Sweden's third national Action Plan for Open Government Partnership 2016–2018

1 Introduction

Sweden joined the Open Government Partnership (OGP) in 2011. Since then, it has published two action plans and Sweden has reaffirmed its commitment to open government efforts, both in principle and in practice.

Sweden has a long tradition of transparency, citizen engagement and measures to build an effective and accountable government. Confidence and trust are among the most important pillars of Swedish democracy. The Swedish principle of public access to official documents guarantees the general public and the media an unimpeded view of activities pursued by the Government and local authorities. An efficient and accessible administration, together with well-managed public finances, forms the basis of the Swedish model.

2 Open Government efforts to date

The first Swedish OGP Action Plan was published in 2012 and focused on the challenge of *More Effectively Managing Resources*. In the second Action Plan published in 2014, the scope was broadened by focusing on *More Effectively Managing Public Resources* and *Increasing Corporate Accountability*. Five commitments were made on eGovernment, public sector information and aid transparency.

eGovernment

The Swedish Government is currently running a four-year implementation programme called *Digital First*. It is designed to implement the goals of the Government strategy for enhanced digital collaboration in public administration entitled *Bringing the Citizen to the Heart of Government (Medborgaren i Centrum)*.

A central objective is an increasingly open government that supports innovation and participation. This includes easier access to open data, greater opportunities for third parties to provide government digital services as part of their service offering and to engage in policy implementation.

An integral part of the Digital First programme is therefore to actively promote more open government through digital channels. A number of agencies have been tasked with digitising certain public value chains: a smarter planning and building process, smarter use of environmental information, a smarter food chain and smart business administration. The assignments include working on data maturity, open data and open innovation within the particular value chain.

The Government has created a council for the digital transformation of the Swedish public sector. The Council serves as a forum for coordination between authorities at both national and local level.

Vinnova, Sweden's innovation agency, and various institutions, enterprises and organisations can apply for financial support to make their data public. Vinnova has previously built the national portal for open data, opendata.se. The portal has now been taken over by the National Archives (Riksarkivet) as part of a general assignment to promote open data (see below).

Several agencies and municipalities have taken initiatives to publish open data and promote re-use. Meteorological datasets, geographical data, traffic data and open data for cities, for example, have been published free of charge. The released data has in turn created several applications. At Stockholm University, eGovlab has started activities focused on open and smart government. Several other digital innovation hubs are also involved in data-driven innovation in the public sector.

Public sector information commitment

The Swedish Government also gives priority to increased accessibility and ability on the part of the public to re-use public information. This commitment is closely linked with the eGovernment commitment.

Open data contributes to innovations and solutions in society. In the second half of 2015, the Government decided on collaboration with the Swedish Association of Local Authorities and Regions (SKL) and the municipal sector to create an innovative public administration. The Government, together with SKL and in partnership with the private and voluntary sectors, is therefore working on the development of future mobile eServices. Open innovation processes, open data and agile development constitute the basic starting points for this joint effort.

The Government has designated the National Archives as the pilot agency for open data. This means that the National Archives is tasked with collecting and publishing information from the authorities. The National Archives will encourage the authorities to publish open data according to common guidelines. It will be responsible for web guidance. The Cadastral and Map Agency (Lantmäteriet) will in turn assist the National Archives by providing information security, interoperability and coordination experience.

Aid transparency

Sweden is one of the most generous aid donors in the world, with a minimum allocation of one per cent of estimated Gross National Income (GNI) for development assistance. For this reason, it is particularly important for the Government to ensure that aid money is well spent and to publish related information including achieved results, especially as the activities are performed in other countries. To this end, the Open Aid initiative was launched in 2009, aiming among other things to make Swedish aid information available to the outside world in a modern way. One result of the Open Aid initiative was the launch of the Swedish 'Aid Transparency Guarantee' in 2010. The Transparency Guarantee means that all public documents and public information must be available online. The information must explain when, to whom and why financial support has been provided, and the results achieved. The fulfilment of the Open Aid initiative relates to several commitments in the previous OGP Action Plans.

