



*Swedish Chambers*



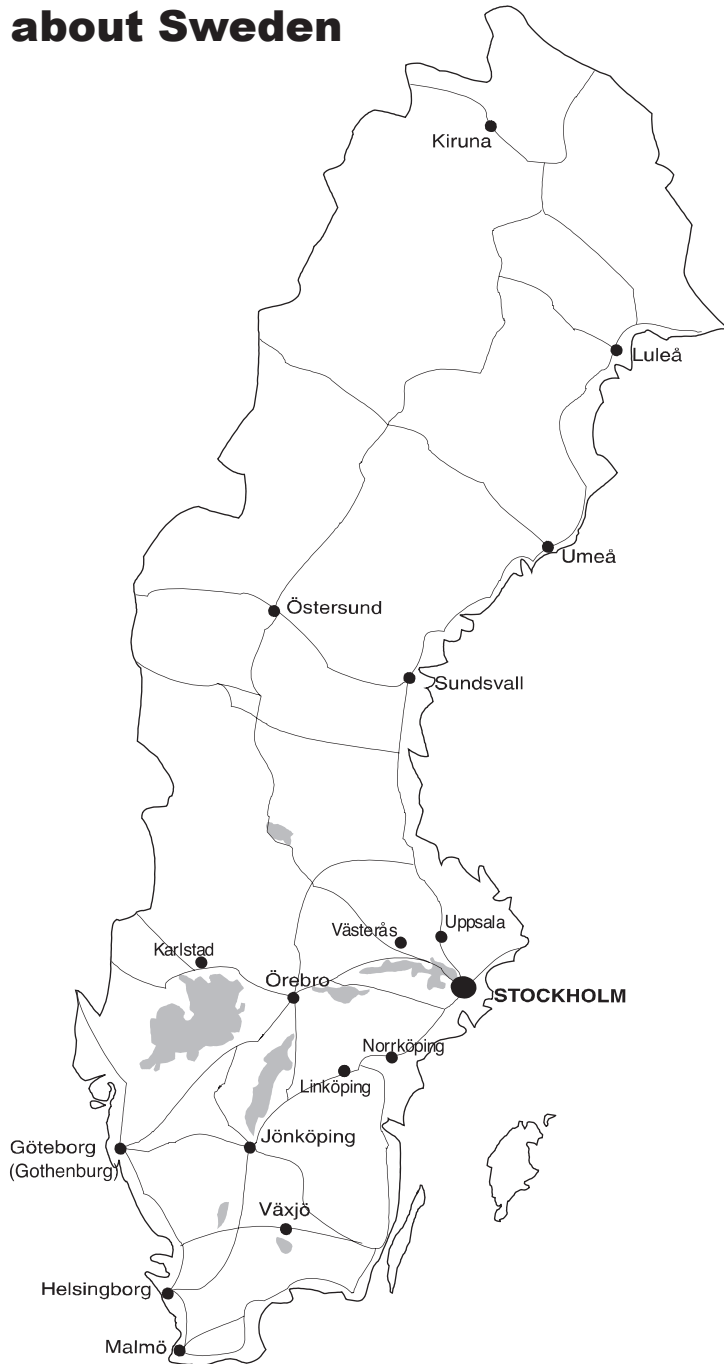
# From Contact to Contract



For exporters from developing countries  
interested in doing business with Sweden

October 2010

# Facts about Sweden



**Area:** 449,964 sq.km  
**Population:** 9.3 million

**Capital:** Stockholm.  
Stockholm city: 810.100 inh.  
Greater Stockholm: 2 mil. inh.

**Business language:**  
Swedish, English

**Religion:**  
Lutheran

**Largest cities:**  
Stockholm city 810.100 inh.  
Gothenburg 500.200 inh.  
Malmö 286.500 inh.  
Uppsala 190.700 inh.  
Linköping 141.900 inh.  
Västerås 134.700 inh.  
Örebro 132.300 inh.  
Norrköping 128.100 inh.  
Helsingborg 126.700 inh.  
Jönköping 125.200 inh.

**Form of government:**  
Constitutional monarchy,  
parliamentary democracy

**Some distances:**  
Stockholm-Malmö 640 km  
Stockholm-Gothenburg 490 km  
Stockholm-Sundsvall 400 km  
Stockholm-Kiruna 1310 km

**Currency:**  
1 krona (SEK) = 100 öre

## The European Union

- Austria
- Belgium
- Bulgaria
- Cyprus
- Czech Rep.
- Denmark
- Estonia
- Finland
- France
- Germany
- Great Britain
- Greece
- Hungary
- Ireland
- Italy
- Latvia
- Lithuania
- Luxemburg
- Malta
- Netherlands
- Poland
- Portugal
- Romania
- Slovak Rep.
- Slovenia
- Spain
- Sweden

**The EES/EEA area**  
EU-countries, Iceland,  
Liechtenstein and Norway

**EFTA**  
Iceland, Liechtenstein,  
Norway and Switzerland



## Introduction



The aim of this booklet is to provide assistance to exporters from developing countries that want to enter the Swedish market and find new business partners in Sweden. It is meant act as a spring board with basic advice and suggestions regarding where to turn for further information.

