



Integrated Country Strategy

SWEDEN

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Table of Contents

1. Chief of Mission Priorities	1
2. Mission Strategic Framework	3
3. Mission Goals and Objectives	5
4. Management Objectives	14

Approved: March 30, 2022

Reviewed and Updated: March 6, 2023

1. Chief of Mission Priorities

The United States and Sweden enjoy a close and deepening relationship, built upon a strong security partnership, robust and growing economic ties, and a shared commitment to democracy, human rights, and the rule of law. Mission Sweden's strategic priorities aim to address today's most pressing challenges, including combatting climate change and pandemic resilience. Sweden's early 2023 EU presidency, as well as its leadership role in other multilateral bodies, provides a platform from which to advance our shared values-based priorities.

Mission Sweden's first strategic goal is to deepen our security relationship to ensure we can defend our shared democratic values and systems. This goal encompasses pursuing greater interoperability between Swedish, U.S., and NATO forces, collaborating to promote democracy and respect for human rights, increasing both countries' capacity to counter violent extremism and disinformation, and improving the Swedish public's understanding of U.S. policies.

Sweden is a dynamic bilateral security and NATO Enhanced Opportunities Partner that makes significant contributions on the international stage. As tensions rise in the region, this mission will seek to foster NATO interoperability and a closer bilateral partnership through joint exercises, training, and increased procurement of U.S. and NATO compatible weapon systems.

The United States and Sweden share many of our core values, and this Mission will seek to leverage these similarities to further our shared goals of promoting democracy and human rights, including respect for the rights of LGBTQI+ people and marginalized communities. This Mission will also work with Swedish counterparts to face the common challenges of violent extremism, disinformation, and malign influence that threaten our open and inclusive world view. Finally, we will foster a better understanding of the United States to help secure strong public support for our continued close cooperation.

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Reviewed and Updated: March 6, 2023

Mission Sweden's second strategic goal is to promote free, fair, and sustainable trade while countering unfair trade practices and meeting and advancing climate goals. Increased U.S. exports to Sweden and greater Swedish foreign direct investment (FDI) in the United States create American jobs and contribute to prosperity in the United States. Sweden is the fifteenth largest source of FDI in the United States, directly employing nearly a quarter of a million people across all 50 states. Sweden also imports an estimated \$4.7 billion from the United States in goods. We will work with Sweden to counter other countries' unfair trade practices that undermine the international economic order on which our mutual prosperity relies. It is critical that economic growth not come at the expense of the environment, and we will also cooperate with Sweden, as a world leader in green technology, to build a green economy that not only meets U.S. climate change goals but in so doing creates new jobs and prosperity. We will also work with Sweden to ensure pandemic preparedness and resilience as well as inclusive and sustainable development in the Arctic are part of the green economy.

The Mission's highest priority is protecting U.S. citizens, and Mission Sweden's third strategic goal is to protect their lives and interests overseas. We will ensure U.S. citizens receive effective assistance in crises and timely consular services. We will also facilitate legitimate travel to the United States that promotes trade and people-to-people ties while protecting our security.

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Reviewed and Updated: March 6, 2023

2. Mission Strategic Framework

Mission Goal 1: Sweden plays an integral and indispensable role in European and near-region security while more vocally promoting human rights and democratic values around the world.

- **Mission Objective 1.1:** Sweden finalizes its membership in NATO, achieves two percent of GDP spending on defense by 2026, fully integrates into NATO planning structures, and increases procurement of U.S. and NATO compatible weapon systems in order to become a more active, effective, and interoperable NATO member and bilateral security partner.
- **Mission Objective 1.2:** Sweden cooperates with the United States bilaterally and in multilateral institutions to promote democracy, human rights, and inclusion of minority and marginalized groups globally.
- **Mission Objective 1.3:** Sweden increases its capacity to counter and resist violent extremism, disinformation, and malign influence.
- **Mission Objective 1.4:** The Swedish public better understands U.S. policies and supports Sweden's increased contributions towards these objectives.

