



BUSINESS CLIMATE SURVEY FOR SWEDISH COMPANIES IN COLOMBIA 2025

A REPORT FROM TEAM SWEDEN IN COLOMBIA

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FOREWORD

Sweden and Colombia share over 150 years of diplomatic relations, a long-standing partnership that laid the groundwork for strong economic ties. The Swedish business presence in Colombia began in 1896 – when Ericsson delivered the country's first telephones. Since then, Swedish companies have played a key role in Colombia's economic and industrial development.

While Colombia presents a dynamic yet sometimes complex business environment, Swedish enterprises continue to show strong interest in the market. Many established companies are expanding their operations, and new entrants are exploring business opportunities in sectors such as transport, infrastructure, mining, life science, defence, energy and services. Together, these companies employ thousands of people and maintain a significant footprint in the Colombian economy.

This year's report marks the latest edition of the global Business Climate Survey. In 2025, the survey enables a global comparison across 40 markets, providing local insights alongside international benchmarking, including the business climate perceptions of Swedish companies operating in Colombia.

The purpose of the Business Climate Survey is to shed light on how Swedish firms view the local business environment and current market conditions, as well as to highlight opportunities and challenges. The insights aim to support companies already active in Colombia and those considering entry or expansion into the Colombian market.

This is the first time the Business Climate Survey is being conducted in the Colombian market, providing a valuable baseline for future assessments. In 2025, it gathered responses from 39 Swedish companies of varying sizes and sectors operating in Colombia. The data collection took place between 3 February and 7 March.

Team Sweden in Colombia, consisting of the Embassy of Sweden and Business Sweden, works together to strengthen Sweden's presence in Colombia and promote Swedish industry and economic interests. This collaboration is exemplified by the execution of the annual Business Climate Survey, a joint effort that enhances Sweden's visibility and supports Swedish businesses in the region.



Helena Storm
Swedish Ambassador to
Colombia



Erik Alarik
Country Manager in
Colombia, Business
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+35 respondents in Colombia

Current business climate

18% perceive the current business climate as very good/good

Industry turnover

62%

of Swedish companies expect their industry turnover to increase

Future investments

41%

of Swedish companies plan to increase their investments slightly or significantly in the next 12 months

Globally valued success factors

1. Brand awareness
2. Sales competence
3. Partnerships/relationships

Brand Sweden

85%

of Swedish companies abroad consider Brand Sweden beneficial for business

Local conditions with high satisfaction

1. Specialists and key personnel
2. Service providers
3. Business mindset

Local conditions with least satisfaction

1. Corporate taxation
2. Physical infrastructure
3. Licences, permits, and approvals

Environmental considerations

78%

of respondents believe environmental considerations are a factor in their customers' purchasing decisions

Corruption

A total of 28% of companies reported some exposure to corruption, mainly involving public or private counterparts.

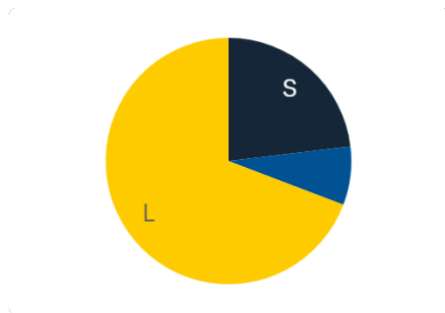
Human rights violations and labour rights abuse

No company reported exposure to human rights or labour rights violations.

ABOUT THE SURVEY

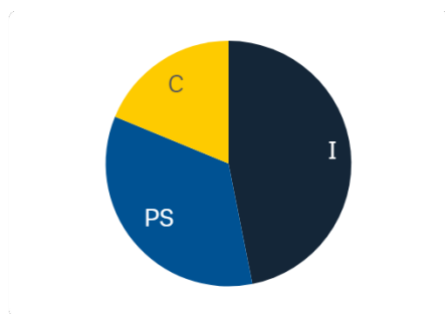
The 2025 survey received 39 answers from the largest Swedish companies in Colombia

SIZE OF COMPANIES



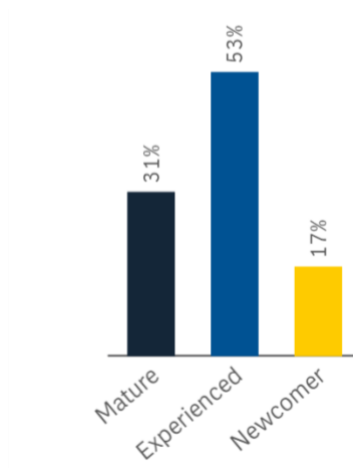
NOTE: Global employees. Large 69% >1000. Medium (8%) 250-1000. Small (23%) 0-249

MAIN INDUSTRY



NOTE: Industrial (47%). Professional services (34%). Consumer (19%)

AGE OF COMPANIES



NOTE: Mature (-2003). Experienced (2004-2019). Newcomer (2020-)