The booklet is published by the Swedish Chambers of Commerce as a part of their trade promotion programme. The purpose of the programme is to reduce poverty through trade promotion.

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# 1 Preparations

## How Do I Start?

There are many reasons why you would want to export your products, such as having more customers, higher profits and lower manufacturing costs. However, it is important to understand that finding new business contacts takes time, costs money and requires patience and commitment. Before considering exporting, the company should analyse its own business and motives for export. A good start is the SWOT analysis. SWOT stands for Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats. What is your company good at and what could it do better? For example, do the staff members have sufficient knowledge of English to communicate with foreign business partners? Is the company ready to increase its production volume? Is adequate marketing material available or can it be produced? Is there a reliable Internet connection at the company? In the future, what opportunities present themselves and what threatens the business?

## Business Plan

A business plan shows what needs to be done in order to achieve the company's long-term goals. If your company does not already have a business plan, it is a good idea to develop one.

In the business plan you define what products/services you are offering and who your customers and competitors are. You formulate your strategy and business concept (what you are going to do, how you are going to do it and who your customers are).

Some examples of questions that can be answered in a business plan:

- When, where and how are you manufacturing your products? What are you producing? How many products? What quality?
- Who and where are your customers? Do you have more than one target group? How will you find and keep your customers?
- Who are your competitors? What are your advantages compared to them? How competitive are your prices?

## Market Information and Analysis

If the analysis and business plan show that export is a suitable way to develop the company, the next question is what market should be targeted. Sweden, as most European markets, is considered rather difficult with a lot of competition and it is often advisable for a company from a developing country to first start exporting to neighbouring countries. However, this of course also depends on the circumstances, what contacts you have, what products you offer, etc. For small companies, it is wise to start small, with one country or even one region if the market is big.



Before choosing a market, you need information. An exporter must learn as much as possible about the country, the business culture, the market structure, competitors, payment procedures, etc. The Swedish Chambers of Commerce provide information about the Swedish market, both general (in *Exporting to Scandinavia*) and for specific product groups (in Market Briefs). There is also much information to be found on the Internet. See links in **Chapter 9** – Useful Links.

Factors to be taken into account when making the decision are, for example, market potential and size, trade barriers, product regulations, growth, competition, price levels, political and economical stability, export related technical problems, customs duties, geographical distance and distribution channels, but also your own experience of the country, established business contacts and your company's own resources.

A very good way to get to know the market is to visit it and decide whether it is right for the company and its products. Maybe your first visit to the country should not be about actively trying to find a business partner, but a study visit to get to know your customers, visit a trade fair to study trends, etc.

#### Highlights:

- Analyse your own business. Are you ready to export?
- Make a business plan
- Gather information about prospective markets before you choose

## 2 The Market

### General Background

Sweden is well-known for its creativity, entrepreneurial spirit and environmental and social responsibility. Sweden has for long been an industrial country, but the country is moving away from industry towards a knowledge-based service sector. The service sector is now the largest employer in Sweden and accounts for more than 75 percent of the Swedish workforce. Sweden is also one of the world-leading nations in research, in areas such as biotechnology, medical innovations, microelectronics and space.

In addition, Sweden is known as a leading nation and pioneer in knowledge-based industry and technological development. Information technology and communication (ITC) and environmental technology are examples of important sectors in the Swedish economy.

Globalisation is a key-concept in the Swedish economy. Due to an insufficient domestic market, Swedish companies have been engaged in international trade from the start. Most exports go to countries within the EU (58%). Other important export destinations are Norway (10.6%), the US (6.4%), China (3.1%), Russia (1.4%) and Japan (1.3%). In terms of imports, Sweden is dependent on imports of raw materials and components. Sweden imports mainly from EU countries (68%), Norway (9%), China (3.8%), the US (3.8%) and Russia (3.76%).

### Facts about Sweden

**Population:** ca. 9.4 million

**Business Languages:** Swedish, English

**Area:** 499,964 km<sup>2</sup>

**Ten Largest Cities:** Stockholm (capital), Gothenburg, Malmö, Uppsala, Linköping, Västerås, Örebro, Norrköping, Helsingborg, Jönköping

**System of Government:**

Parliamentary democracy, constitutional monarchy

**Religion:** The church of Sweden is Evangelical Lutheran

**Currency:** SEK

**The Most Important Export Good:**

Machinery, electronics and telecommunication, paper, pharmaceuticals, petroleum products, iron and steel and foostuff

**The Most Important Import Goods:**

Electronics and telecommunication, machinery, chemicals, pharmaceuticals and petroleum products, foodstuff, crude oil, textile and footwear

## Population

Sweden is a multicultural society, with a population of almost 9.4 million. Most of the population is concentrated in the area around the three largest cities, Stockholm, Gothenburg and Malmö. Approximately 20 percent of the population have roots in foreign countries. Despite problems with segregation, the multicultural society has made Swedes more open-minded and internationally orientated.

