



Questionnaire re. Business and Human Rights – Swedish response

1. The aim of Sweden's gender equality policy is for women and men to have the same power to shape society and their own lives. With this as its starting point, the Government is working towards six sub-goals:

1. Equal division of power and influence. Women and men must have the same rights and opportunities to be active citizens and to shape the conditions for decision-making.
2. Economic equality. Women and men must have the same opportunities and conditions with regard to paid work which gives economic independence throughout life.
3. Equal education. Women and men, girls and boys must have the same opportunities and conditions with regard to education, study options and personal development.
4. Equal distribution of unpaid housework and provision of care. Women and men must have the same responsibility for housework and have the opportunity to give and receive care on equal terms.
5. Equal health. Women and men, girls and boys must have the same conditions for a good health and be offered care on equal terms.
6. Men's violence against women must stop. Women and men, girls and boys, must have the same right to and opportunity for physical integrity.

Women and men run companies in all business sectors, but to a different extent. Service-providing companies are the most common type of companies for both women and men. Fewer women than men run companies in the construction and manufacturing sectors/industries because many young people still make traditional career and education choices. Since most people run companies based on their occupational skills, enterprise is equally as gender-segregated as the labour market overall. Moreover, women often work in occupations where the possibilities and conditions for running an own business are more limited.

Today, around 25 percent of the entrepreneurs in Sweden are women, and 31 percent of businesses started each year are started by women. That means that women's entrepreneurship is underrepresented compared to all entrepreneurs in Sweden.

When looking at public finances and government resources (for example counselling and business development initiatives), it goes mainly to men and companies owned by men.

2. Gender disaggregated statistics are needed to capture similarities and differences in the situation of and conditions for women and men to run companies. Visualizing women's enterprise by compiling and disseminating facts and statistics is part of the work being done by the Swedish Agency for Economic and Regional Growth.

Another important factor is how projects are designed to reach a wide target group; what industries are involved, what size of the company etc. By factoring in knowledge of how men and women run their businesses, projects can be modelled to include different types of businesses and business-owners. It is essential to be proactive and that perspectives of equality and diversity are present already in the planning-process of the projects.

The goal is to reflect and support enterprises in Sweden with varieties in industries, gender of the owner, geographical location etc., and Swedish Agency for Economic and Regional Growth works in a structural way to achieve that goal, and has done so for a long time.

3. Under the Swedish Discrimination Act (the Act), discrimination is prohibited in principle in all sectors of society, for example in working life. The Act covers the following grounds of discrimination: sex, transgender identity or expression, ethnicity, religion or other belief, disability, sexual orientation or age. According to the Act, sexual harassment is a form of discrimination.

Employers are required to have guidelines and routines for their activities to prevent reprisals and harassment, including sexual harassment. Employers are also required to evaluate the guidelines and routines.

The Equality Ombudsman has the task to monitor compliance with the Discrimination Act and to combat discrimination and promote equal rights and opportunities for all. The Ombudsman offers support and tools for employers on its website (do.se) regarding, among others, sexual harassment.

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During the year (2017) the investment management organisation carried out two surveys at portfolio level. The first was a geographical review showing that state-owned enterprises are represented and create jobs all over the country to a greater extent than private companies. The other survey showed that there is a high level of activity in the portfolio regarding the enterprises' activities aimed at new arrivals in Sweden and other people who are very detached from the labour market. Since the enterprises are working actively for gender equality and inclusiveness for all, this will not only benefit their own operations but will also generate positive effects in all areas of society.

Sustainable business is essential to enable state-owned enterprises to continue to be successful and create value over time. This is why the Government has made clear its expectations of the work done by these enterprises on the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Paris Agreement. As of 2017 we will track the work of the enterprises on the Sustainable Development Goals, or Global Goals, and intensive efforts were also made during the year to raise the enterprises' knowledge of the Global Goals. Digitalisation continued to be a focus area during the year. The ambition of the Government is for Sweden to be among the leading countries in digitalisation, innovation, and research and development.

Measures to increase knowledge - The UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights is a corner stone in the field of sustainable business. In 2015, Sweden presented its National Action Plan for Business and Human Rights. To increase knowledge about the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights and to facilitate knowledge transfer between companies the investment organization held a number of workshops in 2015–2017 along with the state-owned enterprises on various themes including impact analysis as well as human rights and the rights of the child.. Human rights have also been given higher priority in the owner's tracking of the work of the companies, including through the sustainability analyses carried out by the investment organization and in connection with owner dialogues.

Tracking and the way ahead - In spring 2017 the investment organization carried out a study of how well state-owned enterprises communicate their work on human rights. This analysis has been presented to the state-owned enterprises and is being used to enable both the investment organization and the companies to continue to strengthen their work on human rights in line with the UN Guiding Principles. One result is that, working along with human rights specialists, the investment organization has developed a guide for boards of state-owned enterprises about the expectations on the work of these companies in the area of human rights and the role and responsibility of the board. Our work for increasing knowledge about human rights and strengthening the work of the companies in this area is continuing in 2018.

The gender distribution is as follows in the state company portfolio:
Board chairs and directors, proportion of women/ men 49/51%.
Board chairs, proportion of women/men: 48%/52%.