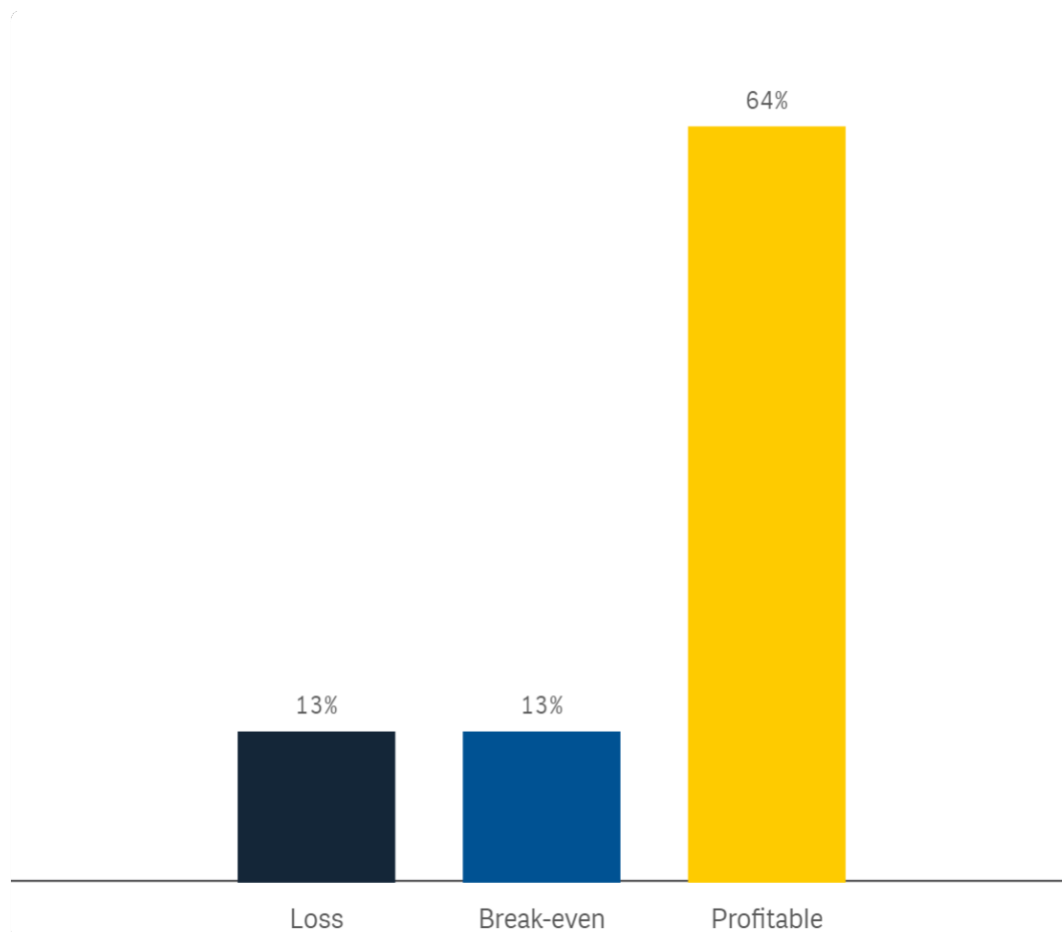
ECONOMIC OUTLOOK

Swedish companies report positive financial performance in Colombia in 2024

The first edition of the Business Climate Survey in Colombia reveals encouraging results: 64 per cent of the participating Swedish companies reported a profitable year in 2024. Meanwhile, 13 per cent indicated they broke even, and another 13 per cent reported losses. These figures suggest that a significant share of Swedish companies have managed to build and maintain successful operations in Colombia despite the natural complexities of operating in a dynamic and evolving market.

As newcomers to the survey in Colombia, Swedish companies are providing a valuable first look at how the local business environment supports or challenges their performance. Profitability among respondents reflects both Colombia's potential and the adaptability of Swedish firms to local conditions.

HOW WOULD YOU DESCRIBE YOUR COMPANY'S FINANCIAL PERFORMANCE IN COLOMBIA IN 2024?



NOTE: The number of respondents for this question was 3*. "Don't know/Not applicable" responses are included but not shown in this figure.

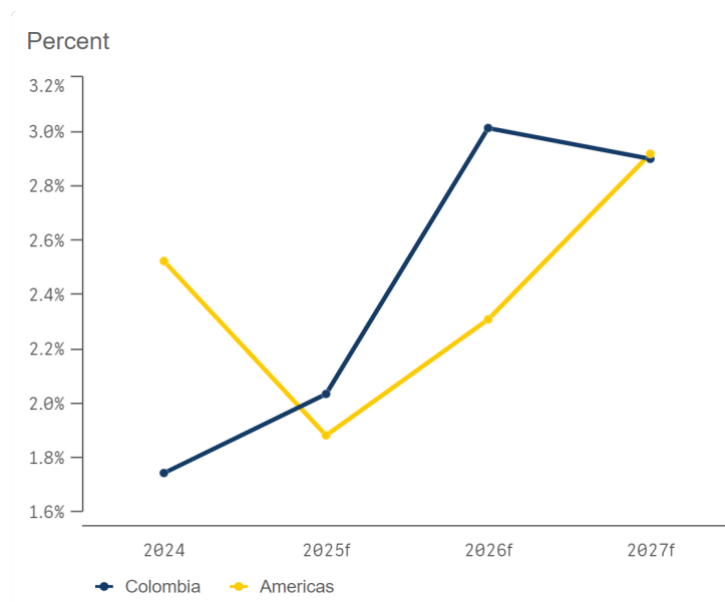
SOURCE: Business Climate Survey for Swedish companies in Colombia 2025.

Positive outlook for Colombia as growth and turnover expectations improve

Colombia shows signs of a strengthening economic environment, both at the national level and within the business sector. GDP growth is projected to accelerate from one per cent in 2024 to three per cent in 2026, surpassing the Americas' average from 2025 onward. This reflects renewed momentum after a period of slower growth and places Colombia among the more dynamic economies in the region in the coming years.

This optimism is also visible in business expectations: 62 per cent of the companies surveyed expect higher turnover in the next 12 months, compared to only 10 per cent anticipating a decline. While global uncertainty remains, the combination of economic forecasts and company sentiment points to increased confidence in Colombia's recovery and future market performance.

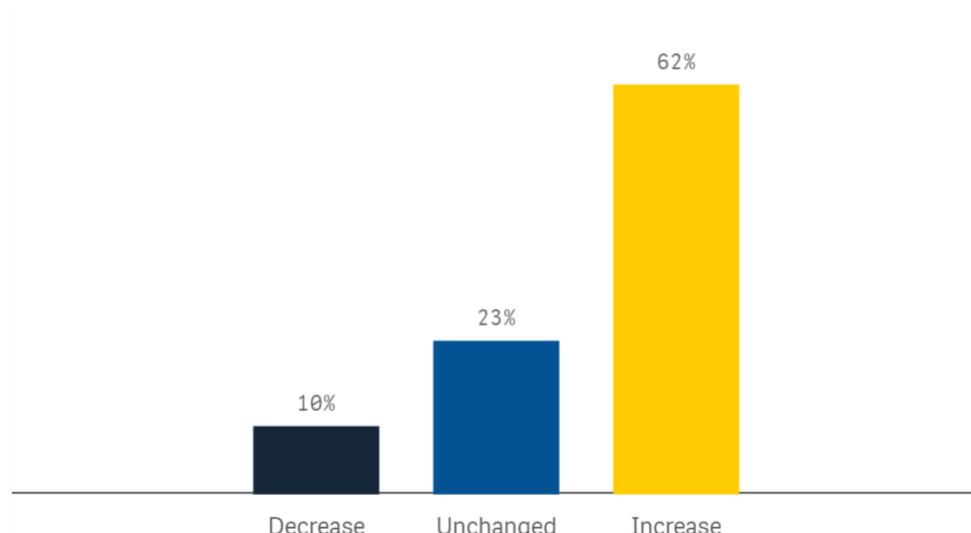
PROJECTED GDP GROWTH IN COLOMBIA



NOTE: Constant prices.

SOURCE: Oxford Economics, GDP, constant prices and exchange rate, USD. Last update: 26 February 2025

COMPARED TO DEVELOPMENTS OVER THE PAST 12 MONTHS, WHAT ARE YOUR EXPECTATIONS FOR YOUR INDUSTRY IN COLOMBIA REGARDING TURNOVER OVER THE NEXT 12 MONTHS?



NOTE: The number of respondents for this question was 39. "Don't know/Not applicable" responses are included but not shown in this figure.