Sweden is known to be one of the world's most developed countries in terms of gender equity and it becomes more and more common to see both men and women in corporate leadership. One aspect of this is that the Swedish system with parental leave is becoming increasingly more popular, and more than 22 percent of the total parental leave is taken by men.

## Climate

The Swedish climate has four seasons and eight climate zones. The weather tends to fluctuate a lot and the temperature can differ significantly from north to south. Winter last longer in the north, with snow for about six months a year, while in south winter tends to last for two-three months. Rainfall is fairly evenly distributed throughout the year, but tends to be geographically intensified on the West Coast and in the mountains.

## Consumption and Consumer Characteristics

The key determinant of consumer behaviour in Sweden is price. Another important factor is quality. The expression "Value for Money" is commonly used. Swedes tend to make sure that they are well-informed before making any purchase decision. This consumption behaviour has intensified due to the increased access to Internet, followed by increased transparency. More and more Swedes are using online banking and purchase online nowadays. Internet facilitates gathering of information and enables the consumer to put pressure on prices.

In general, Swedish consumers are used to a high standard of living. Their high expectations and awareness in purchase has generated a relatively high purchasing power. Swedish companies and consumers have also become increasingly aware of corporate social responsibility (CSR) and environmentally sustainable consumption. For instance, about 1/3 of the population consume renewable energy, about 96 percent of household waste is recyclable and organic and locally grown food is becoming increasingly popular.

## Business Culture

When talking about business cultures, the first thing to remember is that there is no real right or wrong. Just as different countries speak different languages, people do business differently in different places.

The Swedish way is not the only *right* way. But it is the way business is done in Sweden. So if you would like to do successful business exporting to Sweden, there are certain unwritten rules you should memorise and apply.

### *Do's and Don'ts*

- *Be honest in all things*

Swedes expect everyone they work with to be honest. If you should not keep your word, try to cheat the Swede or try to get a bribe of some sort, this will most likely ruin the business relationship with the Swede. Swedish companies avoid doing business with any person considered dishonest or not trustworthy.

- *All agreements in writing and signed*

Your Swedish contact will want any agreement you have made with him or her put in writing and signed. Do not see this as a sign that the Swede distrusts you or your countrymen. In general, it is simply company policy to always get all agreements in writing and signed.



- *Uncommon to give and receive valuable gifts*

The giving and receiving of valuable gifts is not common among business contacts in Sweden. The tax laws in Sweden make it difficult for someone to give or receive valuable gifts as a part of doing business and the tax authorities often consider such gifts as bribes.

- *Come to all meetings exactly on time*

If you have booked a time for a meeting with a Swede, be there *on time*. Punctuality is a sign of respect and efficiency. Being exactly on time will make a good impression and it will indicate that you are reliable and trustworthy.

- *Do not be over-ambitious when estimating delivery times and inform of delays right away*

If you are estimating a time plan as to when an order can be delivered to Sweden, it is best not to give an unrealistically early date in the hope of impressing your Swedish business contact. Deadlines are set to keep and Swedes often expect the delivery *exactly* when you promised. If there is an unexpected delay in delivery, you must inform your Swedish business contact *immediately*. Otherwise you risk lose their trust and they might not want to deal with you again.

### *Swedish Mentality*

- *Quickly get down to business*

Swedes prefer to quickly start dealing with other companies based on product, price and quality rather than on their personal relationship to their contacts.

- *Swedes often do not use titles*

In English-speaking countries, business people often use the titles Mr, Mrs, Ms and Miss before a person's last name. Do not be insulted if your Swedish contacts quickly start using your first name. They are not being rude or disrespectful. This is simply because the modern Swedish language does not have a way to say "Mr Smith".

- *Informal clothing during working hours*

Swedish business people are often more informally dress than other countries and cultures. This is not a sign of disrespect. Instead, it can be regarded as an indicator of equity and relatively small power distance between employees on different company



levels. However, this is not set in stone, and dress codes can vary with industry and type of business (e.g. people in finance tend to wear more formal clothing).

- *Flat business organisation*

Do not be surprised if you meet representatives and employees from different organisational levels in a meeting with a Swedish company. The business organisation in Sweden is normally relatively flat, and business ideas are commonly discussed across all levels.

- *Men and women equal*

Almost all jobs in Sweden can be done by either a man or a woman. Swedes consider men and women to be entirely equal. If it is uncommon in your country for a man to negotiate with a woman in business, you will have to quickly learn to accept that you could be dealing with either a Swedish man or a Swedish woman.