An important part of Open Aid was the development of the www.openaid.se platform – a new and unique web-based platform that allows users to browse large amounts of Swedish aid data and documents in a user-friendly way. Since the publication of the second Action Plan, substantial improvements have been made to the platform, which is offered as free and open software to be used by other publishers wanting to visualise similar data.

Sweden is pleased with how the Open Aid reform agenda and the transparency guarantee have been implemented. One outcome is that Sweden maintains its position as one of the strongest advocates of transparency in the area of development cooperation and is, for example, one of the highest ranked donors in the 2016 transparency indicator assessment by Publish What You Fund (PWYF).

Swedish civil society organisations are important for engagement in global development issues and for strengthening the results of Swedish development cooperation and its contribution to sustainable global development. To create a framework for dialogue and to highlight the value of Swedish civil society in development issues, the Government adopted a set of joint commitments between the Government and Swedish civil society organisations in 2015. These joint commitments provide a basis for relations between the Ministry for Foreign Affairs and Swedish civil society organisations and for the implementation of Sweden's Aid Transparency Commitment (see section 4.3).

The next step

Sweden's third Action Plan builds on three of the commitments in the previous Action Plan and one additional commitment:

- Putting citizens at the centre (eGovernment)

- Re-using public administration documents and open data

- Improving opportunities for dialogue and transparency in aid management and implementation

- Developing a new format for dialogue with CSOs (**new commitment**).

As stated in the Independent Reporting Mechanism, more can be done to increase the scope of future commitments by adopting a more integrated approach to open government. An important step in that direction is the engagement of the Ministry of Culture with a new commitment in the Swedish OGP Action Plan.

3   National Action Plan development process

Sweden's third Action Plan builds on the previous Action Plans and the progress on the commitments. Sweden has continued its integrated approach to OGP. Parallel structures for OGP have been avoided so as not to duplicate ongoing consultation processes.

Concerning the **eGovernment commitment,** the current four-year programme has reached the halfway mark. As it progresses, several new actions are initiated. Actions under this commitment are partly in consultation with civil society in the initial phase; implementation of the commitment is based on feedback from the cooperating and implementing bodies.

The eGovernment commitment and **the public sector information commitment** are going through a similar process and these two commitments are closely linked. Since May 2016, they are both coordinated by the Ministry of Finance.

Regarding the **aid transparency commitment,** there is a continuous and comprehensive dialogue with civil society on aid policy issues in Sweden. During the development and implementation of the commitment and the different milestones, the Ministry for Foreign Affairs received feedback from civil society during regular meetings and consultations. This feedback supports continuous efforts on aid transparency and the suggested scope of the commitments.

Concerning the **new commitment on developing a new format for dialogue with CSOs,** Sweden already has an ongoing dialogue with CSOs and other stakeholders, focusing in particular on a forthcoming communication to the Riksdag on cooperation between CSOs and the Swedish Government during the current electoral period. Since the latest bill on the Policy for Civil Society (2009), an interministerial group of civil servants at the Government Offices has been identifying processes in which civil society can be involved from the outset (e.g. in proposing measures the Government or an agency needs to take in a certain area). The group is also responsible for follow-up and reporting on how many meetings with CSOs the Government has per year (not including regular visits with the political leadership). Since September 2015, the group has been using a new model for dialogue with civil society organisations developed in close cooperation with more than one hundred CSOs at national level.

4 Sweden's commitments

4.1 eGovernment commitments

Commitment 1: Putting citizens at the centre (eGovernment) of government administration reforms

The current programme, *Digital First*, is designed to implement the goals of the government strategy *Bringing the Citizen to the Heart of Government*, and is structured around three focus areas: governance, smart solutions and infrastructure. Current initiatives are described below.

Better governance

The first aim of the programme is to improve the horizontal governance of digitisation. Because of the decentralised nature of Swedish public administration, there has been a lack of quantifiable knowledge on the current status of eGovernment. A number of initiatives have now been taken to gain a clearer picture in terms of the whole-of-government IT costs, digital maturity and risk-prone projects.