Mission Goal 2: Sweden supports U.S. efforts to promote a free, fair, and sustainable economic relationship with Europe, counter unfair trade practices, meet climate goals, and improve population health preparedness and pandemic resilience.

- **Mission Objective 2.1:** Sweden permits free, fair, and reciprocal access for increased U.S. exports and increases its FDI in the United States to create American jobs and contribute to prosperity in the United States.

Approved: March 30, 2022

Reviewed and Updated: March 6, 2023

- **Mission Objective 2.2:** Sweden fully implements a comprehensive investment screening law that adequately protects national security interests, while still promoting free trade.
- **Mission Objective 2.3:** Sweden raises and delivers upon its climate ambition and helps other countries meet their climate goals.
- **Mission Objective 2.4:** Sweden contributes to the global pandemic recovery and prevention of future pandemics.
- **Mission Objective 2.5:** Sweden cooperates with the United States to promote sustainable and inclusive development in the Arctic, while addressing environmental, human rights, and security challenges.

Mission Goal 3: Mission Sweden protects the lives and interests of U.S. citizens overseas and strengthens U.S. border security, while facilitating legitimate travel to promote economic ties and mutual understanding.

- **Mission Objective 3.1:** The Mission assists U.S. citizens during emergent crises and facilitates legitimate and secure travel between the United States and Sweden with the help of its network in the aviation, tourism, health, security, immigration, and judicial sectors.

Management Objective 1: Develop and implement an Embassy strategy for advancing diversity, equity, and inclusion to foster a maximally effective workforce.

Management Objective 2: Mission Sweden identifies a suitable location for a New Embassy Compound.

Management Objective 3: Mission Sweden reduces or offsets the Embassy's carbon footprint despite headcount increase.

Approved: March 30, 2022

Reviewed and Updated: March 6, 2023

3. Mission Goals and Objectives

Mission Goal 1 | Sweden plays an integral and indispensable role in European and near-region security while more vocally promoting human rights and democratic values around the world.

Description | The United States and Sweden share many core values and interests, including a desire for a world that is peaceful, secure, and democratic. This Mission Goal aims to facilitate Sweden's accession to NATO, which will bolster Transatlantic and regional security. Bilaterally, the United States will encourage Sweden to use its reputable voice against strategic adversaries to defend and promote human rights and democratic values worldwide.

Objective 1.1 | Sweden finalizes its membership in NATO, achieves two percent of GDP spending on defense by 2026, fully integrates into NATO planning structures, and increases procurement of U.S. and NATO compatible weapon systems in order to become a more active, effective, and interoperable NATO member and bilateral security partner.

Approved: March 30, 2022

Reviewed and Updated: March 6, 2023

- **Justification** | Russia's renewed invasion of Ukraine in February 2022 prompted a complete rethink of Swedish defense and security policy, resulting in Stockholm reversing 200-plus years of military non-alignment by applying for NATO membership in May 2022. Days after Russia's renewed invasion, Sweden sent military equipment to Ukraine, making it the first time since 1939 that Sweden provided weapons to a country in conflict. That the historically anti-NATO Social Democratic Party, which led the government at the time, made these decisions underscored the seismic shifts in Swedish policy. The current center-right led government, which long espoused NATO membership, has pledged to reach two percent of GDP spending on defense by 2026, which would nearly double current defense spending. Government and military leaders have publicly vowed Sweden would be a net defense contributor to NATO, once its application was fully ratified and approved. We will enhance our productive political-military and defense cooperation through increased Swedish participation in joint exercises, military-military exchanges, joint training opportunities, and Distinguished Visitor programs. As a prospective NATO member, Sweden's interoperability with the Alliance will be crucial to its regional and global effectiveness. We will support increasing the Swedish Armed Forces' interoperability with U.S., EU, and NATO forces by informing Swedish political and military decision-makers of opportunities for enhanced cooperation, collaboration, and fully integrated military planning. We will support Sweden's focus on homeland defense and regional stability while advancing interoperability and assisting its continued development and utilization of expeditionary capability so Sweden can be a defense capability contributor in security activities in the Baltic Sea region and shared areas of global concern.
- **Linkages** | JSP Goal 1, 1.4; EUR JRS Goal 1, Objective 1; EUR JRS Goal 1, Objective 1; National Security Strategy, Part II.
- **Risks** | The United States and NATO would miss out on the benefit Sweden could contribute to the Alliance and security in Northern Europe if this objective was not achieved, making it easier for Russia to threaten U.S. Allies and partners in the region.