- *Age neutrality*

Compared to many other cultures, age and seniority is not as important in Sweden as it may be elsewhere. What counts in Sweden is the results and it is normal for persons at a fairly young age to have been delegated full negotiation responsibility or product responsibility. You should not be offended or think that the Swedish company judges you to be a less important customer if you are not dealing with an age wise senior person. Somewhat similar to Swedes conviction of gender equality, age in Sweden is not an automatic sign of rank or decision making capability.

- *Stick to the negotiated agreement*

When you negotiate with Swedish business people, they expect the negotiation to take place during the “official negotiating time”. Once the negotiations are complete and an agreement has been reached, the Swede will expect you to stick to the agreement that was made. They do not like any more adjustments to the contract once it is agreed upon. This is different from some countries where agreements are constantly adjusted as time goes and things change.

- *Everything must be fair*

Equity tends to be highly valued in Sweden. They will often look for win-win solutions and will try to find a fair solution to everything, even if the fair solution is more complicated than a straight up “you win some; you lose some” system.



- *Superior attitude*

Do not be insulted if your Swedish contacts give you the impression that they think that Swedes are superior to other nationalities. This could be because Swedes are very proud of their country, their social system, their standard of living, their way of doing things, their environmental concerns and their political neutrality. Remember, truly experienced business persons know that there are many ways of doing things and they are willing to learn from other

people as well as other countries and cultures. Most likely your contact does not mean to give this impression.

- *Not very religious*

Although many of Sweden's national holidays are religious holidays, a lot of Swedes today are not actively religious. Be sure to clearly express how you feel about certain days, holidays, traditions, etc. that are important to you, so that there are no misunderstandings.

- *Long summer vacations*



Speaking of important traditions, many Swedes have four to five weeks of vacation during the summer. Many industries shut down entirely during July. For this reason, your Swedish contact person may be difficult to contact during June, July and August, so make sure to plan in advance for this.

- *Swedes do not like conflicts*

The Swedish culture is known for avoiding conflict. This can be good sometimes and bad sometimes. In many places negotiations and discussions can get emotional and appear to be a conflict. Many Swedes would feel uncomfortable if someone raised their voice, slammed the table, or haggled aggressively. They prefer things to be calm and to calmly reach an agreement. Haggling is not a traditional part of the Swedish culture.

- *Personal space and body contact*

Swedes have a large personal space and do not usually have much bodily contact. Shaking hands quickly is a good greeting. The Swede might feel uncomfortable with greetings that are common in other cultures such as hugging or kissing or pats on the back.

### 3 Business Partner Search

If you decide to enter the Swedish market, you will need a business partner. Decide what kind of partner you are looking for. Is it an agent who will negotiate the deal in your name, an importer who buys from you and sells to a distributing wholesaler, an importing wholesaler or a trading house?

There are several ways of finding new business partners, with different advantages, disadvantages and costs.

#### Internet and Media

Internet is one of the most important sources of information for most Swedish companies. If you do not know where to start looking for potential business partners, a good advice is to use any search engine on the Internet. Most Swedish companies have a website that can be translated into English, with information about product range and distribution. Using the Internet to find potential business partners is both cheap and easy. However, it can be time-consuming and difficult to identify relevant partners due to the infinite amount of information.

An increasingly common and popular source is also different social medias on Internet, e.g. Facebook and Twitter. You may be able to find networking groups that can help you find relevant business partners.

Moreover, a good way to get a better understanding about the Swedish economy and different companies it to visit the Confederation of Swedish Enterprises, known as Svenskt Näringsliv ([www.svensktnaringsliv.se](http://www.svensktnaringsliv.se)). Although the information often lacks in details, it can be a good source to use when trying to identify business opportunities and trying to find business partners that are emerging and up-to-date.

### Company Databases

There are many catalogues and directories of companies available on the Internet, where companies are presented in varying detail. Some directories are subject to a charge and a password is required to access all or parts of the information. A list of links to company databases with Swedish companies can be found in **Chapter 9** – Useful Links.

Looking for companies in databases can be time-consuming and the quality of the information varies. The databases use different codes and classifications and it is important that you familiarise yourself with these to get good search results. If free text search is possible, try different alternatives. For example, if you are looking for a garments importer, the words clothes, clothing, wear, garments, ready-made, readymade and apparel, among others, may be used.

It is important to remember that a company is not necessarily looking for new business partners just because it is listed in a directory. Many Swedish importers receive a huge amount of more or less relevant inquiries and do not have the resources to answer them all, or even to decline interest. This may puzzle and disappoint an exporter who is not aware of this fact.

### Business Inquiry Databases

There are also databases with only business inquiries, where companies look for new customers, agents, suppliers or cooperation partners. In contrast to company databases, the business inquiry databases contain companies who are actively looking for a new business partner. However, the same situation as above may occur, where the company receives too many inquiries to be able to answer them. For this reason, many Swedish companies will not publish an import business inquiry, but rather search among the exporters in the database.

The use of business inquiry databases may be free or subject to a charge. If you do not find what you are looking for, it is often possible to register an inquiry, directly on the Internet or through the organisation behind the database.

