

Subject: Statement on Sida's financial and policy efforts to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic to "build back better".

Sida, and Sweden, is committed to [*protecting Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights \(SRHR\) and promoting gender-responsiveness in the COVID-19 crisis.*](#)

SRHR and gender transformation are at the heart of Sida's work and priorities. This focus is reflected in our contributions, and has been emphasized in dialogue as well as in the reprogramming or added funding to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic, whether specifically focusing on SRHR or integrated into other sectors.

During the pandemic, Sida's principle to provide core support to our partners enabled flexible funding allowing for a simplified, effective and agile process to reallocate and reprogram funds accordingly and as needed. The trust we placed in our partners to identify the most pressing needs and contextualized approaches have been key to respond to this pandemic, and the unprecedented challenges it has put on communities, countries, regions and the world.

Overall, a total of 359 out of around 2000 contributions supported by Sida are directly responding to or mitigating the effects of the pandemic (www.openaid.se). The vast majority of these (278) have been reprogrammed to cater to the needs that have surfaced because of the pandemic, and 98 contributions have been added as a direct response either as a new contribution or additional funds to an existing contribution, adding up to 1.4 billion SEK (~138 MEUR) in additional funds. The support has spanned across sectors, and has been a mix between development and humanitarian contributions. Health has received majority of new or additional funds (~26.7 MEUR), followed by social infrastructure (~23 MEUR), and thirdly Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights specific contributions (~17.2 MEUR). The additional funds have primarily been channeled through multilateral organizations because of their country presence, skills and capacity to deliver quickly.

To give a more specific example, at the level of the Swedish Global Strategy on Social Sustainable Development (2018-2022), nine contributions have contributed to the COVID-19 response and mitigation measures, six of which are addressing the pandemic directly, and two of which are new contributions. The majority of contributions related to health under this strategy focuses on SRHR and health system strengthening, both crucial to ensure maintained services for all, and in particular SRHR services such as access to maternity care, contraception and safe abortion care during and after the pandemic. Based on the needs of partners, Sida enabled fund disbursement earlier than initially planned, and flexible programming where relevant. One core contributions, received added funds with a soft-earmarking toward the COVID-19 response for the duration of one year.

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