

# Export to Sweden



## Table des matières

Table des matières .....	2
1. General information .....	3
Political landscape .....	3
Economics .....	3
Technology .....	3
Environment.....	3
2. Additional indicators.....	4
Economic indicators .....	4
Social and environmental indicators .....	4
Free trade agreements .....	4
3. On-site: a step-by-step guide .....	5
First contacts .....	5
Exporting.....	5
Interesting markets for a first export .....	6
4. Business culture .....	7
Communication .....	7
Attire.....	7
How to prepare a visit .....	7
Negotiating.....	8
What are the public holidays?.....	8
5. What can we do for you? .....	9
Local contact point.....	9
Important addresses.....	9
Useful website to delve into .....	9



# 1. General information

## Political landscape

- The current government, installed in October 2022, consists of a minority coalition of three right-wing parties (the Moderates, the Christian Democrats and the Liberals), with the support of the far-right party Sweden Democrats.
- In a monumental shift for a country with a long history of neutrality, Sweden became a full member of NATO in March 2024.

## Economics

- Swedish economy and society are characterized by a strong partnership between the public and the private sector, which is what is often referred to as The Swedish Model.
- Swedish economy has been in recession since 3Q23, and is expected to remain in recession until 2025. Purchasing power is anticipated to increase in 2024.
- The Swedish krona (SEK) has been relatively weak since 2022, with €1 = 11,61 SEK in April 2024, while €1 = 10,05 SEK in January 2021.
- Relatively high median salary (34 200 SEK monthly, 2024) and strong household purchasing power.
- Personal income tax is relatively high (ranging from about 20-57.1%), but taxes for businesses are quite moderate, with corporate tax rate amounting to 20,6%.
- Machinery and transport equipment represent 46,1% of Sweden's total export (in 2023).

## Technology

- Focus areas for Sweden are smart energy, smart industry, smart transport, new materials, life science and digital technologies.
- Growing industries are defense, automotive (especially electric, with 113 000 EV's registered in 2023), and fossil-free energy.
- Sweden has a well-developed tech ecosystem, and is considered a global innovation powerhouse. Stockholm has a strong start-up culture and has become the tech hub of the Nordics. It is home to many unicorns, such as Skype, Spotify, King, Mojang (bought by Microsoft), and Klarna.

## Environment

- Sustainability is a key factor in Swedish economy, which aims to be innovative, digital and sustainable.



## 2. Additional indicators

### Economic indicators

Find the main socio-economic indicators for this country, as well as its trade with Brussels and Belgium, in the publication "[Brussels and the world – Country statistics](#)" on analytics.brussels, hub.brussels' online data library.

The "[Brussels and the world - General statistics](#)" publication also provides data on trade between the Brussels-Capital Region and the rest of the world, by continent and by major world region. The same type of data is also available for the various regions of Belgium, as well as for Belgium as a whole.

### Social and environmental indicators

If you'd like to know where your country stands in terms of social, environmental and economic issues, access a series of [composite indicators from the European Commission](#), structured according to the 17 United Nations Sustainable Development Goals<sup>1</sup> and the European Commission's 6 priority policy areas<sup>2</sup>.

### Free trade agreements

European agreements have a major impact on market accessibility and trade with certain countries. The links below, published by the European Commission, will provide you with all the information you need on free trade agreements and trade barriers. Existing agreements, those that have not yet been ratified and those that are expected to be ratified, can be consulted here:

- [Free trade agreements](#)
- [Trade barriers](#)

---

<sup>1</sup>No poverty, Zero hunger, Good health and well-being, Quality education, Gender equality, Clean water and sanitation, Clean and affordable energy, Decent work and economic growth, Industry, innovation and infrastructure, Reduced inequalities, Sustainable cities and communities, Sustainable consumption and production, Measures to combat climate change, Water life, Land life, Peace, justice and effective institutions, Partnerships to achieve the goals.

<sup>2</sup> A green pact for Europe, An economy serving people, A Europe fit for the digital age, A stronger Europe on the world stage, Promoting our European way of life, A new impetus for European democracy.