The Swedish Chambers of Commerce have developed a global business inquiry database, Chamber Trade ([www.chambertrade.com](http://www.chambertrade.com)), which is used in the trade promotion programme. You can publish your business inquiry and search for new business partners in Chamber Trade free of charge.

### Business Support Organisations

Business support organisations in your home country may be able to help you look for business contacts. Examples are chambers of commerce and export promotion organisations. If you ask an organisation for help, it is important to specify what you

need done and get a quotation from the organisation. Many organisations offer services free of charge and different discounts to their members.

### Embassies

Sometimes it could be useful to turn to your embassy for advisory consultancy. They might be able to provide you with information or refer you to right person, company or organisation to turn to.

### Trade Fairs

Trade fair participation can be a way to find new contacts, whether you exhibit your products or come as a visitor. For a small company, it is best to start by visiting fairs. This will give insight into the sector, the competition, trends and customer groups. Participating as exhibitor means a lot of preparation and costs for exhibition stand, transport, etc.



After the trade fair, it is very important to follow up the contacts. Otherwise, the effort is wasted.

The Swedish Chambers offer a guide to trade fair participation – *Fairs and Exhibitions* – which can be downloaded or ordered at [www.swedishchambers.se](http://www.swedishchambers.se). The Scandinavian Trade Fair Council lists trade fairs in Sweden, Denmark, Finland and Norway on its website. It also provides advice to exhibitors. See **Chapter 9** – Useful Links.

### Trade Missions

Sometimes trade organisations (chambers of commerce or export promotion organisations) will arrange trade missions to different markets. The trade mission can include market information, study visits to companies, fairs, organisations and authorities, individual meetings with potential business partners or a combination of the above. Make sure that the purpose of the trade mission is in line with your own goals.

If you are going to participate in a trade mission with individual matchmaking, you need to provide as much information as possible about your company and what you are looking for in a business partner. This will help your trade organisation and their Swedish counterpart to set up quality business meetings for you. The information must be supplied well in advance. At least three months is a good rule of thumb.

### Your Own Network

Business partnership is built on mutual trust. Perhaps the most effective way to find potential business partners is by using your own network. A recommendation from an already existing contact is relatively high valued in Sweden, since Swedes expect everyone they work with to be honest. It is not considered wise to recommend someone, unless you are absolutely certain of the person you recommend. Otherwise you risk your own reputation and credibility. Hence, you should put some effort into networking.

If your existing business contacts are of your own nationality or come from any other country than Sweden, it can still be wise to consult them. Hopefully they will be able to share their own contacts and experiences of doing businesses with Swedish companies.

**Highlights:**

- Decide what kind of business partner you are looking for
- Searching for partners on the Internet is cheap and easy, but time-consuming. Use a sense judgement when distinguishing relevant actors/companies
- If you use a database: make sure it contains companies from relevant sectors and geographical areas. If possible, register your own business inquiry, but do not sit back and wait for others to find you
- If you use a business support organisation: specify carefully what you want them to do for you and ask for a quotation
- If you participate in a trade fair: decide on the goal, start preparing early and reserve time for the follow-up
- If you participate in a trade mission: make sure the purpose is in line with your own goals
- Your own network can be a very effective source when searching for business partners. Put some effort into maintaining your contacts

## 4 Contacting Potential Partners

When you have found a new business contact that seems interesting, you need to awaken their interest in turn. This may be a challenge, since competition is fierce and many hopeful suppliers often contact Swedish importers. If you can get a personal meeting, this is the best way to get to know each other. Later in the process, visiting each other's companies is a good way to learn how they work.

### Sales Technique

If you want to sell your products to a Swede, you are advised to begin with carefully studying the Swedish business culture (see previous **Chapter 2**). However, there are also some general things to keep in mind:

- ◆ Write down your goals with the contact before you take it. This will make it easier for you to focus on the goals and achieve them.
- ◆ Gather information about the contact to be well-prepared. Many Swedish companies have a website with information in English.
- ◆ If your first contact is over the telephone, 90% of the impression is how you sound and only 10% of the impression is what you say. Practise your telephone voice and manners.
- ◆ Within the first 15-20 seconds, you should tell the contact who you are, where you are calling from and what you are offering. Do not talk too fast, be concise.
- ◆ People may say "no" at first but then come around. Try, in a nice way, to turn the initial no into a yes by finding new reasons and angles. Do not take a "no" personally.
- ◆ Listen for the signals in the conversation. If you get positive signals, do not be afraid of asking for a meeting or an order. For example, if your contact asks "How long would the meeting take?" you answer "It would take an hour, when can we meet?"

- ◆ The discussion should be about why they should buy, not why they do not want to buy.

### Business Meetings

At the business meeting, the importer will expect the exporter to be prepared and able to answer all questions regarding the company, resources, price, quality, terms of delivery, etc. Also, you should have investigated the relevant legislation and market requirements. Exporters from most developing countries will need a visa to visit Sweden and must apply for this at a Swedish embassy several months before departure. Many embassies require substantial documentation and sometimes an invitation from the potential business partner. There is also a growing trend that Swedish importers visit producers in developing countries before starting a new cooperation.