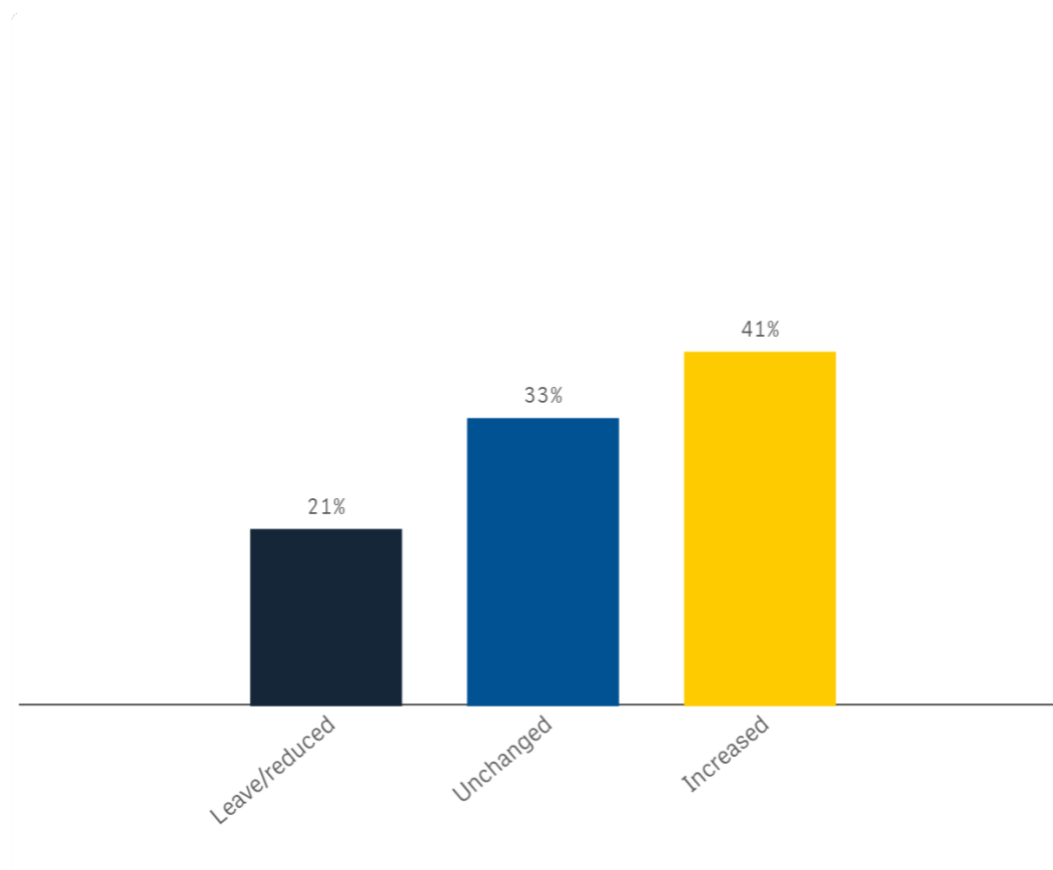
SOURCE: Business Climate Survey for Swedish companies in Colombia 2025.

Investment appetite remains cautious but shows signs of recovery

A total of 41 per cent of companies reported plans to increase their investments in Colombia over the next 12 months compared to the previous year. This suggests a moderate but encouraging level of confidence in the country's business environment. Meanwhile, 33 per cent expect to keep investment levels unchanged, and 21 per cent anticipate reducing or leaving their current commitments.

The fact that planned increases overtake reductions by nearly two-to-one signals a shift toward growth. However, the combined 54 per cent of companies either holding steady or cutting back indicates that concerns still weigh on the outlook. Overall, the results reflect a cautious optimism. Companies are open to expanding, but many are adopting a wait-and-see approach as they assess Colombia's macroeconomic stability, political landscape, policy direction, and market opportunities.

WHAT ARE YOUR COMPANY'S INVESTMENT PLANS FOR THE NEXT 12 MONTHS IN COLOMBIA COMPARED TO THE PAST 12 MONTHS?



NOTE: Reduced and increased represent aggregations of Slight/significant development changes. The number of respondents to this question was 39. "Don't know/Not applicable" responses are included but not shown in this figure.

SOURCE: Business Climate Survey for Swedish companies in Colombia 2025

THE MARKET

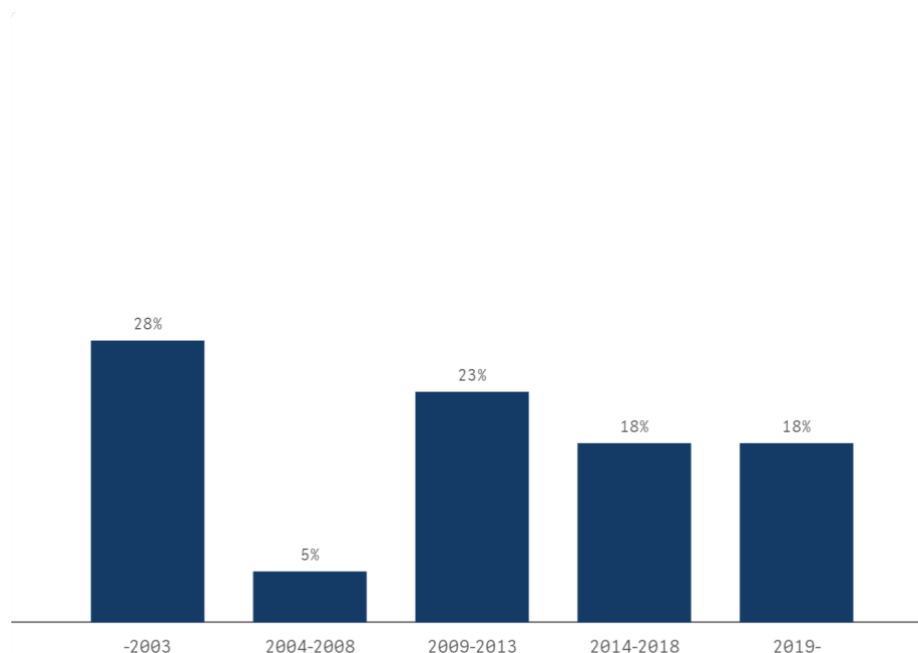
Swedish companies in Colombia show long-term presence, sector diversity, and lean operations

Swedish companies have maintained a steady and long-standing presence in Colombia, combining early market entrants with newer arrivals. Notably, 28 per cent of surveyed firms were established before 2003, while 18 per cent entered the market from 2019 onwards – reflecting continued interest in the country. Market entry was also significant between 2009 and 2013 (23 per cent), whereas the period from 2004 to 2008 showed comparatively lower activity, with only five per cent of firms entering during that time.

This presence is spread across a wide range of sectors. The most represented industries include industrial equipment, IT and electronics, and metals and mining, each accounting for just over 10 per cent of respondents. Other relevant sectors include automotive, healthcare, energy, retail, and food, with 20 per cent of firms falling outside the top ten categories. This mix highlights the diverse commercial interests that Swedish companies pursue in Colombia.

In terms of workforce size, most Swedish firms in Colombia operate with relatively lean local teams. Nearly 80 per cent have fewer than 250 employees in the country, while only five per cent employ more than 1,000. This suggests that many companies maintain streamlined operations focused on commercial or service-oriented activities while still demonstrating a long-term commitment to the Colombian market.