## 3. On-site: a step-by-step guide

### First contacts

#### Prospecting

- Trade agents exist in Sweden, but are not that common. Distributors are generally a great way to introduce consumer goods on the Swedish market, and direct sales work well for services.
- Swedish supermarkets usually buy their products from distributors, but if they are interested in your product, they may request their distributor to add your product to their assortment. For that reason, it is encouraged to contact the supermarket chains and to register your interest as a supplier on their platforms.
- Thanks to Swedes' fluency in English, a high degree of digitalization, relative proximity to most other European countries, above average salaries and a relatively high disposable income, and the fact that Swedish companies are known to reinvest profits in innovation, the Swedish market is highly accessible, as well as competitive. This makes it vital to differentiate your business well, stick to your unique selling points, and carefully examine your prospective clients to fully understand how your company can cater to their needs.
- Swedish companies usually have a strong digital presence, with lots of information available on their website and social media.

### Exporting

#### Payments

- All invoices will be in SEK, and payment terms in Sweden are shorter than in most Western European countries, averaging at 28 days.
- A common payment system in Sweden is Bankgiro, a system for the Swedish market in which all banks are included. The bank connects your Swedish bank account with a Bankgiro number, and on the day of payment a withdrawal is made from the payer's account and a deposit is made to the payee. The Bankgiro system ensures smooth payments, regardless of the payer's or payee's banks.
- Sweden is at the forefront when it comes to alternative payment methods, the most popular solutions being Klarna (buy now, pay later), Swish (an app-based direct transfer method owned by the local banks), and Trustly (online shopping without card or app).

#### Company types

The most common company types in Sweden are:

- Aktiebolag / AB (EN: limited company):
  - o You must have 25 000 SEK in share capital.
  - o Can be started by one or several individuals.
  - o Disconnected from your private economy, as the personal responsibility for the company's debt is limited to the share capital of 25 000 SEK.



- Enskild firma (EN: sole trader):
  - o Most common when starting up a business.
  - o A private individual owns, operates, and is responsible for the business.
  - o Sole traders are not obliged to register their company with the Swedish Companies Registration Office ([Bolagsverket](#)).
- Handelsbolag (EN: trading partnership):
  - o Can be started by a minimum of two stakeholders (either natural or legal persons).
  - o No invested capital in the company required.
  - o The company owners are personally responsible for the company's debt.

### **Support and subsidies**

Discover all subsidies for Brussels businesses on the Brussels Economy and Employment website: <https://economie-emploi.brussels/primes-export>

### **Interesting markets for a first export**

#### **Tech**

Leading the rankings of the Global Innovation Index year after year, Sweden is often considered a global innovation powerhouse. In addition, Stockholm is the second most prolific region in the world in producing unicorns per capita. With the largest ICT cluster in Europe, a strong tech ecosystem, and a population of early-adopters, Sweden is a great test market for innovative tech solutions.

#### **Smart energy, industry and logistics**

Aiming to lead the transition to clean energy, green industry and e-mobility, Swedish municipalities and companies welcome collaborations and innovative solutions in these sectors.

#### **Life science**

Sweden aims to be at the forefront of innovation and implementation of advanced healthcare. With top-notch digital capabilities, a high degree of innovation, world-leading universities, and openness to private and public collaboration, Sweden provides a receptive environment for innovative life science solutions.

#### **Sustainable construction**

From north to south, numerous construction and infrastructure projects are in the pipeline. Combined with the fact that Sweden attaches great importance to sustainable architecture and urban development, this creates huge opportunities for the sustainable construction market. In the Stockholm region alone, construction and infrastructure projects for a total of €115 billion are planned until 2040 (mainly housing and railways). The construction industry is also booming in northern Sweden, with large investments in a.o. green energy infrastructure (Skellefteå, Boden) and a new railway (Norrbotniabanan).

**Calendar of all trade shows in Sweden - <https://www.allamassor.se/event/>**



## 4. Business culture

### Communication

- Swedes are very used to **virtual meetings**, which are often considered as efficient as live meetings. Face-to-face meetings are also common and people are used to communicating over both phone and e-mail.
- Swedes are reasonably relaxed and informal, but they expect professional standards of behaviour. It is also good to bear in mind that most Swedes attach great importance to gender equality.
- Swedes tend to avoid conflict, which may lead to difficulties in understanding how they truly feel about something. Rather than being outspoken about issues they might see, they will generally use a friendly tone and neutral language to kindly explain their point of view.

### Attire

- Swedish **business attire** is business casual, and functional depending on the season. During winter, big winter coats and sturdy shoes are omnipresent. For men it is uncommon to wear a tie, and for women high heels are unusual. Sneakers are common, especially in the tech industry.

