



Migration Governance Profile: Kingdom of Sweden

May 2018

In 2015, the International Organization for Migration (IOM) developed a [Migration Governance Framework \(MiGOF\)](#) to help countries define what “well-managed migration policy” might look like at the national level. The MiGOF was welcomed by IOM’s Member States in the same year. The Migration Governance Indicators (MGI)¹ were developed to assist countries operationalize the MiGOF by using a standard set of approximately 90 indicators that could be applied across six key policy domains.

The MGI is a tool based on policy inputs, which offers insights on policy levers that countries can use to develop their migration governance. The MGI is not intended to function as a measurement of outcomes related to migration policies and institutions. Instead, it operates as an input-based benchmarking framework that offers insights on policy measures that countries can use to strengthen migration governance. The MGI is not meant to rank countries in the assessment of the comprehensiveness of their migration policies, or to identify gaps and areas that could be strengthened. The MGI aims to assist countries while advancing the conversation on migration governance by clarifying what “well-governed migration” might look like in the context of the [Sustainable Development Goal Target 10.7](#), “Facilitate orderly, safe, regular and responsible migration and mobility of people, including through the implementation of planned and well-managed migration policies.”

This country snapshot presents a summary of well-governed areas of the Kingdom of Sweden’s (hereafter referred to as Sweden) migration governance structures, as well as the areas with potential for further development, as assessed by the MGI.

¹ The MGI initiative is a policy-benchmarking programme led by IOM and implemented with the support of the Economist Intelligence Unit. Funding is provided by IOM Member States.

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Key findings

1. Adherence to international standards and fulfilment of migrants' rights

1.1. International conventions ratified

The table below follows a standard format and looks at the ratification of specific international conventions. The list of conventions covered is by no means exhaustive.

Convention name	Ratified
International Labour Organization (ILO) Migration for Employment Convention (Revised), 1949 (No. 97)	No
United Nations Convention relating to the Status of Refugees, 1951	Yes (1951)
United Nations Convention relating to the Status of Stateless Persons, 1954	Yes (1965)
United Nations Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness, 1961	Yes (1969)
ILO Migrant Workers (Supplementary Provisions) Convention, 1975 (No. 143)	Yes (1982)
United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), 1989	Yes (1990)
United Nations International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families, 1990	No

1.2. Migration Governance: examples of well-developed areas

All children who live in Sweden have the right to attend school – including children seeking asylum (indeed this is compulsory for nine years for all children in the country). Children who do not have a residence permit or the right to stay in Sweden by constitution or legislation have the right to attend school and to begin upper secondary education before they turn 18. The Swedish Education Act states that all students are entitled to the support they need in order to achieve the objectives of the different subjects taught. The [School Ordinance](#) states that children seeking asylum should be able to attend compulsory school when this is deemed appropriate according to their personal circumstances. However, it should happen no later than one month after arrival.

All persons with a legal right to reside in Sweden and who can be expected to stay for one year or longer have the same rights as Swedish citizens. In 2013, health care rights were strengthened to grant irregular/undocumented migrants the same access to health care as regular migrants and asylum-seekers. Under Swedish law, irregular/undocumented migrants have the right to receive health-care treatments that cannot be postponed. This includes dental, maternity and contraceptive care, as well as any other health treatment deemed urgent by a medical professional. Children, regardless of status, have full access to the same level of health care as residents.

In general, non-EU migrants enjoy favourable legal access to the labour market; Swedish labour market regulation creates few distinctions between Swedish and EU/non-EU citizens. As a result, non-EU migrants who have a work permit or who are exempt from the requirement for one have equal access to employment (with some exceptions). Refugees and other beneficiaries of international protection have access to special introduction programmes aimed at facilitating their integration into the labour market. Other newly arrived migrants have access to information on the labour market through, for example, the Migration Agency, the Public Employment Service, the social partners and several multilingual websites.

Social security can be accessed outside of Sweden by migrant workers. According to the Swedish Pensions Agency, those who have lived and worked in Sweden may be entitled to a pension from the Swedish Government, even if they currently live in another country. Pensions are not conditional on Swedish citizenship. Migrants have access to their income pension, supplementary pension and premium pensions irrespective of which country they move to.

1.3. Areas with potential for further development

Sweden has not ratified the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families (ICRMW), or the ILO Migration for Employment Convention.