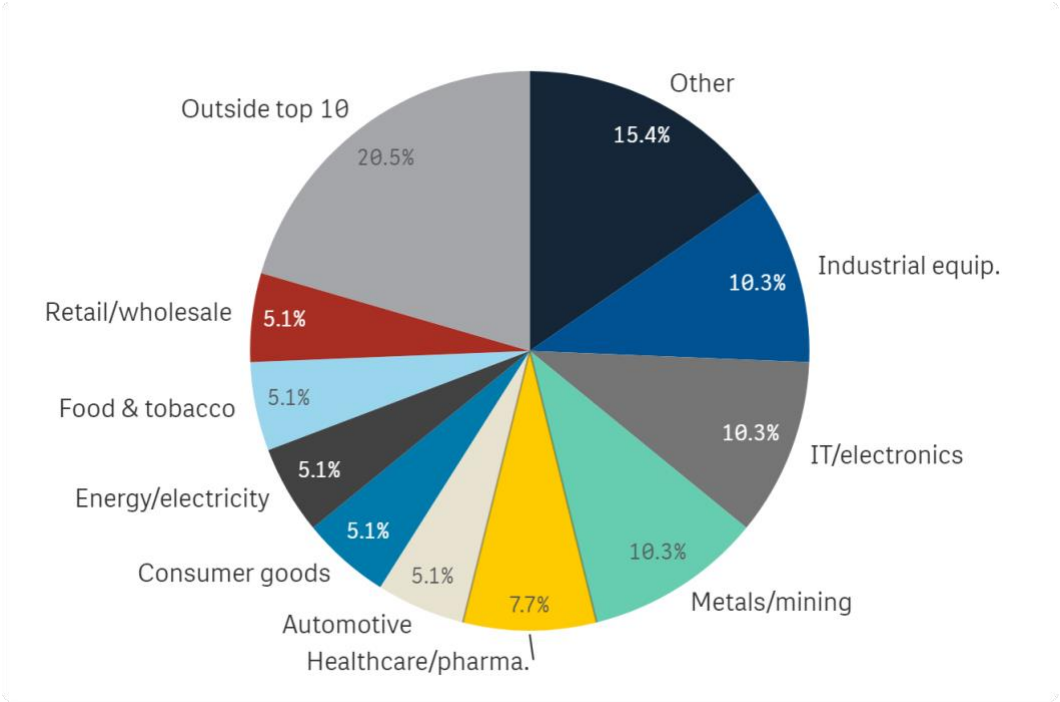
IN WHAT YEAR DID YOUR COMPANY ESTABLISH OPERATIONS IN COLOMBIA?



NOTE: The number of respondents for this question was 39. "Don't know/Not applicable" responses are included but not shown in this figure.

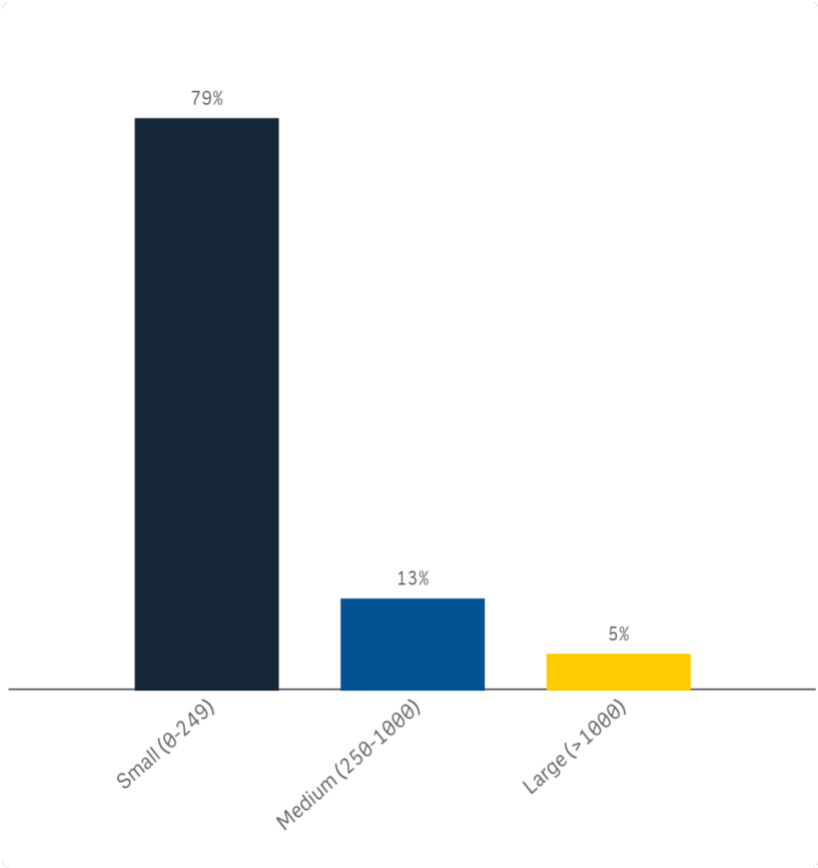
SOURCE: Business Climate Survey for Swedish companies in Colombia 2025.

WHAT IS YOUR COMPANY’S MAIN INDUSTRY IN COLOMBIA?



NOTE: The number of respondents for this question was. “Don’t know/Not applicable” responses are included but not shown in this figure.
SOURCE: Business Climate Survey for Swedish companies in Colombia 2025.

SWEDISH FIRMS’ LOCAL NUMBER OF EMPLOYEES IN COLOMBIA IN 2025



NOTE: The number of respondents for this question was 39. “Don’t know/Not applicable” responses are included but not shown in this figure.
SOURCE: Business Climate Survey for Swedish companies in Colombia 2025.

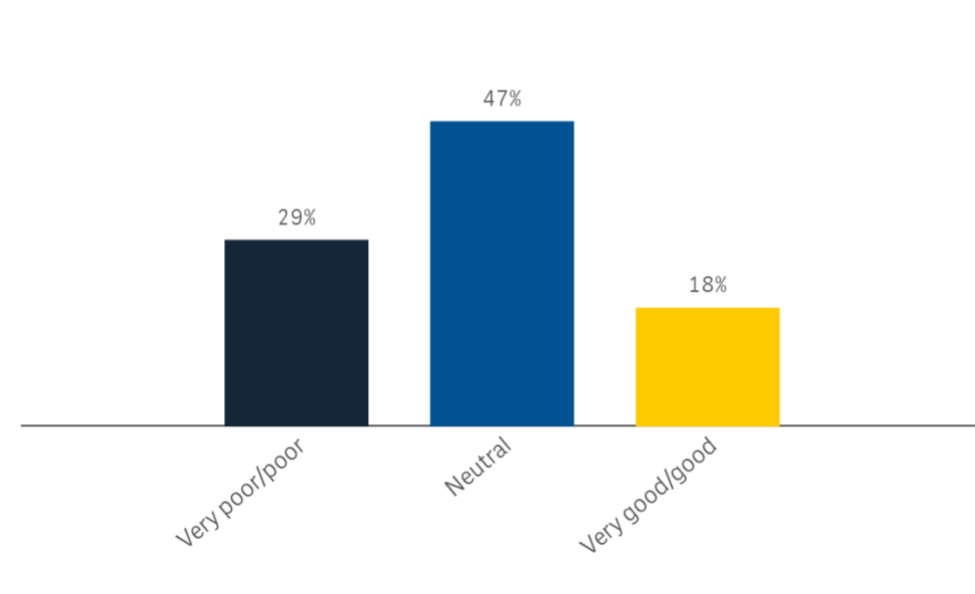
The business climate is seen as stable, but optimism remains low

The overall perception of the business climate in Colombia remains mostly neutral. Nearly half of the respondents (47 per cent) described current conditions as neither positive nor negative. Meanwhile, 29 per cent see the business environment as poor or very poor, and only 18 per cent consider it good or very good.