### How to prepare a visit

- **Workdays** are usually from 09:00 to 17:00, with a one-hour lunch break between 11:30 and 13:00. A normal working week is 40 hours. Since the pandemic, it is common that employees work from home at least one day a week up to full-time, with only a few days per month at the office.
- Rules of politeness:
  - o Politeness is signalled by listening carefully to your discussion partner, without interrupting them.
  - o When greeting someone, have eye contact and give a firm handshake.
  - o Swedes may seem quite relaxed at a first meeting, but there is a clear line between private and public life which takes some time to cross. It is important for Swedes not to intrude into other's private life, which at first might be interpreted as a lack of interest.
  - o Swedes are considerate and make sure not to intrude in other people's personal space, or behave in a manner which might disturb others in any way, such as wearing heavy perfume, talking very loudly, or standing too closely to another person.
  - o Punctuality is important, and it is considered disrespectful to run late.
- Online meetings should be planned at least two weeks in advance, and face-to-face meetings at least a month in advance. The best time to schedule a meeting is between 9:00 – 11:00, and between 14:00 – 16:00. Lunch meetings are common, but it is unusual to order alcohol during a business lunch in Sweden.
- Business meetings will most probably start with a fika which is a coffee, possibly tea, and some kind of pastry, typically a "kanelbulle" (EN: cinnamon bun). To meet someone for a fika is common and it might take a bit longer and be more personal than only a quick coffee.
- In Sweden there is a code of conduct called "jantelagen" (EN: the law of Jante), which summons people not to show off, and not to think that they are better than others.



## Negotiating

- **Decision-making through consensus** is baked into Swedish business culture. Decisions are made democratically and by consensus, granting the same weight to all voting members regardless of hierarchy. This means that the decision-making process can take longer in comparison to other European states.
- Following up on a meeting, you might want to send a mail to express you are thankful for the meeting and their time, as well as a short summary of any decisions that were made.

## What are the public holidays?

- From mid-June until mid-August it is difficult to book appointments as most Swedes take long **vacations** during the summer months, sometimes up to five consecutive weeks.
- **Midsummer**, celebrated on a Friday and Saturday between 20 and 26 June, is by far the most important Swedish holiday and marks the start of the summer holidays.





## 5. What can we do for you?

### Local contact point

The General Delegates and local representatives employed by hub.brussels are official representatives of the Brussels Government abroad, they support Brussels companies that want to export, and search and prospect for new investors.

They have the information, expertise and in-depth knowledge about the specifics of different foreign markets. Based on that knowledge, they help to refine and fine-tune your export plans, with advice on regulations, competition, market entry conditions, permits, etc. Furthermore, they can support you with your questions regarding exports, certain sectors within the jurisdiction, contacts with intermediaries, business culture, and much more.

#### **Terry Huyghe**

Sweden

Embassy of Belgium  
Kungsbroplan 2, Box 1040  
SE 101 38 Stockholm  
Sweden

+ 467 39 08 69 53

[stockholm@hub.brussels](mailto:stockholm@hub.brussels)

### Key addresses

#### **Embassy of Belgium**

Kungsbroplan 2  
112 27 Stockholm  
SWEDEN  
Tel: +46 (0)8 534 802 00  
[stockholm@diplobel.fed.be](mailto:stockholm@diplobel.fed.be)

#### **Honorary consul Göteborg, Sweden**

Mr. Erik SPANDOW  
Fabriksgatan 7  
412 50 Göteborg  
SWEDEN  
Tel: +46 31 15 15 30  
[erik.spandow@litigate.se](mailto:erik.spandow@litigate.se)

#### **Honorary consul Malmö, Sweden**

Mr. Gustav CARPING  
c/o AB Hugo Carping  
Företagsvägen, 20-22  
232 21 Arlöv Malmö  
SWEDEN  
Tel: +46 40 535 382  
[info@carpings.se](mailto:info@carpings.se)

#### **Swedish-Belgian Association, Stockholm**

[contact@swebel.org](mailto:contact@swebel.org)  
<https://swebel.org/>

### Useful websites to delve into

[Ministry of Enterprise and Innovation](#)  
[Ministry of Foreign Affairs](#)  
[Ministry of Finance](#)  
[Ministry of Infrastructure](#)  
[Ministry of Health and Social Affairs](#)  
[Vinnova - The Swedish Agency for Innovation Systems](#)  
[Tillväxtverket – The Swedish Agency for Economic and Regional Growth](#)  
[Livsmedelsverket – The Swedish Food Agency](#)  
[SCB – Statistics Sweden](#)