Approved: March 30, 2022

Reviewed and Updated: March 6, 2023

Objective 1.2 | Sweden cooperates with the United States bilaterally and in multilateral institutions to promote democracy, human rights, and inclusion of minority and marginalized groups globally.

- **Justification** | Sweden is a like-minded partner on promoting democracy and human rights, including reproductive rights and respect for the human rights of LGBTQI+ people. Recent years have seen democratic backsliding in many countries, including in Europe, while human rights abuses have become more common and more flagrant around the world, especially in China. This objective seeks to enhance cooperation with Sweden to combat these negative trends and leverage our shared values to promote democracy and human rights.
- **Linkages** | JSP Goal 1, 1.3 and 1.4; EUR JRS Goal 1, Objective 3; EUR JRS Goal 2, Objective 1, 2, and 4.
- **Risks** | The United States would miss out on the benefit Sweden could contribute to promoting democracy, human rights, and inclusion if this objective was not achieved.

Objective 1.3 | Sweden increases its capacity to counter and resist violent extremism, disinformation, and malign influence.

- **Justification** | Sweden faces threats of violent extremism from racially and ethnically motivated violent extremist (REMVE) groups and from violent Islamists, including returning Foreign Terrorist Fighters. The government has ramped up efforts to combat radicalization and has been actively engaged on issues related to violent extremism within the EU.

Information-sharing and identity-management protocols and practices of foreign governments are important tools for helping the U.S. government screen and vet foreign nationals. Mission Sweden will continue to work closely with Sweden to ensure their compliance with legally mandated information-sharing and identity-management criteria.

Approved: March 30, 2022

Reviewed and Updated: March 6, 2023

- **Linkages** | JSP Goal 1, 1.2; EUR JRS Goal 2, Objective 3, EUR JRS, Goal 4, Objective 3.
- **Risks** | Due to transnational linkages among violent extremist groups, the failure to effectively counter such groups in Sweden could increase the risk that such groups would be able to carry out attacks in the United States.

Objective 1.4 | The Swedish public better understands U.S. policies and supports Sweden's increased contributions towards these objectives.

- **Justification** | The United States' close cooperation with Sweden is built upon a foundation of public support for close bilateral relations and cannot flourish without public support. Recent Pew and other opinion research show that Swedish impressions of the United States government deteriorated over the past several years (largely due to domestic developments in the United States). This objective seeks to improve public understanding of U.S. policies and build support for Sweden's cooperation with the United States in reaching our shared goals.
- **Linkages** | JSP Goal 3, 3.3; EUR JRS Goal 1, Objective 2.
- **Risks** | If public support wanes, the space for Swedish counterparts to cooperate with us narrows. This also affects support for and interest in Embassy programs, Swedish tourism to the United States, as well as for the applications we receive for our major exchange programs.

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Reviewed and Updated: March 6, 2023

Mission Goal 2 | Sweden supports U.S. efforts to promote a free, fair, and sustainable economic relationship with Europe, counter unfair trade practices, meet climate goals, and improve population health preparedness and pandemic resilience.

Description | This Mission Goal seeks to ensure that the economic relationship between the United States and Europe develops in a way that is free, fair, sustainable, and mutually prosperous. This Mission Goal also seeks to ensure trade and the resulting economic growth supports climate goals rather than threatening the environment, so it aims for an ambitious green economy that is resilient to unfair trade practices.

Objective 2.1 | Sweden permits free, fair, and reciprocal access for increased U.S. exports and increases its FDI in the United States to create American jobs and contribute to prosperity in the United States.