This suggests a cautious approach among Swedish companies. While most did not report a strongly negative experience, the low share of positive views points to limited confidence in the current business setting. Combined with the high number of neutral responses, the data reflects a tendency to stay cautious while companies follow how conditions evolve before making new decisions.

The data points to a measured outlook shaped by a mix of cautious optimism and ongoing observation. For many companies, maintaining a stable presence while assessing future developments remains the preferred strategy. Strengthening clarity around the business environment – including policy direction, regulatory frameworks, and economic prospects – may help reinforce confidence and support more active engagement from Swedish firms moving forward.

HOW DO YOU PERCEIVE THE CURRENT BUSINESS CLIMATE IN COLOMBIA?



NOTE: The number of respondents for this question was 39. "Don't know/Not applicable" responses are included but not shown in this figure.

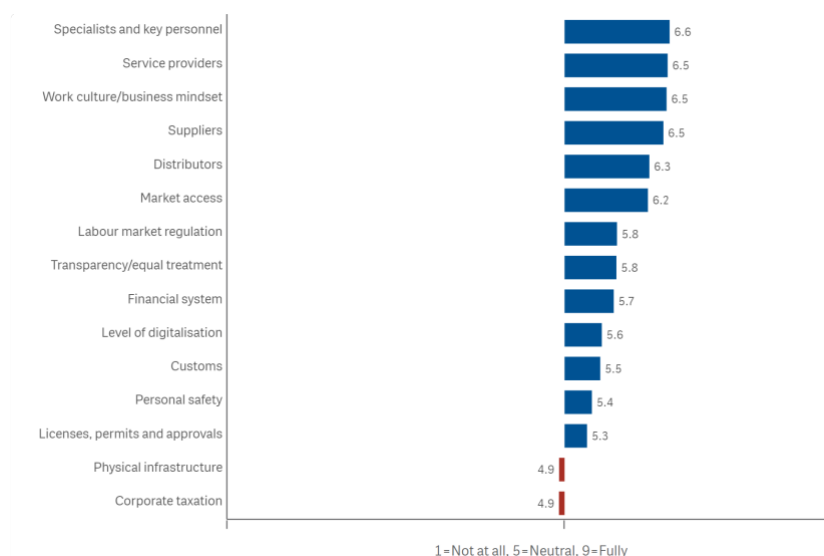
SOURCE: Business Climate Survey for Swedish companies in Colombia 2025.

Business support services perform well, but structural conditions fall behind

Swedish companies in Colombia report that their operational needs are mostly met when it comes to human capital and service-related conditions. Access to specialists, service providers, and suppliers all received scores of six or higher on a nine-point scale, indicating strong satisfaction in these areas. Work culture and market access also rank positively, suggesting a generally supportive environment for doing business at the day-to-day level.

However, some conditions continue to limit overall effectiveness. Corporate taxation and physical infrastructure were rated the lowest, both scoring five below the neutral mark. Other regulatory and logistical factors, such as licensing, personal safety, and customs, remain close to neutral and reflect ongoing challenges. These results point to a gap between strong operational inputs and the broader systems that shape long-term business conditions.

HOW WELL DO THE FOLLOWING CONDITIONS MEET THE NEEDS OF YOUR COMPANY IN COLOMBIA?



NOTE: The number of respondents for this question was 39. "Don't know/Not applicable" responses are included but not shown in this figure.

SOURCE: Business Climate Survey for Swedish companies in Colombia 2025.

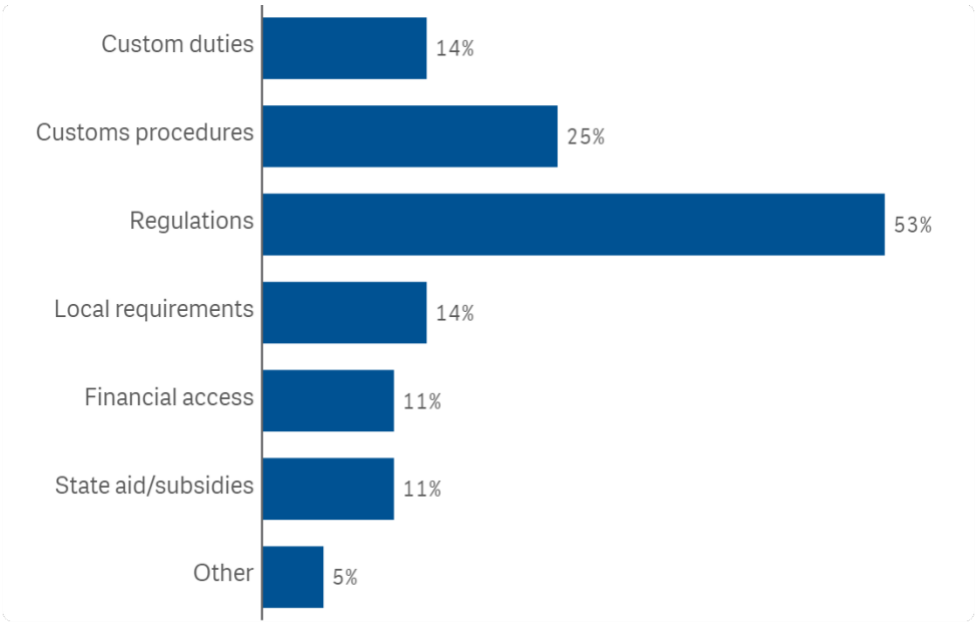
Regulations and procedures in Colombia remain areas to watch for Swedish companies

Over half of Swedish companies in Colombia (53 per cent) reported that regulations had a noticeably negative impact on their operations in the past year, making it the most frequently reported challenge. Customs procedures followed at 25 per cent, highlighting continued difficulties in navigating Colombia's trade systems.

Other obstacles mentioned include local requirements (14 per cent), customs duties (14 per cent), and limited access to financial support or subsidies (11 per cent each). Although these issues affect fewer companies, they contribute to an overall environment that remains complex for trade and investment.

The findings suggest that while Colombia offers a range of commercial opportunities, some companies still encounter regulatory and logistical challenges that require careful planning. Continued improvements in trade procedures and administrative clarity could help strengthen the overall business environment for international companies.

