

# Connect the unconnected

Sweden's candidacy for the Council of the International Telecommunication Union for the 2023–2026 term

Photo: TT Bild



Government Offices of Sweden

# Connect the unconnected

Sweden is proud to present its candidacy for the Council of the International Telecommunication Union (ITU). Digital transformation is not only a technical issue, but a fundamental precondition for participating fully in today's society. The COVID-19 pandemic, in particular, has demonstrated the need for connectivity and basic digital skills. The potential of digital technologies is enormous. For societies, it creates opportunities for increased growth and prosperity, while giving individuals easier access to information and education – when the right conditions are in place.



"The global digital divide must be bridged in order to realise the full potential of digital transformation. It is an important step towards global equality and cohesion, benefitting everybody. Sweden has been successful in strengthening connectivity on the national, regional, and international level and now we wish to bring this knowledge to the ITU-Council."

Khashayar Farmanbar  
Minister for Energy  
and Digital Development

Photo: Niklas Forsström

Sweden is convinced that the global digital divide must be bridged to realise the full potential of digital transformation. This is an important step towards global equality. A strong and active ITU is vital to addressing these challenges together. Sweden already contributes to this work in several areas, and now we wish to do so within the Council.

## Sweden, the UN and ITU

Multilateral cooperation is crucial for our common future. Sweden is a strongly engaged and long-standing friend of the UN system. As the UN's specialised agency for information and communications technology, ITU is an important

arena for international work in this area. Being one of the founders of ITU, Sweden has always been engaged in, supported and contributed to developing the organisation's mandate and objectives.

## Sweden's objectives within the ITU Council – bridging the digital divide

Sweden will push for the International Telecommunication Union to assume a more central role within the UN system with the aim of contributing to a more inclusive and equitable world through digital transformation.

**Connectivity:** Sweden has long supported and been a driving force

in the development and expansion of telecommunications networks, broadband and mobile telephony at national, regional and global level. Through the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida), Sweden supports the broad efforts to achieve universal access to information and communications technology and connectivity, with a particular emphasis on reducing the digital gender divide. Everyone must be included in the digital transformation. Over the past six years, the Swedish Post and Telecom Authority and SPIDER, a project with Stockholm University, has contributed to capacity-building to more than 30 countries,

providing assistance in knowledge-building and advice with the aim of contributing to an effective digital infrastructure for all. Swedish businesses support Giga, an ITU and UNICEF initiative aiming to connect every school in the world to the internet. Sweden is one of the founders and financiers of the Digital Impact Alliance (DIAL), which cooperates with ITU to support a holistic approach to digital transformation. This includes responsible data use, funding and procurement, with a focus on leaving no one behind in strategic digital investments.

As a member of the ITU Council, Sweden will work to ensure that the organisation invests more effectively to connect the unconnected.

**Digital skills:** Both technical resources and digital skills are needed to bridge the digital divide. These are two areas in which Sweden has extensive knowledge and practical experience, which we intend to contribute to the ITU Council. Sweden is actively involved in numerous international cooperation forums aimed at raising the level of digital skills. Sweden will strive to enhance digital inclusion at global level by working for

greater connectivity and digital skills and know-how. SPIDER has for a long time contributed to information and communications technology education and capacity-building around the world. A seat on the Council would enable Sweden's know-how to reach even further through the ITU.

**Transparent, equitable and effective governance:** To ensure that digital transformation contributes to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda, ITU's limited resources must be used effectively, equitably, and transparently. Sweden's long tradition of working with the UN and support to multilateralism, in combination with its extensive digital knowledge, experience and resources, will be used in the ITU Council to help steer the organisation in a direction that delivers clear results for all its members in a transparent, effective and equitable way.

Sweden promotes the development of global standards that are, effective and developed with respect for fundamental rights so that they can be applied with confidence by all.

**Flexibility and effective use of the radio spectrum:** The radio spectrum is a valuable and limited

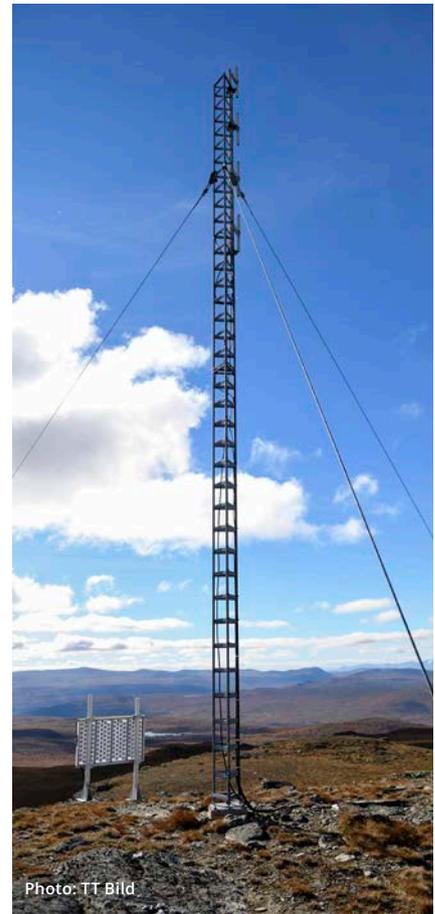


Photo: TT Bild

resource that must be used in a way that maximises benefits to society over time, particularly when global needs increase.

Broadband radio access is particularly important in reaching beyond the cities and ensuring that digital transformation works in peoples' everyday lives, also when travelling. Sweden will push to ensure that regulation of the radio spectrum is as inclusive and flexible as possible, enabling technological neutrality and thus an opportunity for development and innovation aimed at a future for all.

A vote for Sweden is a vote for digital transformation as a catalyst for equitable societal development, effective governance, transparency and openness.



Photo: Alexander Olivera/TT Bild



"A vote for Sweden is a vote for digital transformation as a catalyst for equitable societal development, effective governance, transparency and openness."

*Announcement of the Swedish candidacy to the ITU-Council by the Swedish Minister of Digitalization, Mr. Khashayar Farmanbar*  
<https://bit.ly/3sQd9Qi>

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