- **Justification** | Sweden is a champion for free trade and is a staunch ally with liberalized trade policies in multilateral trade fora, including in the EU where some members promote trade protectionist policies that will unfairly benefit EU companies and destabilize trade relations with the United States. Deepening cooperation with Sweden will strengthen its voice in the EU and elevate the U.S. business community as a partner of choice.
- **Linkages** | JSP Goal 2, 2.1 and 2.3; JSP Goal 3, 3.3; EUR JRS Goal 3, Objective 1, 2, and 3.
- **Risks** | Trade barriers could result in loss of exports to Sweden, affecting U.S. jobs and prosperity. Additionally, increased U.S.-EU trade tensions could cause a wedge between historically like-minded economic allies and provide room for Russia and China to strengthen their trade portfolios.

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Objective 2.2 | Sweden fully implements a comprehensive investment screening law that adequately protects national security interests, while still promoting free trade.

- **Justification** | Comprehensive screening legislation is needed to protect Sweden's national interest against malign foreign investments. Such legislation will give the Swedish government the ability to prevent foreign actors from acquiring strategic assets and technologies.
- **Linkages** | EUR JRS Goal 3, Objective 2.
- **Risks** | Sweden's key industries risk being purchased and controlled by outside actors that seek to exert political pressure through investments.

Objective 2.3 | Sweden raises its climate ambition and helps other countries meet their climate goals.

- **Justification** | U.S. climate policy following the Glasgow COP26 conference is heavily focused on twin objectives: (1) reducing emissions quickly enough to keep a 1.5-degree C limit on global warming within reach; and (2) substantially scaling up progress on adapting to the impacts of climate change. Sweden is a world leader on fighting climate change and has much to offer politically, financially, and technologically to help countries around the world reach their climate goals.
- **Linkages** | EUR JRS Goal 4, Objective 1.
- **Risks** | Without greater climate ambition, the world risks missing the target 1.5 degree C limit and preventing the permanent impacts of climate change.

Objective 2.4 | Sweden contributes to the global pandemic recovery and prevention of future pandemics and similar population health threats.

- **Justification** | Sweden leads the world as the largest single donor per capita for COVID-19 financing and is situated to encourage other countries to increase measures for pandemic preparedness.
- **Linkages** | JRS Goal 3, 3.4; EUR JRS Goal 4, Objective 2.

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- **Risks** | Low vaccination rates around the world will prolong the economic cost of the pandemic, result in tremendous loss of life, and encourage the emergence of further variants.

Objective 2.5 | Sweden cooperates with the United States to promote sustainable and inclusive development in the Arctic, while addressing environmental, human rights, and security challenges.

- **Justification** | Sweden and the United States share similar views on the importance of protecting the Arctic environment and facilitating research cooperation there. Sweden is pursuing economic development in the Arctic while protecting the environment. Sweden shares the United States' concerns about Russia's increasing military presence in the Arctic and has noted China's increased interest in the region. This objective seeks to further our cooperation in addressing these challenges.
- **Linkages** | EUR JRS Goal 4, Objective 3.
- **Risks** | It would be more challenging for the United States to achieve its goals in the Arctic without Sweden's support.

Mission Goal 3 | Mission Sweden protects the lives and interests of U.S. citizens overseas and strengthens U.S. border security, while facilitating legitimate travel to promote economic ties and mutual understanding.

Description | Serving U.S. citizens overseas is the Mission's highest priority, and this Mission Goal seeks to ensure that their lives and interests are protected. The Mission also facilitates legitimate travel to the United States to promote economic ties and mutual understanding while protecting our security.

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Objective 3.1 | The Mission assists U.S. citizens during emergent crises and facilitates legitimate and secure travel between the United States and Sweden with the help of its network in the aviation, tourism, health, security, immigration, and judicial sectors.

- **Justification** | The protection and support of U.S. citizen interests remains the top priority for Missions overseas. An estimated 60,000 U.S. citizens are resident in Sweden, with large concentrations in major urban centers including Stockholm, Gothenburg, and Malmo, and smaller populations spread throughout the country, including in the far north. Prior to the start of the global pandemic in March 2020, the numbers of Americans traveling to Sweden for tourism and business had steadily increased. These visitors included a large volume of cruise ship traffic and those engaged in chasing the Northern Lights and other outdoor activities. Swedish COVID-related entry restrictions prevented many non-resident Americans from visiting the country until late 2021.