HAS YOUR COMPANY IN THE PAST YEAR ENCOUNTERED TRADE BARRIERS IN COLOMBIA WITH A NOTICEABLY NEGATIVE IMPACT ON OPERATIONS IN ANY OF THE FOLLOWING AREAS?



NOTE: The number of respondents for this question was 39.
SOURCE: Business Climate Survey for Swedish companies in Colombia 2025.

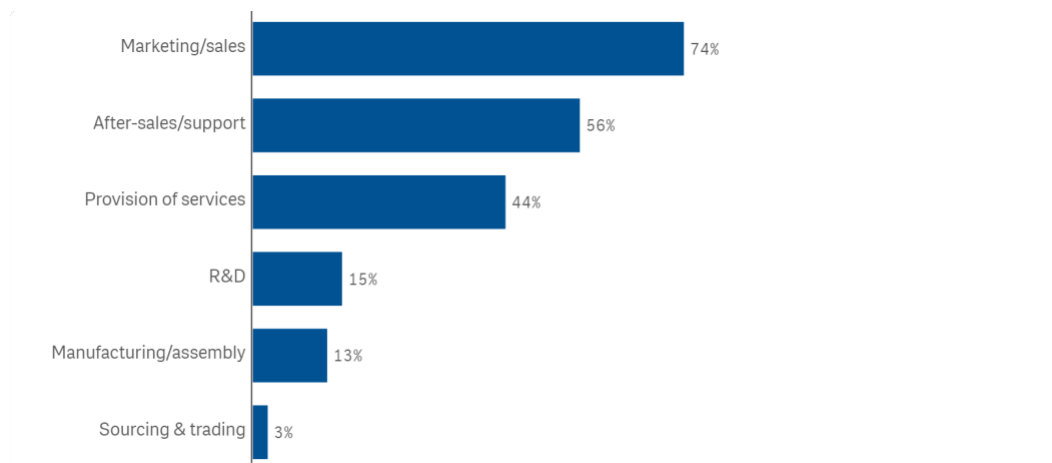
HOW SWEDISH COMPANIES SUCCEED IN COLOMBIA

Most Swedish companies in Colombia focus on commercial and service-related activities

Marketing and sales are the most common business operations among Swedish firms in Colombia, as mentioned by 74 per cent of respondents. After-sales support follows at 56 per cent, and provision of services at 44 per cent, indicating that companies are primarily active in client-facing and service-oriented functions.

In contrast, only a minority of firms reported involvement in production activities. Just 13 per cent have local manufacturing or assembly operations, and only 15 per cent are engaged in research and development. Sourcing and trading are even less common, with only three per cent of companies reporting this activity. These figures suggest that the presence of Swedish firms in Colombia is largely driven by market access and customer engagement rather than industrial footprint.

OPERATIONS OF SWEDISH FIRMS IN THE MARKET



NOTE: The number of respondents for this question was 39. "Don't know/Not applicable" responses are included but not shown in this figure.

SOURCE: Business Climate Survey for Swedish companies in Colombia 2025.

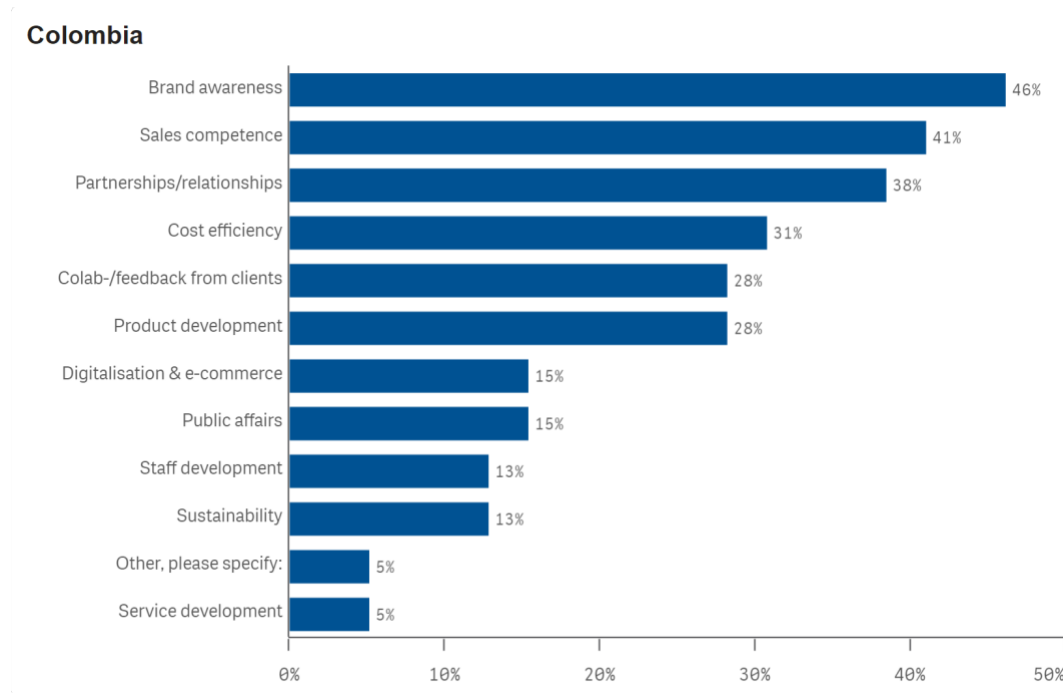
Brand awareness and sales competence are key to remaining competitive in Colombia

Swedish companies operating in Colombia identify brand awareness (46 per cent) and sales competence (41 per cent) as the most important areas for maintaining competitiveness. This suggests that local market presence and strong commercial capabilities are central to success in the Colombian context.

Partnerships and client relationships (38 per cent), cost efficiency (31 per cent), and client collaboration or feedback (28 per cent) are also frequently mentioned. These findings indicate that Swedish firms prioritise adaptability and responsiveness to local needs over structural or institutional factors.

Fewer respondents cited areas such as sustainability, digitalisation, and staff development. While these may play a growing role in the future, their lower ranking suggests that companies are currently focused on establishing trust, meeting client expectations, and staying cost-efficient in a market where operational fundamentals take precedence over long-term transformation strategies.

TO DATE, WHICH OF THE FOLLOWING AREAS HAVE BEEN IMPORTANT IN MAINTAINING COMPETITIVENESS IN COLOMBIA?



NOTE: The number of respondents for this question was 39. "Don't know/Not applicable" responses are included but not shown in this figure.

SOURCE: Business Climate Survey for Swedish companies in Colombia 2025.