2. Formulates policy using evidence and whole-of-government approach

2.1. Migration Governance: examples of well-developed areas

The Ministry of Justice houses three dedicated migration divisions responsible for the formulation and tracking of migration policy: the division for Migration Law, the division for Management of Migration Affairs, and the division for Migration and Asylum Policy. The division for Management of Migration Affairs oversees the [Swedish Migration Agency](#), which is primarily tasked with implementing immigration and asylum/refugee policy.

National migration legislation in Sweden is outlined by the [Swedish Aliens Act](#) (2005:716) and the [Aliens Ordinance](#) (2006:97). The Aliens Act contains special provisions on how immigration and citizenship matters are to be dealt with by the Migration Agency and the Migration Courts. The Swedish Migration Agency makes decisions on matters concerning residence permits and Swedish nationality, and other similar matters. The Migration Courts are used as a form of appeal for decisions made by the Migration Agency. The Aliens Ordinance regulates migrants' obligations with regard to residence permits, working permits, travel documents and visas.

Sweden has a transparent set of rules relating to migration. The Swedish Migration Agency provides information on its [website](#) regarding these rules and regulations that is easy to understand. For example, the website offers a detailed explanation of the asylum application process, with clear infographics for further clarification, translated into 20 languages.

The official government statistics agency, [Statistics Sweden](#), provides annual updates on inward and outward migration. It has tracked migration data since 1875, looking at internal and international migration, asylum-seekers and foreign citizens. The Swedish Migration Agency provides monthly updates on asylum applications, decisions and work permits among other inward migration variables. It also collects annual data on the number of residence permits granted in Sweden, the number of asylum applications made, and the main countries of origin of those who have applied for asylum.

2.2. Areas with potential for further development

Currently, beyond general consular services, the Government has no targeted institutions that focus on the emigration of Swedish nationals or diaspora affairs.

3. Engages with partners to address migration and related issues

3.1. Migration Governance: examples of well-developed areas

Sweden engages with the private sector in agenda-setting and the implementation of migration-related issues. The Swedish Migration Agency website provides a list of "other actors" that it works with on migration-related issues. For example, it collaborates with private property owners and landlords to ensure that there is accommodation available for all asylum seekers. It also provides advice to private companies on how to hire migrants.

Sweden is involved in several organizations and initiatives that aim to promote international cooperation on the subject of migration. These include the Global Forum on Migration and Development (GFMD), the International Organization for Migration (IOM), the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development, the Intergovernmental Consultations on Migration, Asylum and Refugees, and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), to name a few.

Through [the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency \(Sida\)](#), the Government supports various civil society organizations in the implementation of migration-related measures. For example, Red Cross volunteers greet asylum-seekers at railway stations in Stockholm, Malmö and Gothenburg. Their main responsibilities include assisting with ailments and providing information in different languages about the process of asylum-seeking, travelling in Sweden, and tracing requests to search for family members.

4. Advances the socioeconomic well-being of migrants and society

4.1. Migration Governance: examples of well-developed areas

In 2008, Sweden's labour immigration rules shifted from being government-led to employer-led. Where foreign employment decisions had been made by the Swedish Public Employment Service, the individual employer is now able to recruit candidates regardless of nationality or qualifications, provided that the terms of employment are met. This has facilitated the hiring of foreign workers and allows a much more flexible system that can adapt to meet the labour demands of the Swedish economy.

Different agencies have their own formalized criteria for recognizing various foreign qualifications. The National Board of Health and Welfare lists 21 different categories of work, including doctors, dentists, nurses and psychologists. Similarly, the Swedish National Agency for Education provides criteria for teachers and the Swedish Bar Association provides criteria for law-related jobs.

In order to participate in a Swedish educational programme, international students must successfully apply for a residence permit. To be eligible for the permit, students must have a letter of acceptance for full-time study and a portion of the tuition fees must be paid in advance. The average time for decisions about residence permit is approximately 1–2 months.

Ethical recruitment measures are in place for foreign workers in Sweden. According to the Swedish Aliens Act, pay must be on par with that set by the Swedish collective agreements or at the customary rate of that industry or occupation. Beyond this requirement, according to the most up-to-date information from the Swedish Migration Agency (September 2017), migrants must earn at least SEK 13,000 per month before taxes (if working part-time) to be able to support themselves. In addition, the employer offering a job to a foreign worker must cover the employee's insurance relating to health, life and pension.

4.2. Areas with potential for further development

Although Sweden regularly monitors the labour market to identify needs, this is not directly linked to its migration policy. For instance, if there is a labour shortage in a specific sector, Sweden only provides foreign nationals seeking a work permit within that sector the right to apply for a residence/work permit from within Sweden (as opposed to the general rule which is to apply from outside of the country). Labour shortages do not result in a plan to attract migrants that can fill such shortages.

