Bilateral Agreements

The majority of schools, universities, university colleges and other organisers of education have their own bilateral co-operation agreements with institutions in other countries, and municipalities often have town-twinning programmes.

The Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida), has bilateral agreements for development support with around 34 partner countries in the developing world. The agency also has agreements with a number of non-governmental organisations. Promotion of basic education is a central objective in many of these agreements as well as in the agreements between Sida and international organisations. Sida funds the following programmes to support international collaboration in education:

- **Atlas** - gives preschools, schools and adult education organisations the possibility to apply for grants for educational exchanges all over the world.
- **Athena** - gives pupils, teachers, school management and other teaching staff within upper secondary vocational education and training the opportunity to exchanges with developing countries.
- **Linnaeus-Palme** - offers collaboration between higher education institutions.
- **Minor Field Studies** - an opportunity to do field work linked to a higher education degree project.
- **The Global School** - provides professional development for teachers in all sectors of Swedish formal education, from preschool to higher education, in Education for Sustainable Development/Global Education.

These programmes are administered by the Swedish Council for Higher Education (Universitets- och högskolerådet).

There are also bilateral mobility programmes called “One year in...’ further described in (Universitets- och högskolerådet).

Cooperation and Participation in Worldwide Programmes and Organisations

A number of national initiatives have been taken to promote internationalisation at all educational levels. Cooperation is mainly carried out with Western Europe and the Nordic countries and – since the dissolution of the Soviet Union in the late 1980s – the Baltic region, especially Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania. A number of central authorities and institutions are involved in the implementation of the national policy through the administration of co-operation and mobility programmes, information activities and other initiatives.
The Swedish Council for Higher Education

The Swedish Council for Higher Education (Universitets- och högskolerådet [2]) is a central authority supporting schools, universities, companies, organisations and individuals to take part in international cooperation. Activities range from international cooperation projects in education and competence development to placements and studies abroad. The council is responsible for Swedish participation in the EU Programme Erasmus+, the Linneaus-Palme Programme, the Nordplus programme as well as for Europass, Euroguidance and Eurydice - the network for information on education in Europe.

The Swedish Council for Higher Education (Universitets- och högskolerådet [2]) also acts as Sweden's National Academic Recognition Information Centre (NARIC [3]). NARIC is a network of national centres created to improve the academic recognition of qualifications and periods of study in the Member States of the EU, and the EEA countries. In most cases, these centres are responsible for work related to the implementation of the joint Council of Europe and UNESCO Convention on the Recognition of Higher Education Qualifications in the European Region. They are then integrated into the ENIC network of the Council of Europe and UNESCO. The two networks have a common website [4]. The Swedish Council for Higher education is part of the Nordic National Recognition Information Centres (NORRIC [5]). The purpose of this network is to eliminate the barriers to the recognition of qualifications between the Nordic countries.

STINT (The Swedish Foundation for International Cooperation in Research and Higher Education)

STINT, the Swedish Foundation for International Cooperation in Research and Higher Education (STINT, Stiftelsen för internationalisering av högre utbildning [6]), was established in 1994 to support the internationalisation of Swedish research and higher education. It provides financial support for co-operation and exchange to academic institutions, post-graduate students and researchers as well as to university faculties.

The Swedish Institute

The Swedish Institute (Svenska institutet, SI [7]) is a public agency that promotes internationalisation of Swedish education by awarding individual scholarships for short or long-term study visits, for foreign students in Sweden as well as for Swedish students abroad. Another task is to disseminate general information about Sweden including Swedish education and opportunities to study in Sweden, Study in Sweden. The institute also promotes the teaching of Swedish as a foreign language at universities abroad and administers The Baltic Sea Regional Cooperation [8], which aims to stimulate long-term co-operation with the Baltic countries, Poland, Russia, Belarus and the Ukraine. This includes student and teacher exchanges or research collaboration. Higher education institutions, HEI:s can apply for funding for contact meetings/project planning in one of the countries in the program. PhD students, researchers or teachers at institutions of higher education can apply for grants for short-term visits to actively take part in a conference, for five days including travel time. A university or university college can also invite a PhD student, researcher or teacher for a study or research visit for two weeks to one month.

The Swedish South Asian Studies Network

The Swedish South Asian Studies Network [9], SASNET, was established at Lund University in 2000 and aims to stimulate and support research co-operation and student and research exchange between Sweden and South Asia, as well as the development of South Asian studies in Sweden.
The International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement

The Swedish National Agency for Education (Skolverket) is responsible for the Swedish participation in the International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement, IEA. The primary purpose of this international co-operative of research institutions and governmental agencies is to conduct large-scale comparative studies of educational achievement. Since its inception in 1958, the IEA has conducted about 30 studies, including Trends in Mathematics and Science Studies (TIMSS & TIMMS Advanced) and the Progress in International Reading Literacy Studies (PIRLS).

OECD

Sweden is one of the original members in OECD - Organisation for Economic Co-Operation and Development and takes an active part in the activities pursued by the organisation. The organisation's work in the field of education rests on 5-year mandates approved by the education Ministers of the Member States. At the heart of the work programme are analysis and activities promoting discussions on education policies as well as comparisons between Member States. In the area of research, Sweden takes part in the work of the Centre for Educational Research and Innovation Governing Board. This is where the member states discuss and compare priorities in the area of the research. Studies have been initiated – for example on the research and innovation systems in different countries – in which Sweden and other countries have been studied in attempt to understand how research and development affect growth and employment.