Gender-responsive budgeting – the application of gender mainstreaming in the budget process – is an indispensable and strategic tool for a feminist government to realize its policy goals and objectives. It implies a gender-based assessment of budgets, incorporating a gender perspective at all levels of the budget process and restructuring revenues and expenditures in order to promote gender equality. A gender equality perspective is to be applied in the budget process so that reforms are implemented with a gender-sensitive approach. It is therefore important that budget work is conducted in a way that includes the effects and consequences for gender equality when decisions are made on the direction and distribution of resources. This requires improved gender equality impact analysis and systematic use of data and statistics disaggregated by gender.

This work should strengthen long-term development of gender-responsive budget work, for example through:

- improved mechanisms for internal management and control (such as a formalized requirement in the budget circular that policy proposals and reforms presented in the Budget Bill must be based on gender-equality impact analyses);

- training for ‘know-how’ and to improve methodology, and the use of new analytical tools;
- a strengthened process for support and coordination; and improved gender-equality impact analyses, and the use of statistics disaggregated by sex.

The Swedish Government is trying to meet this challenge through measures such as a development programme to strengthen gender mainstreaming in government agencies. The aim is to further develop gender mainstreaming in government agencies so that the activities and services provided by participating government agencies contribute to achieving gender equality policy goals. The programme comprises 59 government agencies and one organization, including agencies in the cultural, judiciary and health care sectors. These agencies are to integrate a gender equality perspective in their activities, based on a tailor-made action plan developed by the respective agency. Reports from the participating agencies show that they have identified both critical challenges as well as positive results as regards their contribution to the achievement of the national gender equality policy objectives. As a result, The Swedish Agency for Economic and Regional Growth (a government agency under the Ministry of Enterprise and Innovation) has doubled the financial resources allocated to women who run businesses (13 percent in 2017 compared to 7 percent in 2015).

In addition, the Government recently expanded the programme to include more than 30 universities and university colleges. Universities and university colleges are to develop their work on gender mainstreaming in the period 2016–2019. While more women than men attend and graduate from higher education in Sweden, only 26 per cent of professors are women, and men have greater access to resources and funding for research. The goal of the Swedish government is that by 2030, half of all newly appointed professors shall be women. Further, a national group of experts for increased gender equality in higher education has been appointed.

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Goals. Digitalisation continued to be a focus area during the year. The ambition of the Government is for Sweden to be among the leading countries in digitalisation, innovation, and research and development.

6. Sustainable business including human rights is a prioritized and integrated part of corporate governance. As part of this work and to fulfil its responsibility as a business owner, the Government has, in recent years, strengthened the focus on human rights in the governance of state-owned enterprises, mainly through clearer requirements in the state ownership policy, skill-enhancing measures and greater tracking of the companies' work on the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights.

The UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights is a corner stone in the field of sustainable business. Sweden presented its National Action Plan for Business and Human Rights in 2015. To further ensure the implementation of the National Action Plan, Sweden carried out a follow up of deliverables to the plan and reported on this in 2018. Sweden also established a National Contact Furthermore, the Swedish Agency for Public Management did their assessment through a base line study, in 2018, as to how well the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights had been implemented. According to the National Action Plan, Sweden covers the women issues in business-related matters. Furthermore Sweden is promoting the issues in close collaboration with our Embassies, within the framework of "*Protect, Respect and Remedy*".

The state ownership policy from 2017 states that it is particularly important that state-owned enterprises to work towards the respect for human rights. In various contexts the UN Working Group on Business and Human Rights has also highlighted Swedish corporate governance as a positive example concerning work for human rights.

Gender mainstreaming is an important strategy for reaching the gender equality objectives. The aim is to ensure that a gender equality perspective and analysis is part of all policy making. Sustainable change in decision-making processes can only be achieved through long-term strategic work on gender mainstreaming. The Swedish Government Offices uses the Council of Europe definition of gender mainstreaming, which means an incorporation of a gender equality perspective in all policy areas, at all levels and all stages, by the actors normally involved in the policy-making process.

Gender mainstreaming in government agencies (GMGA) Mainstreaming gender into ordinary work is a challenge. The policy must be coherent and implemented at all levels: governmental, regional and local.

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8. The state company portfolio contains of 47 wholly and partially owned companies, of which two are listed. The State bears a substantial responsibility to be an active and professional owner. Most companies are for-profit enterprises. 23 companies have specifically adopted public policy assignments.

9. The Discrimination Act: The prohibition of discrimination, see question 3, are supplemented by rules concerning active measures. In simple terms, the active measures can be said to be targeted at the treatment of employees and others as groups, not as individual cases. Active measures are prevention and promotion measures aimed at preventing discrimination and serving in other ways to promote equal rights and opportunities. Employers are required to take active measures to prevent discrimination on all grounds covered by the Discrimination Act. The provisions on active measures entail that all employers are obligated to:

- continuously apply a four-step approach (investigate, analyse, take measures and monitor/evaluate) within the following five areas:
 - working conditions
 - provisions and practices regarding pay and other terms of employment
 - recruitment and promotion
 - education and training, and other skills development
 - possibilities to reconcile gainful employment and parenthood.
- promote gender balance in different types of work – including in management positions
- establish, follow up and evaluate guidelines and routines to prevent harassment, sexual harassment and reprisals
- carry out annual pay surveys.

Employers with at least 25 employees are required to document all elements of their work on active measures. Employers with between 10 and 24 employees are required to document their work on pay surveys. Employers with fewer than 10 employees have the same responsibility for taking active measures as larger employers, but there is no legal requirement for them to document their work in this area.

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