In the coming years, and as vaccines continue to make positive inroads in the global pandemic and entry restrictions loosen, we expect to see a renewed demand for both routine and emergency services from the American Citizen Services (ACS) unit as more American tourists and businesspeople return to Sweden. The ACS unit primarily provides these services from the Embassy in Stockholm and via trips to Gothenburg, Malmo, and other significant cities across Sweden. However, the drastic worldwide reduction in funds for consular operations is expected to last through 2023, and funding for nonemergency travel is no longer available. Sweden is on track to become the first “cashless” society in the world by 2023 and U.S. government payment platforms for services are not yet in place to manage this transition smoothly. U.S. citizens living outside of Stockholm are now able to pay for passport renewal online, but opportunities for other online payments are limited. The consular section leverages online platforms, social media, and routine and emergency messaging to keep U.S. citizens informed and to help them access local regulations and assistance.

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Processing visas as efficiently as possible, without compromising our national security, is critical to maintaining a competitive and secure travel and tourism industry in the United States. Due to the global visa processing suspension in March of 2020 and COVID-19-related processing challenges, the consular section has worked steadily to reduce wait times for immigrant and nonimmigrant visa appointments. Returning to routine processing, within expected wait time frameworks, is a top issue for the coming years.

- **Linkages** | JSP Goal 1, 1.5.
- **Risks** | The Mission could be unprepared to respond to a crisis if it did not build and maintain a strong network of contacts across a range of relevant sectors.

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4. Management Objectives

Management Objective 1 | Develop and implement an Embassy strategy for advancing diversity, equity, and inclusion to foster a maximally effective workforce.

- **Justification** | Embassy Stockholm is committed to a diverse and inclusive workforce that fully represents and supports many different cultures, backgrounds, and perspectives. We recall the Foreign Service Act of 1980's mandate that the Department of State should ensure that it is "representative of the American people;" note the General Accountability Office's findings in its 2020 report that though the Department's workforce has grown more diverse, racial or ethnic minorities are still underrepresented, particularly in the senior ranks; recognize the ongoing impact of the Department's historical legacy of discrimination against racial and ethnic minorities, women, and LGBTI individuals on recruiting and retaining a truly diverse workforce; and affirm that increasing the proportion of historically underrepresented groups in the Department's workforce would strengthen U.S. foreign policy creation and implementation. Mission Sweden strongly believes in implementing a strategy for advancing diversity, equity, and inclusion at post.
- **Linkages** | JRS Goal 4, 4.3; EUR JRS Management Goal Objective 1.
- **Risks** | The Embassy could have a less effective workforce if it failed to achieve this objective.

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Management Objective 2 | Mission Sweden identifies a suitable location for a New Embassy Compound.

- **Justification |** There is a current, approved waiver from the Bureau of Diplomatic Security for the Chancery being located within the minimal required set-back distance. Staff members and all visitors enter the compound through a single compound access control point. If Mission Sweden continues to grow in importance and size, space utilization in the Chancery soon will surpass 100 percent. Mission Sweden believes strongly that a New Embassy Compound is needed. This objective links to Goal 4 of the Joint Strategic Plan 2018-2022 to provide modern and secure infrastructure and operational capabilities to support effective diplomacy and development and strengthen the security and safety of workforce and physical assets.
- **Linkages |** EUR JRS Goal 4, Objective 1.
- **Risks |** The real estate market provides a limited ability to locate a suitable property that meets our collective needs and adheres to security requirements.

Management Objective 3 | Mission Sweden reduces or offsets the Embassy's carbon footprint.

- **Justification |** Embassy Stockholm should seize the opportunity to re-establish the United States as a strong defender of the environment by reducing its carbon footprint.
- **Linkages |** EUR JRS Goal 4, Objective 1.
- **Risks |** Mission Sweden could set a poor example of environmental stewardship if it failed to achieve this objective.

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