A new dedicated governmental body for the digital transformation of the public sector has been formed and reports to the Minister for Public Administration. Also, a council for the digital transformation of the public sector has been established, which includes the pilot agencies described below. The Swedish National Financial Management Authority has received several assignments to support the Government and agencies in digital transformation efforts.

Smart Sweden

The second aim of the programme is to speed up the digital transformation of the public sector. This requires the Government to name the areas that need to embark on the digital transformation process. Four value-chains have been prioritised in the first round of digital transformation assignments: smarter planning and building, a smarter food chain, smarter environment and simplified entrepreneurship. A number of agencies and municipalities will work on open data, data maturity and open innovation. Vinnova continues to promote the development of new smart services.

National digital infrastructure

The third aim of the programme is to find legal, financial and organisational solutions to the long-term management of a national digital infrastructure that has been developed over the past six years. The infrastructure is composed of different layers. The service layer consists of electronic identity and signature, secure messaging, eProcurement and eArchiving. The data layer consists of prioritised base data, open data and structured public service information.

Main activities

- Action to improve **whole-of-government governance** of open government activities. This includes a new unit dedicated to eGovernment and improved frameworks for follow-up and benchmarking.
- **Specific government assignments** to a number of pilot agencies to digitise four value chains.

- The pilot agencies are called to the Government's council for the digital transformation of the public sector. The council holds an 'open council' once a year to take in advice from digital change leaders in civil society, businesses and citizens.

- An agreement has been made with the Swedish Association of Local Authorities and Regions to **strengthen collaboration around eGovernment and open government**. The agreement includes a commitment by the Association to appoint pilot municipalities within the four targeted sectors mentioned above.

- **Spontaneous activities** in terms of labs, hackathons, tech fests and innovation hubs emerging from Sweden's ongoing digital transformation are being supported by Vinnova and others.

The activities are performed by the Swedish National Financial Management Authority, Lantmäteriet (the Swedish mapping, cadastral and land registration authority), the National Board of Housing, Building and Planning, the National Food Agency, the Board of Agriculture, the Environmental Protection Agency, the Agency for Economic and Regional Growth, the Companies Registration Office, the National Archives, eGovlab and Stockholm University. They are coordinated by the Ministry of Finance and the Government Offices in cooperation with individuals, businesses and civil society organisations.

4.2 Public sector information commitment

Commitment 2: Increasing the supply of public administration documents

Public information should be easy to access and re-use. Open data in particular can contribute to solutions to tomorrow's social challenges. Ultimately this can lead to entrepreneurs and businesses finding innovative solutions that create new jobs. Increased re-use of Government data means greater openness and transparency. It also enhances conditions for developing better or new services for the benefit of individuals, businesses and Government itself. This can also lead to new industries and businesses, resulting in increased employment. A uniform way of working may also mean future cost savings for authorities and for the state as a whole. The goal is to increase the supply of public information. Current initiatives are described above. In summary, Sweden has taken a further step to promote open data.

Main activities

- Continue to **facilitate actions** to promote agencies' re-use of public administration documents at different levels.

- **Support initiatives** related to projects with the European Commission.

- Improve comprehensive **follow-up and monitoring**, including continuing to systematically require agencies to report on their efforts in relation to the re-use of public administration documents.

- **Facilitate and coordinate agency information** in a common portal and according to national guidelines.

The activities will mainly be performed by the National Archives, the Agency for Public Administration, the Swedish Competition Authority and Vinnova, and will be coordinated by the Ministry of Finance.

4.3 Aid transparency commitment

Commitment 3: Improved opportunities for dialogue and transparency in aid management and implementation

The commitment on improved opportunities for dialogue and transparency in aid management and implementation aims to increase knowledge and participation. Greater knowledge and involvement of more actors create better possibilities for accountability and promote fresh thinking. Increased transparency may also limit the scope for corruption and misuse of resources. The commitment will mainly be achieved through strengthening channels for dialogue and feedback on aid management and implementation with different parts of society.

