

SWEDISH NATIONAL COMMISSION FOR UNESCO

OPERATIONAL STRATEGY

2018 - 2022



United Nations
Educational, Scientific and
Cultural Organization

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Svenska Unescorådet
Swedish National
Commission for UNESCO

Operational strategy for the Swedish National Commission for UNESCO 2018-2022

Adopted on 26 September 2018 for the period 2018-2021. Revised on 5 February 2021 for the period 2018-2022.

This strategy forms the basis for the activities of the Swedish National Commission for UNESCO for the period 2018–2022.

The mission of the Swedish National Commission for UNESCO is stated in its terms of reference (2013:123). The Swedish National Commission for UNESCO shall according to the terms of reference carry out, among other things, the following functions:

- Contribute to the implementation of Sweden's strategy for cooperation with UNESCO;
- Provide the Swedish government with policy advice, information and proposals on UNESCO-related issues;
- Disseminate information on, and create interest, in UNESCO's activities;
- Handle and coordinate matters pertaining to UNESCO-related issues;
- Cooperate with relevant government agencies and organisations on UNESCO-related issues.

As shown above, the task of the Swedish National Commission for UNESCO is extensive. Meanwhile there are no guidelines for how the National Commission should prioritise within the framework of the task. Sweden's strategy for cooperation with UNESCO 2018–2021, which was adopted in 2018 (U2018/01141/AI), is limited to Sweden's cooperation with UNESCO and does not cover UNESCO-related activities in Sweden.

The operational strategy for the Swedish National Commission for UNESCO serves as a complement to the terms of reference of the Swedish National Commission for UNESCO and to the Strategy for Sweden's cooperation with UNESCO 2018–2021.

Starting points for the strategy

UNESCO is the United Nations' organisation for education, science and culture and communication. Its purpose is to contribute to peace and security by promoting collaboration among nations through education, science and culture to further universal respect for justice, the rule of law and the human rights and the fundamental freedoms which are affirmed for the peoples of the world, without distinction of race, sex, language or religion, by the Charter of the United Nations.

The activities of the Swedish National Commission for UNESCO will be guided by democratic values with an emphasis on human rights such as freedom of expression and gender equality as well as support for the multilateral system and an effective and integrated UN. The starting point for the activities of the Swedish National Commission for UNESCO is the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

The Swedish National Commission for UNESCO shall systematically integrate a gender equality perspective in all its work. Gender equality analysis must be part of the planning, implementing and monitoring of all activities.

The Swedish National Commission for UNESCO plays an important role in supporting and enhancing the development and implementation of UNESCO's programmes and activities in Sweden. Therefore, the Swedish National Commission is responsible for ensuring that UNESCO's name, programmes and activities are used and developed in accordance with rules, guidelines and decisions of, for example, the Executive Board and the General Conference.

Civil society organisations contribute with important knowledge and a high level of dedication to Sweden's UNESCO-related work. Civil society organisations are therefore

important stakeholders in the implementation of this strategy.

Themes and priorities for UNESCO-related work in Sweden

The Swedish National Commission for UNESCO shall disseminate information on and create interest in matters where UNESCO's work is deemed to be of high quality and where the Swedish National Commission for UNESCO has a unique or central role to play.

The Swedish National Commission for UNESCO shall contribute to ensuring that experiences and knowledge on the global level, such as UNESCO reports, are disseminated to Swedish stakeholders whenever relevant. Furthermore, the Swedish National Commission for UNESCO will actively work to make Swedish expertise and experience in UNESCO's areas of activity available globally.

UNESCO's potential lies in its normative work. Sweden has ratified 12 of UNESCO's conventions. Furthermore, UNESCO Member States have adopted recommendations within a wide range of fields. The Swedish National Commission for UNESCO contributes to increasing knowledge about the normative instruments of UNESCO and disseminates Sweden's reports regarding their implementation. The Swedish National Commission for UNESCO will during the period for this strategy identify which UNESCO recommendations will be prioritised.

The Swedish National Commission for UNESCO will during 2018–2021 particularly prioritise fields which are topical and urgent globally as well as fields where the Swedish National Commission for UNESCO has experience and could contribute meaningfully.

