

Sweden

Sweden joined the Coalition in July 2021 and submitted its [commitment](#) through the Ministry of Rural Affairs and Infrastructure in July 2025 around the following areas: Financing, Programme design and coverage, Advocacy and Partnerships.

Achievements

Sweden's 290 municipalities are obliged to serve free and nutritious school meals to all students in primary school according to the Education Act. Budgetary responsibilities lie at the local level.

New National Guidelines for School Meals were developed by the Swedish National Food Agency during 2023-2025, emphasizing the role of school meals for health, learning, the environment and social community. The Guidelines contain goals and indicators that can be used at both national and local levels, anchored in the "Meal Model" framework with six elements: good, nutritious, safe, enjoyable, environmentally smart and integrated as a central part of school.

The Swedish Food Agency also collects data to track developments across municipalities, including on quality and topics such as food waste. It operates in networks with other national actors to collaborate and strengthen knowledge exchange between municipalities, government agencies and other organizations.

New research has been completed in recent years on the educational and social impact of school lunches. In addition, experiences and lessons learned from the long-term project, "A New Recipe for School Meals," coordinated by the Swedish Food Agency, have been summarized in a published report that identified the following success factors:

- student involvement and integration which strengthens understanding of the connection between food, health and sustainability;
- collaboration, leadership support and communication to ensure school meals are accepted by the students, parents and wider community;
- integration of innovation and local food systems contributing to more sustainable, accepted meals that support local food chains with a reduced climate footprint.

This project has also led to schools and municipalities introducing improved meals and opportunities for increased student involvement in line with good examples shared.

Sweden participates in international networks for the exchange of knowledge about school meals and a case study on Sweden's school lunch program is being finalized with the Research Consortium for School Health and Nutrition. The government contributes data and reports to European and international initiatives, such as the Global Child Nutrition Foundation, and school meals are highlighted as an important part of Sweden's work on sustainable food systems and implementation of the 2030 Agenda.

Highlights

- School meals are a statutory right in Sweden, fully financed by municipalities, with national support through guidelines and knowledge-sharing networks.
- Sweden invests in innovation and sustainability through research, student engagement, and integration of local food systems, contributing to reduced climate impact.
- The government contributes data and expertise to international initiatives and Swedish researchers and experts are finalizing a case study for the Coalition showcasing its school meal model and best practice.