Traditional ODA will remain central, but it is not enough to meet global needs. New funding models – including increased mobilisation of private capital and different forms of blended finance – can play an important role in strengthening resources for gender equality work going forward.

Continued Importance to Measure, Map, and Review

This review has demonstrated the importance of continued monitoring and scrutiny of gender equality ODA. Measuring ODA's contribution to gender equality is methodologically complex and the existing tools have clear limitations. Nonetheless, it is essential in order to follow trends over time and hold decision-makers accountable.

We, therefore, welcome initiatives such as the forthcoming report from the Expert Group for Aid Studies (EBA), and we see a continued need for independent analysis in this area. Ensuring effective and well-targeted ODA requires better data and sufficient resources to analyse and review developments. At a time when both needs and challenges are growing, transparency and knowledge are prerequisites to be able to reach well-informed decisions on future ODA.

Kvinna till Kvinna Recommends that Sweden:

- 1 Restore ODA to 1% of the GNI.
- 2 Allocate at least 75% of bilateral ODA to gender equality as a significant objective (G1).
- 3 Allocate at least 20% of bilateral ODA to gender equality as a principal objective (G2).
- 4 Allocate at least 5% of this to women's rights organisations. Ensure that the ODA reaches civil society organisations and feminist movements in the Global South.
- 5 Reinstate a Global Ambassador for Gender Equality and increase staffing to actively advance and elevate gender equality perspectives and issues in donor circles and policy processes.
- 6 Create a dedicated fund for support to Ukraine to safeguard the rest of the ODA budget.
- 7 Set clear red lines for the EU's commitments on gender equality and ODA in coming negotiations on the EU budget, the Gender Action Plan, and the Women, Peace and Security strategy – so that the EU's ambition and targets are not lowered. 85% of EU ODA should have gender equality as a principal or significant objective, with at least 20% as a principal objective, and 5% of EU ODA should go to women's rights organisations.
- 8 Create enabling conditions to increase cooperation with private capital and mobilise new financing flows for gender equality work, contributing to long-term, sustainable funding for women's rights organisations and other change-makers.

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For the first time since Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine, the Women's March returned to Kiev - and more than 3,000 women filled the streets to make their voices heard. Among them were Kvinna till Kvinna's partners in Ukraine, WA "Sphere" and Fight For Right.

**For all women's rights,
in every corner of the world.**