Four themes are at the centre of the activities of the Swedish National Commission for UNESCO 2018–2022:

- i) Education for sustainable development;
- ii) Freedom of expression, creativity and democracy;
- iii) Cultural heritage;
- iv) Science for all.

i) Education for sustainable development

Education is a human right. UNESCO has a key role in the UN system for goal 4 in the 2030 Agenda, namely inclusive and equitable quality education for all based on democratic values. Regarding education, the Swedish National Commission for UNESCO has the potential of contributing considerably to Sweden's work on the 2030 Agenda. In particular, the Swedish National Commission for UNESCO has extensive experience in working with Education for Sustainable Development (target 4.7).

During the strategy period the Swedish National Commission for UNESCO shall:

- Strengthen the national work in achieving target 4.7 through cooperation with relevant stakeholders, including teacher-training programmes, and through raising awareness of education as a driving force for global sustainable development through, for example, education for sustainable development and life styles, human rights, gender equality and fostering a culture of non-violence and global citizenship.
- Promote tolerance and democratic values through, among other things, disseminating information on the UNESCO Convention against Discrimination in Education (1960), the UNESCO Recommendation on Education for International Understanding (1974) and UNESCO's work on Holocaust education and on preventing violent extremism.
- Promote lifelong learning for all through dissemination of the UNESCO Recommendation concerning Technical and Vocational Education and Training, TVET (2015), the Recommendation on Adult Learning and Education (2015) and the Convention on the Recognition of Qualifications concerning Higher Education (2019). [Revised 2021.]

- Strive to ensure Sweden’s ratification of the Convention on the Recognition of Qualifications concerning Higher Education (2019). [Added 2021.]

ii) Freedom of expression, creativity and democracy

The fundamental ideas of the UN and UNESCO, such as respect for justice, human rights and fundamental freedoms, are challenged today and need protection and support.

The Swedish National Commission for UNESCO has in recent years worked actively with Media and Information Literacy (MIL) as well as with matters relating to freedom of expression and the status of journalists, artists and cultural practitioners. This work relates to UNESCO’s responsibility regarding target 16.10 of the 2030 Agenda (Ensure public access to information). The Swedish National Commission for UNESCO plays an important role when disseminating information from UNESCO to Swedish stakeholders working on these issues. The relevant instruments are the UNESCO Convention on the Protection of and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions (2005), the Recommendation on the Status of the Artist (1980) and the UN Plan of Action for the Safety of Journalists and the Issue of Impunity. There are several Swedish actors within the field of freedom of the press and the safety of journalists, therefore the role for the Swedish National Commission for UNESCO shall be limited to the dissemination of information regarding UNESCO’s work within this field.

The UNESCO Creative Cities Network (UCCN) was created in 2004 to promote cooperation with and among cities that have identified creativity as a strategic factor for sustainable urban development. The Network covers seven creative fields. The Network has grown substantially in recent years and in 2018 the Network was comprised of 180 cities. Two cities in Sweden are part of the Network: Östersund, Creative City of

Gastronomy, member since 2010 and Norrköping, Creative City of Music, member since 2017. In 2018 there was no overarching national structure for the network and cooperation between the two Swedish cities had not yet commenced.

The Local Unesco Collaboration Sweden (LUCS) was established in 2014, initiated by the local municipalities Botkyrka, Eskilstuna and Malmö, with the objective to strive for exchange of expertise on social inclusion. In 2021 LUCS consisted of members from municipalities, NGOs, municipal housing providers and higher education institutes.

During the strategy period the Swedish National Commission for UNESCO shall:

- Be the leading and coordinating actor in creating good conditions for a coherent and long-term work with Media and Information Literacy (MIL).
- Promote the diversity of cultural expressions, freedom of speech for cultural actors and artistic freedom by disseminating information on the UNESCO Convention on Protection and Promotion of Cultural Expressions (2015) and the UNESCO Recommendation on the Status of the Artist (1980). [Revised 2021.]
- Together with relevant Swedish actors, raise awareness of the importance of freedom of speech, freedom of press and journalists’ safety as well as inform about UNESCO’s work in this area. [Added 2021.]
- Encourage the Swedish members of the Network for Creative Cities to contribute to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and ensure that their work is qualitative and sustainable in the longer term. [Revised 2021.]
- Promote efforts to work with sustainable social inclusion through cooperation with LUCS. [Revised 2021.]

iii) Cultural heritage

The UNESCO Convention on Protection for the World’s Cultural and Natural Heritage (1972) requires that state parties must have legislation

and management policies to protect their cultural and natural heritage of outstanding universal value. The World Heritage List contains more than 1000 sites and approximately 25 more are added annually. This constitutes a major challenge to UNESCO's work with the Convention. In Sweden, there is a considerable level of engagement both locally and regionally with regards to the 15 Swedish World Heritage sites, which mainly focuses on preservation and management of the current World Heritage sites. The Swedish National Commission for UNESCO has contributed, and continues to do so, to the development and implementation of the national World Heritage strategy that has been developed by the Swedish National Heritage Board following a request from the Government (2019).