The exporter may have to meet several times with the potential buyer before a deal is concluded.

### Company Profile

You are strongly recommended to create a company profile, to have as a basis in discussion with potential buyers. A company profile is a one page short description of the company. It outlines the products or services, facts about the company, existing customer types and what kind of business cooperation the company is looking for. A company profile helps the new business contact to quickly discern what the company wants and its preferences. If you are participating in a trade mission with individual matchmaking, a company profile is a necessity.

### References and Credit Rating

Another way to learn more about your prospective business partner is to ask for references. You can ask for the name and address of a previous supplier or cooperation partner, a bank or a trade organisation that the company is a member of. If you have questions of a sensitive nature, you can ask your regional chamber of commerce to contact the chamber of commerce where the prospective partner is located. That way, you will not put a strain on the relationship.

Before deciding to enter into business with a company, you may need information on its solvency. This can often be ordered through your bank or international credit rating companies. Generally, there is a lot of information about Swedish companies, although some of it is in Swedish only.

Use this information to evaluate the company's ability to pay for your products.

### Tender

If the contacts have been successful, you may be asked to submit a tender. It is important that you get back quickly with your tender (within two weeks). The tender should contain information about product, quantity, price, time and way of delivery, freight charge, day of payment and how long the tender is valid.

**Highlights:**

- Be well-prepared when contacting and meeting your potential business partner
- Gather information to make sure the company is reliable
- If you are asked to submit a tender, do so quickly

## 5 Contracts

As previously mentioned, Swedes like all agreements to be in writing. If you are writing a contract, it is wise to consult a lawyer. At the end of the agreement, all parties should have a signed copy (original) of the contract, and the contract is considered to be irrevocable.

For international agreements, it should be stated in the contract which country's law is applicable. If the agreement exists in different language versions, state which version takes precedence. There may be an international standard agreement for the sector that can be included. The International Chamber of Commerce (ICC) offers model contracts for agents, distributors, etc. for a fee.

An arbitration clause for settling disputes is also advisable. The Arbitration Institute of the Stockholm Chamber of Commerce has several model clauses on its website (see **Chapter 9** – Useful Links).

**Highlights:**

- Consult a lawyer before writing a contract
- Do not forget to think of special conditions for international agreements (e.g. to state which country's law is applicable)
- Include an arbitration clause

## 6 Trade Margins/Price Structure

Before determining the export price of your product, you will have to consider a number of factors. Apart from your own production costs and profit margin, the price will depend on the competition and the consumers' willingness to pay.

Evaluate your cost structure. For instance, in general, the number of intermediaries has lowered for Swedish companies, as a mean to keep costs and thus the price down. Keep this in mind when determining your own export price.

When calculating your price, you will have to take into account the price level of competitive products. What distinguish your product from the competitors? What are the advantages and disadvantages with your product compared to competitive products?

The price structure in Sweden varies with product category. For example, the mark up for daily basic consumer products is much lower than the mark up for more durable consumer products and products such as clothes and accessories. Moreover, in general, consumers tend to be less price-sensitive in regards to necessity products (such as

medicines and salt). But the price-sensitivity does not only depend on the need of the product but also the availability of substitutes. Conducting a market research and analysing if your price is reasonable can determine what situation that applies to your product.

## 7 Customer Expectations

As mentioned earlier, the consumer awareness is relatively high in Sweden. It is most likely that your Swedish buyer has high expectations of your product and in terms of delivery. Thus, in order to do successful business with Swedish companies, there are some practical factors that you may consider when planning the delivery.

### CSR

One aspect of the increased consumer awareness in Sweden is the Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) trend that has grown strong. Swedish companies are increasingly expected to take more responsibility than the law demands when it comes to social, ethical and environmental issues. Swedish consumers are interested in these issues and many are willing to pay a little more for products produced under fair conditions in a sustainable way. If you can show that your company is actively working with CSR, it will be to your advantage.

### Certification and Standards

Doing business with a Swedish partner implies that you comply with EU and national directives, laws, regulations and standards. The purpose of this set of different legal requirements is to protect consumer safety and the environment.

The standards and legal requirements of most Swedish products are in accordance with European standards. In order to find out exactly what requirements your product needs to fulfil you may need to consult the national WTO Enquiry Point or the national standards body in Sweden, *the Swedish Institute of Standards* ([www.sis.se](http://www.sis.se)). You may also consult so-called contact points, established to assist exporters from developing countries, e.g. Open Trade Gate Sweden ([www.opentradegate.se](http://www.opentradegate.se)) or the EU Export Helpdesk (<http://exporthelp.europa.eu>).