Within OECD the project the Swedish National Agency for Education (Skolverket) and Statistics Sweden (Statistiska centralbyrån) are the agencies responsible for reporting statistics on education to UNESCO, OECD and Eurostat.

The Council of Europe and UNESCO

For Sweden the Council of Europe is an important European co-operation forum. Together with UNESCO - (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization), the Council of Europe has drawn up the so-called Lisbon Convention on recognition of diplomas in higher education in Europe. The Convention, which aims to facilitate international mobility of students, was adopted in 1997 and ratified by Sweden in 2001. Member States in UNESCO have elaborated texts on various aspects of education and the organization regularly holds global conferences on educational matters. Sweden actively participates in such meetings and Swedish development aid is used for UNESCO:s work in developing countries as well as for the financing of other aspects of the programme Education for All.

Nordic Council of Ministers

Nordic Council of Ministers (Nordiska Ministerrådet) The basis for co-operation between the Nordic countries – Denmark (including the Faroe Islands and Greenland), Finland (including Åland), Iceland, Norway and Sweden – is the Helsinki Agreement signed in 1962. There is a special agreement on culture, education, and research called the Agreement on cultural co-operation. Education and research is considered to be one of the main priority areas within Nordic co-operation. In addition to this, central authorities in the Nordic countries collaborate extensively on both a formal and non-formal basis.

Nordic citizens have the right to pursue upper secondary school education in any Nordic country under the same conditions as a citizen of that country. The agreement (SKOLFS 1993:14) covers national and special programmes as well as individual programmes offered at public upper secondary schools, (gymnasieskolor) and municipal adult education (kommunal vuxenutbildning).
Each Nordic country recognises qualifications from any other Nordic country – whether for access to higher education, for periods of study or for higher education degrees – as equal to corresponding national qualifications. Nordic students may on equal terms seek admission to any Nordic university. This Nordic space for higher education is a sub-space of the European Area of Higher Education and an element in the European Bologna process. For more information see the Nordic Council of Ministers (Nordiska Ministerrådet) [16].

**Nordic Africa Institute**

Another example of Nordic cooperation is the Nordic Africa Institute [19], founded in 1962. The Institute serves as a research, documentation and information centre on Africa for the Nordic countries. The Institute also encourages research and studies on Africa in the Nordic countries and cooperation between African and Nordic researchers. Scholarships are available for study visits and research. The Institute is a Swedish government authority jointly financed by the Nordic countries.

**EU-programmes**

The biggest part of the multilateral cooperation in education takes place within the framework of the Erasmus+ programme, administered by the The Swedish Council for Higher Education (U[2]niversitets- och högskolerådet [2]). In addition, a large number of schools at all levels and tertiary education institutions take part in transnational cooperation projects. Swedish universities and university colleges also participate in the TEMPUS programme as well as other cooperation programmes within the EU framework. Detailed information on these and other EU-programmes is available on the website of the Universitets- och högskolerådet [2].

**Nordplus**

In order to strengthen Nordic educational cooperation a number of cooperation and mobility programmes have been created for different target groups (teachers, students, pupils and those active in research and development). Nordplus [20] offers financial support to a variety of educational cooperation between partners in the area of lifelong learning for the eight participating countries in the Baltic and Nordic regions. Nordplus consists of several programmes: Nordplus Junior, Nordplus Higher Education, Nordplus Adult Learning and Nordplus Horizontal. The programmes supports mobility projects and network activities. In addition to the Nordplus programmes, Nordplus also comprises Nordplus Nordic Languages and Culture and a programme for cooperation between countries in the Nordic and Baltic regions and Russia.

**The Baltic Sea Project**

A large number of Swedish schools are active in the Baltic Sea Project [21] – an international network among schools for a better environment in the Baltic area. Established in 1989, the BSP was the first regional project within UNESCO Associated Schools Project to combine environmental education on a specific environmental issue, the Baltic Sea with intercultural learning. The various sub-programmes, such as Water Quality in the Baltic Sea, Rivers and Coastal watch are coordinated by coordinators from the network countries.

**Baltic 21**

Initiated by the Prime Ministers of the Baltic Sea countries in 1996, Baltic 21 is a regional expression of the global Agenda 21 adopted by the United Nations "Earth Summit." Being an open and transparent network for cooperation, Baltic 21 links together a wide range of stakeholders in a common endeavor for regional sustainable development. Members are various government ministries
and agencies from the 11 Baltic Sea states, the European Commission, numerous intergovernmental and non-governmental organisations, academic and financial institutions, as well as local, city and business networks. As of January 2010 Baltic 21 is integrated into the Council of the Baltic Sea States (CBSS) as an Expert Group on Sustainable Development - Baltic 21. The 4 strategic areas of cooperation during the years 2010 to 2015 are climate change, sustainable consumption and production, sustainable urban and rural development, innovations and education for sustainable development.

In June 2016, the CBSS updated the plan in accordance with UN's Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The CBSS Expert Group on Sustainable Development created the Baltic 2030 Action Plan, specifically tailored for the BSR to guide macro-regional stakeholders through the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

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