The Memory of the World programme is an expert programme within UNESCO which aims to facilitate the preservation, increase awareness and disseminate information of documentary heritage, i.e. valuable documents, collections, libraries and other carriers of information such as photos, film etc. In many countries there are national committees working with this programme. A Swedish committee for the Memory of the World programme, appointed by the Swedish National Commission for UNESCO, is working with the programme in Sweden. In 2018, no Swedish government agency was formally in charge of the programme but, in 2019, the Swedish National Archives agreed to take the main responsibility for the programme.

The UNESCO Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage (2003) aims at transmitting cultural diversity, the power of human creativity, traditions and expressions to future generations, increasing awareness of intangible cultural heritage and promoting international cooperation. In accordance with the Convention there is a Swedish national inventory of intangible cultural heritage in Sweden to which the public can send proposals. In connection to the Convention there is also an international list of representative intangible cultural heritage. The list is fast-growing and may divert focus from

other work with the Convention such as preservation and promotion of intangible cultural heritage. Sweden had no elements on the list in 2018.

Destruction of cultural heritage as well as illicit trafficking of cultural property, may incur the loss of invaluable historical assets and cause major damage to individuals and societies. The UNESCO Convention on the Means of Prohibiting and Preventing the Illicit Import, Export and Transfer of Ownership of Cultural Property (1970), requires countries to work actively against illicit trafficking of cultural property through, among other things, preventive actions such as export licenses, inventories and legal sanctions. The Hague Convention on the Protection of Cultural Heritage in the Event of Armed Conflict (1954) and its two protocols should also be considered in connection with this area. In accordance with these instruments, states take responsibility for respecting and protecting cultural property in armed conflicts in all signature states. The states further take responsibility for securing that, in peacetime, their armed forces act in compliance with the Convention in case of armed conflict.

During the strategy period the Swedish National Commission for UNESCO shall:

- Promote the strengthening of the Swedish World Heritage sites' work with World Heritage education, research and the 2030 Agenda, all from a global perspective.
- Strive to ensure that the World Heritage work in Sweden focuses on management and preservation of current World Heritage sites and not on nominating new sites.
- Contribute to strengthening the interest in documentary heritage in Sweden and, in cooperation with the Swedish Memory of the World Committee, develop a national strategy outlining the role and objectives of the Memory of the World programme in Sweden.
- Contribute to increasing the diversity in the Swedish inventory of intangible cultural heritage and to increasing knowledge of the Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage (2003) in Sweden, and strive

to ensure that Sweden, until further notice, does not nominate elements to UNESCO's list of representative intangible cultural heritage.

- Encourage Swedish actors to contribute to the implementation of the UN:s Decade of Indigenous Languages. [Added 2021.]
- Prevent cultural heritage destruction and illicit trafficking of cultural property through increasing knowledge in Sweden about UNESCO's cultural conventions and relevant UN declarations.

iv) Science for all

It is a human right to share in scientific advancement and its benefits. Science and research have a crucial role to play in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals of the 2030 Agenda. Several of UNESCO's programs play a vital role in creating connections between decision makers and the scientific community in order to achieve the 2030 Agenda.

The UNESCO Man and the Biosphere programme is a unique cooperation between close to 700 Biosphere Reserves where new methods for sustainable development are tested. In 2018, there were five Biosphere Reserves in Sweden. In 2019 two candidate reserves, Voxnadalen and Vindelälven-Juhtttáhdahkka, were inaugurated as new Biosphere Reserves. The Swedish Biosphere Programme is led by a national committee and is coordinated by a national coordinator.

The United Nations has proclaimed a Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development 2021-2030. The Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission (IOC) of UNESCO will coordinate the decade.