### Delivery Times and Terms

As mentioned before, punctuality is highly emphasised in Sweden. Make sure to stick to your agreed deadline in delivery and try to account for the unforeseeable when planning your delivery. A fast and reliable delivery is highly valued by Swedish companies and there is often zero tolerance of delays.

The International Chamber of Commerce (ICC) has created a framework for international delivery terms, known as Incoterms 2000. Incoterms sets up rules, clarifying who is responsible for the delivery in terms of payment and insurance, timeframes etc. It is internationally recognised by authorities and judicatures. Thus, it is a reliable tool to use when setting up delivery terms in order to avoid misunderstandings and legal problems. A new and updated version of Incoterms, Incoterms 2010, will take effect as from January 2011. Incoterms can be ordered for a fee at [www.incoterms.se](http://www.incoterms.se) or <http://www.iccwbo.org/incoterms/>.



## Packaging

The key to a successful packaging is to ensure that the product is not damaged or intact in any way at arrival. However, the packaging also indicates the quality of the product and must meet certain legal requirements. The legal requirements depend on product type and whether the product is destined for industrial use or consumer use. The purpose of the legal requirements of packaging is to protect consumer health and safety. For example, an EU directive has been developed to ensure that right material is used in the packaging of different food products.

International Trade Center (ITC) has created a special webpage with practical information, expert support and advice in the field of packaging – [www.intracen.org](http://www.intracen.org) (look under “Business support” and then “Packaging”). The previous mentioned EU Export Helpdesk and Open Trade Gate Sweden may also be of assistance as well as the Swedish importer.

## Payment

The terms of payment are often stated in the agreement between you and the Swedish company. The most common terms of payment are Cash in Advance, Letters of Credit, Documentary Collections and Open Accounts. More information about each term of payment can be found in *Exporting to Scandinavia* (booklet published by the Swedish Chambers of Commerce).

In general, the dominant payment system in Sweden is the giro systems, the so-called Bankgiro system and the Postgiro system. Most transactions are made electronically and they are increasing in number as well as in shares in Sweden.

In contrast to other countries, the use of cheques is not very common in Sweden. Instead, an increasingly popular payment method is debit cards that are linked to bank accounts. This can be seen as a part of an automation process.

# 8 Advice for Long-term Business Relations

When you have started to do business with your new partner, the real challenge begins with creating a long-term business relationship. Too many leave their business relations to take care of themselves.

Remember the following things:

- ◆ Answer questions as soon as you can. If it will take time to find the answer, let your contact know that you have received the inquiry and will get back to him or her.
- ◆ Be quick to inform about changes in your company, possible delays and other things that your business partner needs to know. Conflicts can often be avoided if you are honest about problems that arise.
- ◆ Make a plan for general contacts: sales meetings, follow-up letters, Christmas cards, etc.
- ◆ Make sure you meet in person every now and then. Nothing can replace the personal meeting and contacts through e-mails and phone are facilitated if you have met the person first.

Frequent contacts and exchange of information will reduce the risk of problems and increase the chances of a fruitful long-term business relationship.

**Highlights:**

- Answer questions quickly.
- Be generous with information.

## 9 Useful Links

### Trade Promotion Organisations

[www.swedishchambers.se](http://www.swedishchambers.se) - the Swedish Chambers of Commerce have a trade promotion programme to support exporters from developing countries. The programme is financed by the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida) and basic services such as business contacts and market information are open to all developing countries in Africa, Asia, Latin America and Eastern Europe.

[www.opentradegate.se](http://www.opentradegate.se) – Open Trade Gate Sweden is a special facility set up by the Government of Sweden to strengthen the capacity of developing countries to trade and export to Sweden. Provides free information on trade rules and regulations.

<http://exporthelp.europa.eu> – The European Union offers information on e.g. duty rates, rules of origin, customs preferences and HS codes online at the website of the European Commission, Export Helpdesk. In order to find the HS code, click *Import tariffs* and then *Input form*.

[www.intracen.org](http://www.intracen.org) – International Trade Center helps to enable small business export success in developing countries by providing trade development programmes to the private sector, trade support institutions and policymakers. ITC work in partnership with the World Trade Organization (WTO) and the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD),

### Market Information

[www.swedishchambers.se](http://www.swedishchambers.se) – general information about the Swedish market (*Exporting to Scandinavia*) and specific information about different product groups.