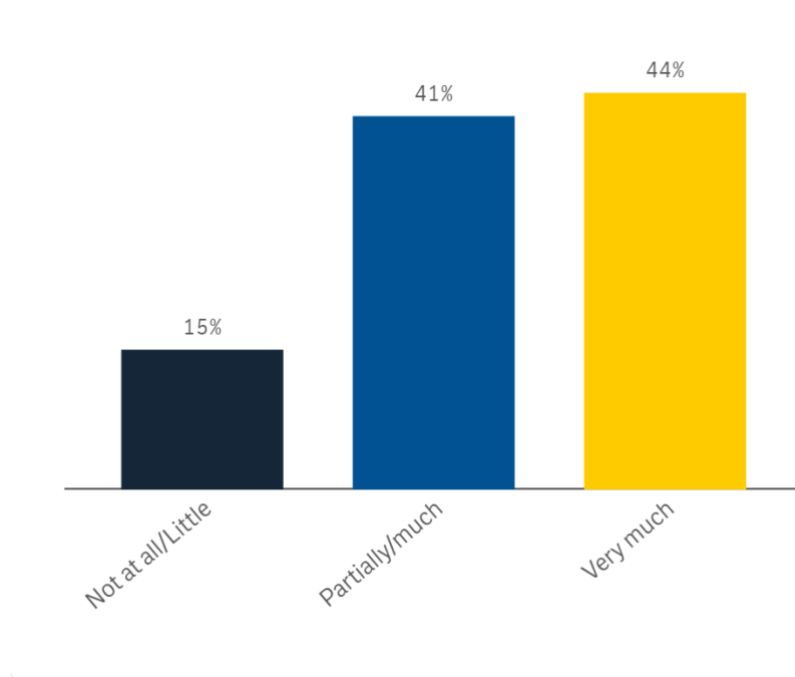
Most companies see clear value in being identified as Swedish

A strong majority of Swedish firms in Colombia believe that the Swedish brand contributes positively to their business. While 44 per cent say it helps them very much, another 41 per cent indicate it supports them partially or much. Only 15 per cent feel the brand adds little or no value.

These results suggest that Swedish origin continues to be perceived as a mark of quality, reliability, and trust in the Colombian market. The high recognition of the brand may also help companies position themselves in competitive sectors by reinforcing their reputation with clients, partners, and institutions.

This brand advantage aligns with the earlier findings, where brand awareness was ranked as the most important factor in maintaining competitiveness. Together, the data indicates that Swedish companies benefit not only from their individual strengths but also from the broader perception of Sweden in the local business environment.

TO WHAT EXTENT WOULD YOU ESTIMATE THAT THE 'SWEDISH BRAND' CONTRIBUTES TO YOUR BUSINESS IN COLOMBIA?



NOTE: The number of respondents for this question was 39. "Don't know/Not applicable" responses are included but not shown in this figure.

SOURCE: Business Climate Survey for Swedish companies in Colombia 2025.

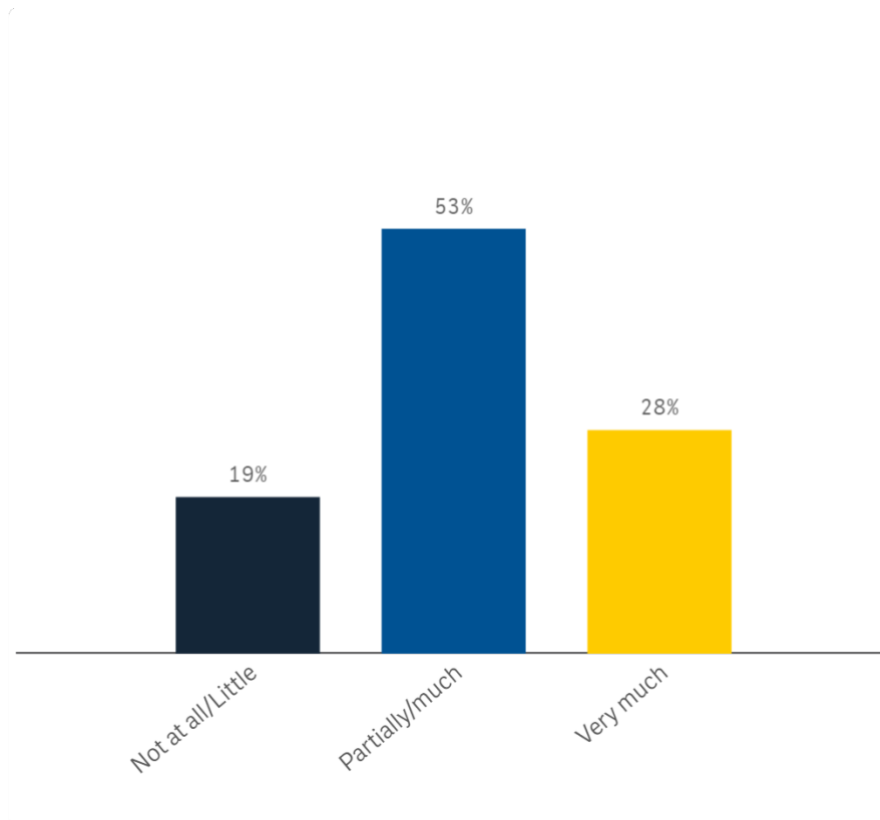
ACTING SUSTAINABLY

Environmental concerns are present in purchasing decisions, though not consistently decisive

Swedish companies in Colombia report that environmental aspects influence customer purchasing decisions, though not uniformly. While 28 per cent of respondents observe that sustainability factors play a decisive role, the majority (53 per cent) indicate that these considerations matter only to a moderate or partial extent. Meanwhile, 19 per cent perceive little or no influence.

These results suggest that while people are increasingly aware of environmental issues, this awareness does not always translate into changes in how they buy. For many customers, sustainability is something they consider, but it tends to be less important than other factors like price, product availability, or familiarity with the brand. This may be due to general market conditions in Colombia, such as budget constraints, limited access to sustainable options, or the absence of clear standards that guide environmentally responsible choices.

TO WHAT EXTENT DO CUSTOMERS IN COLOMBIA CONSIDER ENVIRONMENTAL ASPECTS OF A PRODUCT OR SERVICE IN THEIR PURCHASING DECISION?



NOTE: The number of respondents for this question was 36. "Don't know/Not applicable" responses are included but not shown in this figure.