Main activities

- Promote **independence and autonomy** by working towards a favourable environment for civil society organisations, safeguarding their autonomy to carry out their own activities and promoting their role as collective voices and opinion makers.
- Maintain a good **dialogue** by informing and consulting civil society at an early stage on upcoming strategies, key decisions or changes in Swedish development cooperation.
- Take action to increase **openness and transparency** in development cooperation by:
  - working in these areas at bilateral, EU and multilateral level,
  - where relevant, giving civil society organisations access to contacts, information and knowledge in the area of development cooperation,
  - strengthening a free and open exchange of views on development cooperation,
  - combating corruption within the framework of handling Swedish aid funds and setting requirements for and supporting cooperation partners' efforts to combat corruption, and
  - promoting openness in relationships and the dialogue between the Government and civil society organisations.
- Further develop **procedures for managing reports of suspected corruption** and other complaints that impact Swedish aid funds.

The commitment is expected to contribute to improved transparency, accountability and public participation. Efforts to increase transparency and dialogue channels facilitate accountability and public participation in Sweden, and promote aid transparency commitments in other countries. Activities should therefore contribute to the enabling environment and respond to the 'shrinking space' for civil society at global level.

Activities will mainly be performed by the Ministry for Foreign Affairs based on existing and forthcoming assignments, agreements and related work plans. In addition, Swedish

civil society organisations, public actors with development assistance funds and multilateral aid organisations are important co-actors in the activities.

4.4 Participation commitment

Commitment 4: Developing a new format for dialogue with CSOs

According to the six principles of the Government's Policy for Civil Society and the Code of Good Practice for Civil Participation in the Decision-Making Process[1], a new format for dialogue and exchange of information has been developed by the Government in close cooperation with more than one hundred CSOs at national level. The CSOs are not only crucial for democracy in itself; they are often also experts in their own field. The Government wants to be able to deepen its own knowledge by meeting experts from civil society in a structured way, with clear prior information concerning the expected outcome for each counterpart.

Main activities

- **Meet** with CSOs and other relevant actors such as agencies, the Association of Local Authorities and Regions (SALAR) and municipalities.
- **Document** meetings.
- Carefully **evaluate and follow up**.

The activities will mainly be performed by the Ministry of Culture together with municipalities, SALAR, civil society and relevant government agencies.

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[1] CONF/PLE(2009)CODE1 from the Council of Europe.

ANNEX 1: Commitments

Commitment 1. National strategy: Bringing the Citizen to the Heart of Government (*Med medborgaren i centrum*). Implementation programme: Digital First		
Lead ministry/agency		Ministry of Finance (since May 2016); previously, Ministry of Enterprise and Innovation.
Other actors involved	Government agencies	Government Offices, the Swedish National Financial Management Authority, the Swedish mapping, cadastral and land registration authority, the National Board of Housing, Building and Planning, the National Food Agency, the Swedish Board of Agriculture, the Swedish Environmental Protection Agency, the Swedish Agency for Economic and Regional Growth, the Swedish Companies Registration Office, the National Archives, eGovlab, Stockholm University.
	CSO, private sector	The Swedish Association of Local Authorities and Regions, individuals, businesses and civil society organisations.
Status quo or problem/issue to be addressed		The biggest driver of the open data agenda is the economic potential of re-use since Sweden is already a very open, transparent and low-corruption country. The challenge is to increase digital openness without limiting the long and deeply rooted paper-based tradition of openness.
Main objectives		Government objectives are expressed in the strategy *Bringing the Citizen to the Heart of Government (2012): An increasingly open government that supports innovation and participation*. It should be easier to find and re-use open data and possible for others to provide government digital services as part of their service offering. Transparency and participation must increase.
Main activities		- Improve whole-of-government governance of open government activities. This includes a new unit dedicated to eGovernment and improved frameworks for follow-up and benchmarks. - Specific government assignments to seven pilot agencies in four sectors that need extra governance. The following value chains have been targeted: smarter planning and building process, a smarter food chain, smarter use of environmental information and simplified entrepreneurship. The agencies are required to work on open data, data maturity and open innovation. - The pilot agencies are called to the Government's council for the digital transformation of the public sector. The council holds an 'open council' once a year to take in advice from digital change leaders in civil society, and from businesses and citizens. - An agreement has been made with the Swedish Association of Local Authorities and Regions to strengthen collaboration around eGovernment and open government. The agreement includes a commitment by the Association to appoint pilot municipalities in the four targeted sectors. - Spontaneous activities in terms of labs, hackathons, tech-fests and innovation hubs emerging from Sweden's current digital transformation are being supported by e.g. Vinnova.
OGP challenge addressed by the commitment		- More effectively managing public resources.