[www.sweden.se](http://www.sweden.se) – official gateway to Sweden

[www.investsweden.se](http://www.investsweden.se) – Invest in Sweden Agency

[www.scb.se](http://www.scb.se) – Statistics Sweden

### Company Databases

[www.kompass.com](http://www.kompass.com) – Kompass, international company directory including Swedish companies

[www.europages.com](http://www.europages.com) – Europages, international company directory including Swedish companies

[www.agenturforetagen.se](http://www.agenturforetagen.se) – members of the Swedish Association of Agents

### **Business Inquiry Databases**

[www.chambertrade.com](http://www.chambertrade.com) – Chamber Trade, the global business inquiry database of the Swedish Chambers

[www.emarketservices.com](http://www.emarketservices.com) – Directory of electronic marketplaces around the world

### **Trade Fairs**

[www.fairlink.se](http://www.fairlink.se) – the Scandinavian Trade Fair Council, listing trade fairs and trade fair organisers in Sweden, Denmark, Finland and Norway

### **Authorities**

[www.tullverket.se](http://www.tullverket.se) – Swedish Customs

[www.kommers.se](http://www.kommers.se) – National Board of Trade

[www.jordbruksverket.se](http://www.jordbruksverket.se) – National Board of Agriculture

[www.livsmedelsverket.se](http://www.livsmedelsverket.se) – National Food Administration

[www.lakemedelsverket.se](http://www.lakemedelsverket.se) – Medical Products Agency

### **Sales Technique**

[www.sellingpower.com](http://www.sellingpower.com) – solutions for sales management

### **References and Credit Rating**

[www.worldchambers.com](http://www.worldchambers.com) – directory of chambers of commerce worldwide

[www.dbsverige.se](http://www.dbsverige.se) – business and credit information

[www.uc.se](http://www.uc.se) – business and credit information

### **Contracts and Arbitration**

[www.iccwbo.org](http://www.iccwbo.org) – Model contracts from the International Chamber of Commerce

[www.sccinstitute.com](http://www.sccinstitute.com) – the Arbitration Institute of the Stockholm Chambers of Commerce



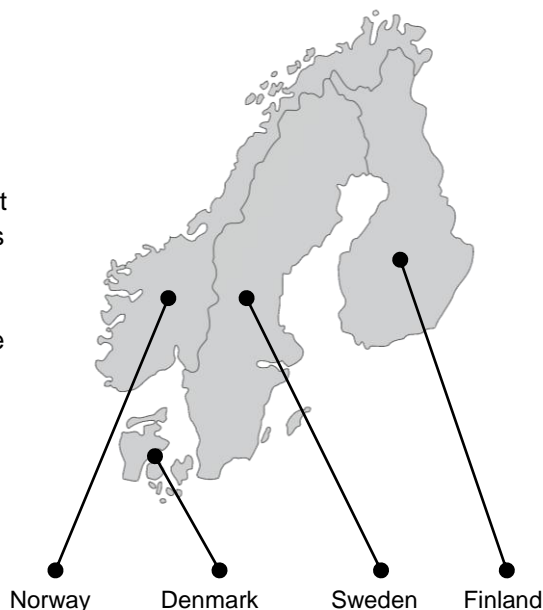
## The Nordic Market

There are many similarities among the Nordic countries with regard to culture, language, political and social systems etc. Also when it comes to consumer behaviour and product preferences you find many similarities.

When entering one of the Nordic markets it therefore might be relevant to consider the possibilities in the other countries as well.

Three of the Nordic countries work with trade and import promotion activities. Below you will find contact details of the import promotion organisations in Finland, Norway and Sweden.

Population:	Denmark	5.5 million
	Finland	5.3 million
	Norway	4.8 million
	Sweden	9.3 million



### Denmark

As from January 2010, Denmark has no trade promotion programme. The earlier programme (DIPP), which was financed by Danida (the Danish International Development Assistance), ended on 31 December 2009.

### Norway

Department of international trade cooperation (DITC) is established according to an agreement between NORAD (Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation) and HSH (Federation of Norwegian Commercial and Service Enterprises). DITC promotes imports from developing countries.

#### Contact details:

HSH – Department of International Trade Cooperation (DITC)  
P.O. Box 2900 Solli,  
NO-0230 Oslo, Norway  
Phone: +47-2254 1700  
Direct phone: +47-2254 1752  
Fax: +47-2256 1700  
E-mail: [ellen.gjeruldsen@hsh-org.no](mailto:ellen.gjeruldsen@hsh-org.no)  
Internet: [www.hsh-org.no](http://www.hsh-org.no)

### Finland

The Finnish business partnership programme, Finnpartnership, provides advisory services for business activities of Finnish companies in developing countries and financial support in the planning, development and implementation phases of a project.

#### Contact details:

Finnpartnership - Finnish Business Partnership Programme  
c/o Finnfund  
P.O. Box 391  
FI-00121 Helsinki, Finland  
Phone. +358-9-3484 3314  
Fax +358-9-3484 3346  
Internet: [www.finnpartnership.fi](http://www.finnpartnership.fi)

### Sweden

The programme is carried out in cooperation with Sida (Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency). It focuses on business contacts, market information, training and extended contacts in order to promote export from developing countries.

#### Contact details:

Swedish Chambers of Commerce  
Trade Promotion  
P.O. Box 16050  
SE-103 21 Stockholm, Sweden  
Phone: +46-8-555 100 00  
Fax: +48-8-566 316 30  
E-mail: [info@chambertrade.com](mailto:info@chambertrade.com)  
Internet: [www.swedishchambers.se](http://www.swedishchambers.se)



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Trade promotion

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