5. Effectively addresses the mobility dimensions of crises

5.1. Migration Governance: examples of well-developed areas

The Swedish Civil Contingencies Agency (MSB) coordinates the national and local response to crises. The Government tasked the MSB with providing assistance to international refugees during the 2015 migration crisis when more than 160,000 people arrived in Sweden requesting asylum, and it provided temporary housing units and tents. The MSB also operates the *dinsäkerhet.se* (“your security”) website, which includes checklists of what should be kept home in preparation for various crisis scenarios. The MSB.se website includes a section on disaster risk reduction at the local level, which sets out prevention measures and strategies related to potential displacement during disasters.

Since 2001 the Government of Sweden has a climate change strategy which includes construction planning. This provides suggestions for incentives to promote living in areas of reduced impact from climate change. In 2012 the MSB published a report on climate change and its implications on societal protection and preparedness. The report discusses, among other issues, the impact of climate change on certain locations and the risks associated with it, such as an increased number of natural (primarily weather-related) disasters and the need for additional planning.

In the event of emergency there are communication systems available to the population to receive information on the evolving nature of a crisis, allowing them to communicate their needs and providing details on ways to access assistance. The MSB operates a number of initiatives to provide information before, during, and after a crisis situation. It is responsible for the *krisinformation.se* (“crises information”) website which provides up-to-date developments. Sweden also has a public warning system with 4,500 sirens across the country – when these are activated citizens should follow up-to-date information via Swedish Public Radio.

The communication systems in Sweden take into consideration the specific needs of migrants, and services such as the MSB website, the Swedish Migration Agency website and Swedish Public Radio deliver information in multiple languages.

Sweden has measures in place to make exceptions to the immigration procedures for migrants whose country of origin is experiencing crisis. Situations change frequently depending on the country of origin, and the Government regularly monitors the situation. Due to the large influx of asylum seekers in 2015, Sweden introduced temporary border controls.

6. Ensures that migration takes place in a safe, orderly and regular manner

6.1. Migration Governance: examples of well-developed areas

The European Schengen Agreement allows for free movement within many European countries; however, the system controls length of stay within European borders for non-Schengen residents. Specifically, Sweden – as a member of Schengen – uses the Schengen Information System (SIS) which supports external border control and law-enforcement cooperation among the Schengen States. In addition, the Visa Information System (VIS) allows Schengen States to exchange visa data. Sweden complies with both these practices. The Swedish Migration Agency also oversees the length of stay for certain types of visa, such as tourist visas, as people seek to change their status, for instance.

The Swedish Migration Agency clearly outlines all visa options available, with its [website](#) categorizing visas by the type of migrant, such as student, job-seeker or asylum-seeker. Sweden has a formal, fully online visa application system that enables migrants to be granted a visa before arrival.

The Swedish Police Authority is responsible for assigning a National Rapporteur on trafficking in human beings at the national and EU levels. The National Rapporteur has a key role in data collection.

In September 2016 the Government decided to transfer all functions related to coordinating action against human trafficking from the County Administrative Board of Stockholm to the new Gender Equality Agency starting as of 1 January 2018. The Gender Equality Agency's tasks encompass the coordination of national action against human trafficking for all purposes of exploitation. The mandate includes, among other things, support to authorities and non-governmental organizations, the [National Task Force against Prostitution and Trafficking](#), and the regional coordinators and the Assisted Voluntary Return Program run by the IOM.

In December 2017 eight authorities were given a government mandate for the period 2018–20 to develop methods for joint control to counteract violations and crime within the area of work and employment, including human trafficking for labour exploitation. The Swedish Work Environment Authority coordinates the assignment. In December 2017 the Government also gave the Police Authority a special mandate to further strengthen and develop its strategy to combat human trafficking.

On 8 February 2018 the Government developed a National Action Plan to prevent prostitution and human trafficking for sexual and other purposes. The Action Plan focuses on preventive work, stronger protection for victims and strengthened knowledge and development of methods for professionals who work with victims of trafficking.

On 6 March 2018 the Government submitted a Bill to the Swedish parliament (*Riksdagen*) containing proposals for amendments of the Penal Code. The amendments involve clarifications of the human trafficking provision, increase the minimum penalty for all trafficking offences, and strengthen child protection in the context of human trafficking.

6.2. Areas with potential for further development

Sweden does not currently have any formal government programme or dedicated policy focusing on attracting nationals who have migrated abroad.

Key sources

European Migration Network

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