Is it relevant to the advancement of:	Transparency	Accountability	Public participation		
	The Government has given specific assignments to digitise and open up several value chains where work is needed.	With increased openness, accountability in all phases of the value chain will increase.	By opening up value chains for smart co-creation, public participation is enabled for citizens, businesses and organisations.		
Verifiable and measurable milestones to fulfil the commitment		**New or ongoing commitment**	**Start date**	**End date**	
1. First reports from pilot agencies		New	2016	August 2016	
2. Final reports from pilot agencies, assessing how the field has developed during the period.		New	2016	2018	
3. The council for the digital transformation of the public sector meets four times a year to report to the Government on current developments and strategic advice.		New	2015	2018	
4. The council holds an 'open council' once a year. The first will be held in conjunction with Digigov, a forum for change leaders, on 29–30 November (Digigov.se).		New	2016	2018	

Commitment 2. **Re-use of public administration documents and open data**				
Lead ministry/agency		Ministry of Finance		
Other actors involved	Government agencies	National Archives, Vinnova and the Swedish mapping, cadastral and land registration authority.		
	CSO, private sector	Individuals, businesses and companies.		
Status quo or problem/issue to be addressed		Essentially, government agencies and municipalities need to take measures regarding the re-use of public administration documents. The National Archives will support government agencies in their work.		
Main objectives		It should be easy to access and re-use public information. Open data in particular can contribute to solutions to tomorrow's social challenges. Ultimately, this can lead to entrepreneurs and businesses finding innovative solutions that create new jobs. Increased re-use of government data means greater openness and transparency. It also enhances conditions for developing better or new services for the benefit of individuals, businesses and government itself. This can also lead to new industries and businesses, resulting in increased employment.		
Main activities		- Continue to facilitate actions to promote agencies' re-use of public administration documents at different levels - Improve comprehensive follow-up and monitoring, including continuing to systematically require agencies to report on their efforts in relation to the re-use of public documents and data.		
OGP challenge addressed by the commitment		- More effectively managing public resources. - Increasing corporate accountability.		
Is it relevant to the advancement of:		**Transparency**	**Accountability**	**Public participation**
		Easy access is key to increased transparency.	Accessibility contributes to increased monitoring, which in turn helps enhance accountability.	Public participation depends on civil society's ability to access and re-use public information.
Verifiable and measurable milestones to fulfil the commitment		**New or ongoing commitment**	**Start date**	**End date**
1. Systematic reports of agencies work on publishing data and public documents.		Ongoing	2015	2019
2. Participation in the European Commission's work on DCAT-AP.		Ongoing	2015	2018
3. Evaluation of the re-use of data and public documents by the Agency for Public Management.		Ongoing	2015	2018
4. National Archives to facilitate agencies involved in publishing data and public documents.		Ongoing	2016	2019

Commitment 3. **Improved opportunities for dialogue and transparency in aid management and implementation**		
Lead ministry/agency		Ministry for Foreign Affairs
Other actors involved	**Government agencies**	The Government Offices, including missions abroad and relevant authorities that have an overarching responsibility for state-financed Swedish development cooperation.
	CSOs, private sector	National civil society organisations.
Status quo or problem/issue to be addressed		The challenge is to effectively increase engagement in development issues and strengthen the results of Swedish development cooperation and its contribution to sustainable global development.
Main objectives		To create an inclusive dialogue between the Government and the civil society organisations and make use of the role and added value of civil society organisations to achieve the overall development objectives.