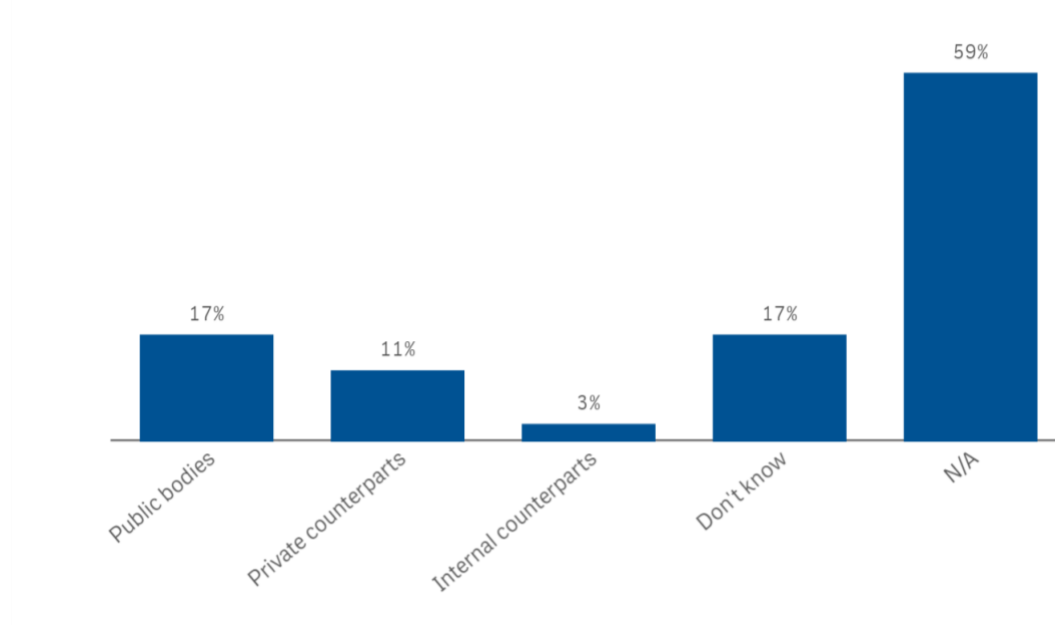
SOURCE: Business Climate Survey for Swedish companies in Colombia 2025.

Reported exposure to corruption remains low among Swedish companies, with most not experiencing any incidents

When asked whether they had encountered any form of corruption, such as bribery, fraud, or other irregular practices, Swedish companies in Colombia reported low levels of exposure in 2024. Only 17 per cent mentioned incidents involving public bodies, while 11 per cent involved private counterparts. A small share of three per cent reported internal issues.

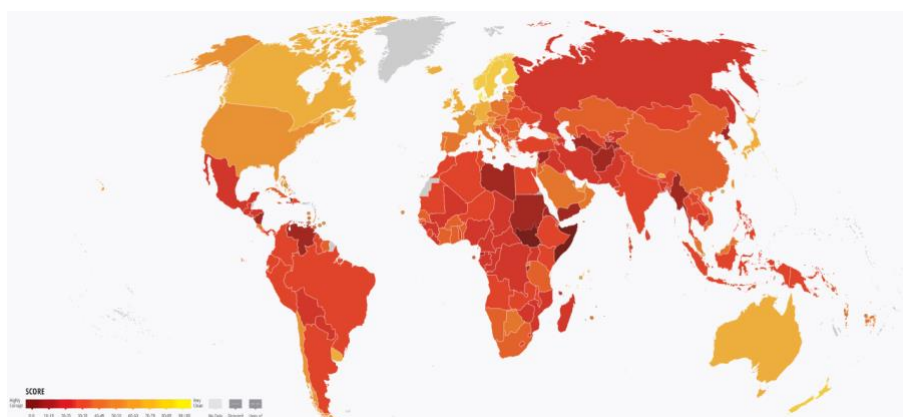
Most respondents chose not to answer this question, which may reflect a lack of exposure, limited visibility within their organisations, or restrictions on reporting on a sensitive topic. Colombia ranked 92nd out of 180 countries in Transparency International's 2024 Corruption Perceptions Index, indicating that while challenges persist at the national level, many Swedish companies appear to manage risks effectively through strong compliance practices and internal controls.

HAS YOUR COMPANY IN COLOMBIA BEEN EXPOSED TO CORRUPTION, SUCH AS, BUT NOT LIMITED TO, ATTEMPTS OF BRIBERY OR FRAUD IN CONTACT WITH ANY OF THE FOLLOWING AREAS?



NOTE: The number of respondents for this question was 39
SOURCE: Business Climate Survey for Swedish companies in Colombia 2025.

CORRUPTION PERCEPTION INDEX 2024

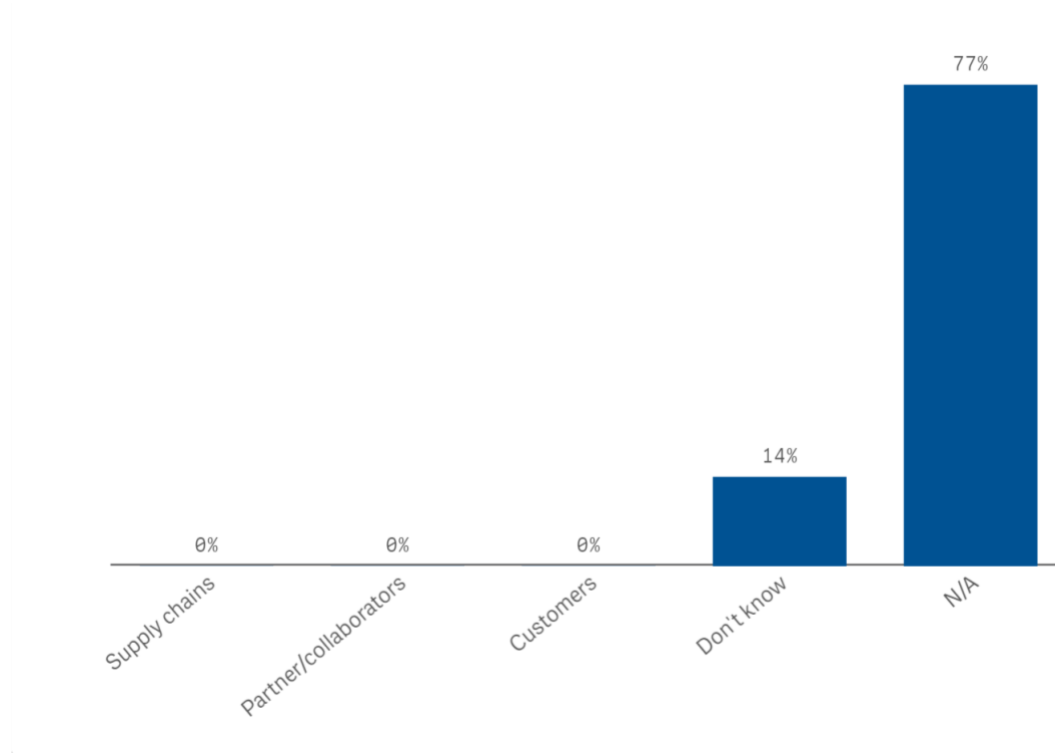


SOURCE: Transparency International.

No reports of human rights violations, with limited company feedback on the issue

None of the surveyed companies reported human rights or labour rights violations across supply chains, partners, or customers. The high number of non-responses suggests that visibility on this topic remains low or not prioritised in current reporting practices.

HAS YOUR COMPANY IN COLOMBIA ENCOUNTERED ANY FORM OF HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATIONS AND/OR LABOUR RIGHTS ABUSE IN CONTACT WITH ANY OF THE FOLLOWING AREAS?



NOTE: The number of respondents for this question was 39. Don't know/Not applicable" responses are included but not shown in this figure.

SOURCE: Business Climate Survey for Swedish companies in Colombia 2025.

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