The International Centre for Water Cooperation (ICWC) was founded in 2014 following a decision by the UNESCO General Conference, thereby becoming the first UNESCO Category II Centre in Sweden. The work of the ICWC is regulated by an agreement between Stockholm International Water Institute (SIWI), Sweden

and UNESCO which is valid until 2020 when the work of the Centre was evaluated. In 2020 UNESCO decided upon an extension of the agreement.

Possible new Category II Centres in Sweden must have a stable organisational structure at the onset, clearly contribute to the work programme of UNESCO and the implementation of the Swedish UNESCO strategy.

In cooperation with L'Oréal Sweden and the Young Academy of Sweden, the Swedish National Commission for UNESCO has raised awareness of the need of more women in science by establishing the L'Oréal-UNESCO For Women in Science Prize in Sweden.

There are eight UNESCO Chairs in Sweden. The Swedish nomination process was revised in 2017 with the objectives to increase transparency in the nomination process.

The UNESCO Network for Global Geoparks consists of areas of international geological significance who together work for sustainable development and knowledge creation about geological processes. In 2019 Platåbergen submitted the first Swedish application to UNESCO to become a Global Geopark. At the national level, the Geological Survey of Sweden (SGU) has developed a national geopark designation, which enables further synergies between the two designations.

During the strategy period the Swedish National Commission for UNESCO shall:

- Support the UNESCO Man and the Biosphere programme in Sweden in their efforts to obtain long-term sustainable funding and a clear organisational structure as well as to strengthen the link between research and the activities of the Biosphere Reserves. Support the two nominated Biosphere Reserves Voxnadalen and Vindelälven-Juhtttáhdahkka in their efforts to become UNESCO Biosphere Reserves.

- Contribute to transboundary water cooperation through supporting the International Centre for Water Cooperation in their efforts to obtain long-term sustainable funding and a clear organisational structure.
- Encourage Swedish stakeholders to contribute to the implementation of the UN Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development 2021 – 2030.
- Strengthen women’s participation in research through the For Women in Science Prize in Sweden.
- Support free research, including freedom of speech for researchers, for example through dissemination on the UNESCO Recommendation on Science and Scientific Researchers (2017). [Added 2021.]
- Ensure that the Swedish UNESCO Chairs are a resource in the implementation of Sweden’s Strategy for cooperation with UNESCO, the 2030 Agenda and this strategy. A new call for UNESCO Chairs shall therefore be made during the strategy period with the objective of adding UNESCO Chairs within strategic fields.
- Contribute to the development of clear guidelines for designation and evaluation of Global Geoparks in Sweden, including for their relations with national geoparks. [Added 2021.]

Follow-up

This strategy will be revised annually with the possibility of revision

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APPENDIX

Conventions ratified by Sweden

- Universal Copyright Convention (1952)
- Convention for the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event on Armed Conflict (1954) and its Second Protocol
- Convention against Discrimination in Education (1960)
- Convention on the Means of Prohibiting and Preventing the Illicit Import, Export and Transfer of Ownership of Cultural Property (1970)
- Convention on Wetlands of International Importance especially as Waterfowl Habitat (1971)
- Convention concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage (1972)
- Convention on the Recognition of Studies, Diplomas and Degrees concerning Higher Education in the States belonging to the Europe Region (1979)
- Convention on the Recognition of Qualifications concerning Higher Education in the European Region (1997)
- Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage (2003)
- International Convention against Doping in Sport (2005)
- UNESCO Convention on the Protection of and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions (2005)

Recommendations

There are currently 34 UNESCO Recommendations (the full list is available [here](#)). Member States report to UNESCO on the implementation of the following recommendations approximately once every four years:

- Recommendation concerning Education for International Understanding, Co-operation and Peace and Education relating to Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms (1974)
- Revised Recommendation concerning the International Standardization of Educational Statistics (1978)
- Recommendation concerning the Status of the Artist (1980)
- Recommendation on the Recognition of Studies and Qualifications in Higher Education (1993)
- Recommendation concerning the Promotion and Use of Multilingualism and Universal Access to Cyberspace (2003)
- Recommendation on the Historic Urban Landscape (2011)
- Recommendation concerning Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) (2015)
- Recommendation on Adult Learning and Education (2015)
- Recommendation concerning the Protection and Promotion of Museums and Collections, their diversity and their role in society (2015)
- Recommendation concerning the Preservation of, and access to, Documentary Heritage including in digital form (2015)

- Recommendation on Science and Scientific Researchers (2017)