Main activities		- Promote **independence and autonomy** by working towards a favourable environment for civil society organisations, safeguarding their autonomy to carry out their own activities and promoting their role as collective voices and opinion makers.
		- Maintain a good **dialogue** by informing and consulting civil society at an early stage on upcoming strategies, key decisions or changes in Swedish development cooperation.
		- **Promote quality** in development cooperation by conducting continual evaluations and research on development cooperation, spread knowledge and work for increased aid and development efficiency, and work for increased aid and development effectiveness in accordance with the declarations made in Paris, Accra and Busan.
		- Promote a **long-term approach** and sustainability in development cooperation by ensuring clear and long-term conditions for civil society organisations to pursue their activities.
		- Take action to increase **openness and transparency** in development cooperation by:
		  • working in these areas at bilateral, EU and multilateral level,
		  • where relevant, giving civil society organisations access to contacts, information and knowledge in the area of development cooperation,
		  • strengthening a free and open exchange of views on development cooperation,
		  • combating corruption within the framework of handling Swedish aid funds and setting requirements for and supporting cooperation partners' effort to combat corruption, and
		  • promoting openness in relationships and the dialogue between the Government and civil society organisations.
		- Apply a **diversity** principle by promoting a variety of civil society organisations and showing new civil society actors openness and development cooperation methods.
		- Further develop **procedures for managing reports of suspected corruption** and other complaints that impact Swedish aid funds.

OGP challenge addressed by the commitment	- More effectively managing public resources. - Increasing corporate accountability		
Is it relevant to the advancement of:	**Transparency**	**Accountability**	**Public participation**
	Openness and a free exchange of views promote transparency.	Quality and a long-term approach drive increased accountability in aid management.	A fruitful dialogue is a prerequisite for engagement and public participation.
Verifiable and measurable milestones to fulfil the commitment	**New or ongoing commitment**	**Start date**	**End date**
1. Promote the role of civil society organisations as collective voices and opinion makers, in Sweden and internationally.	Ongoing	2015	
2. Work to create a favourable environment for civil society organisations to operate in Sweden and internationally.	Ongoing	2015	
3. Create space for civil society to hold a dialogue and develop information exchange on various policy issues.	Ongoing	2015	
4. Consult civil society ahead of overarching and key decisions on Swedish aid policy.	Ongoing	2015	2016

Commitment 4. Developing a new format for dialogue with CSOs		
Lead ministry/agency	Ministry of Culture	
Other actors involved	Government agencies	The Government Offices, municipalities, SALAR, relevant government agencies.
	CSO, private sector	National civil society organisations.
Status quo or problem/issue to be addressed	The challenge is to capture valuable knowledge from CSOs in both an effective and inclusive way.	
Main objectives	To deepen knowledge in the Government before and during a decision-making process.	
Main activities	- Meet with CSOs and other relevant actors such as agencies, SALAR and municipalities. - Document meetings. - Carefully evaluate and follow up.	
OGP challenge addressed by the commitment	- The need to include civic participation commitments. One important step is to enhance public participation by allowing early and deeper involvement of citizens and civil society.	

Is it relevant to the advancement of:	Transparency	Accountability	Public participation
	Openness and a free exchange of views promote transparency.	Accessibility contributes to increased monitoring, which in turn creates better conditions for improved accountability.	A fruitful dialogue is a prerequisite for engagement and public participation.

Verifiable and measurable milestones to fulfil the commitment	New or ongoing commitment	Start date	End date
1. In September 2016, an evaluation will be made of 5–10 pilot projects at the Government Offices. A hearing with CSOs is planned for early October 2016.	Ongoing	2016	2016
2. Follow-up on the new improved format of dialogue and exchange with CSOs.	Ongoing	2016	