



## Application process 2019

# Application for programme contributions 2021-2024: checklist – criteria

After the eligibility clearance, the SDC invites eligible Swiss NGOs, umbrella organisations, NGO alliances and cantonal federations to submit proposals for programme contributions. For the allocation of programme contributions, the following are key criteria.

### Mandatory criteria

Proposals will be screened for completeness and compliance.

Mandatory requirements require proposals to comply with *SDC Guidance for Engagement with Swiss NGO* (issued July 2019), and include all required documents listed in the application for programme contributions. Applications that are not complete or not compliant will not progress to the evaluation step.

The mandatory criteria include:

- I. The ZEWQ Quality Seal is attached to the application (only for eligible applicants that have not been certified by 31 August 2019);
- II. The applicant's annual and audited financial reports (including source of funds) is available online; and
- III. All annexes as stipulated in the application are submitted.

### Assessment criteria

All proposals which successfully complete the screening step along the mandatory criteria will then be evaluated on the basis of the objectives and principles of SDC engagement with Swiss NGOs.

#### 1. Coherence and relevance

Coherence of the international programme with the development and humanitarian objectives of Switzerland's international cooperation and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

##### **Criterion:**

- Programme alignment with Switzerland's long term, development and humanitarian goals and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).
  - The programme demonstrates alignment with Swiss international cooperation goals.<sup>1</sup>
  - The programme includes references to the SDGs, with corresponding indicators in the results framework.

<sup>1</sup> Switzerland's long-term goals are described in Art. 54 of the Federal Constitution of Switzerland, in Art. 5 and Art. 7 of the Federal Act on Development Cooperation and International Humanitarian Aid, in Art. 2 of the Federal Act on Cooperation with the States of Eastern Europe and in Art. 2 of the Federal Act on Civil Peace Promotion Measures and the Strengthening of Human Rights.



## **2. Strategic focus on strengthening civil society in developing and transition countries as well as in humanitarian crises**

A strong and well-organised civil society is essential for effective advocacy of human rights, promotion of gender equality, inclusive and sustainable development and participatory political processes. Well-informed and empowered citizens can voice their concerns and claim public spaces for participation, engage in issues that matter to them and hold their governments and political representatives accountable. This presumes that all people, including powerless and disadvantaged groups, are aware of their rights, identify with their society and feel confident and responsible enough to engage.<sup>2</sup>

### **Criteria:**

- The programme includes a strategic focus on strengthening, empowerment and capacity building of local, national and/or regional civil society organisations.
- The applicant clearly presents its strategic role and its added value in strengthening local / national / regional civil society.

## **3. Enable access to Swiss expertise, innovation and services**

Due to their proven competencies, their long-standing presence in various countries and their sound knowledge of the relevant contexts, NGOs are important actors in international cooperation. With their thematic and operational expertise and know-how, Swiss NGOs are well positioned to disseminate knowledge and innovations to local actors.

### **Criterion:**

- Promoting / delivering Swiss expertise, innovation and services, and concrete actions.
  - Examples of activities implemented in collaboration with Swiss institutions in the past are presented in the track record.<sup>3</sup>
  - Concrete actions are presented in the programme for collaboration with Swiss institutions in delivering the programme.

## **4. Management Criteria**

Applicants have in place defined governance, steering / management mechanisms, reporting and risk management procedures and standardised monitoring and evaluation (M&E) systems and impact measurement.

### **Criterion:**

- Quality and clarity of the institutional governance framework; availability of risk management, monitoring and evaluation processes and open access to development results and evaluations (e.g. IATI).

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<sup>2</sup> See *SDC Policy Democratization, Decentralisation and Local Governance* (2016).

<sup>3</sup> In the case of NGOs umbrellas and NGO alliances, a focus on collaboration with Swiss institutions that are not part of the alliance or included under the umbrella.



## 5. Strengthening the humanitarian-development nexus in fragile contexts and protracted crises

Working in and on fragility and across the humanitarian-development nexus to increase resilience and respond to emergencies in fragile contexts is a priority for the SDC and for the engagement with NGOs. An optimal investment tackles the structural factors responsible for fragility and low resilience. In order to increase the resilience of the countries and the population to shocks and crises, international cooperation relies on a close connection (nexus) between the humanitarian responses and economic, environmental and social development investments, especially in the case of long-term crises.<sup>4</sup> The nexus is particularly valuable in protracted crisis situations where short-term emergency relief and long-term development objectives co-exist and cannot be dealt with separately.<sup>5</sup>

### **Criteria:**

- Understanding of the comparative advantages of nexus approaches and how joining humanitarian aid and development cooperation can build systems and reduce future vulnerabilities.
  - Context analysis identifies issues to be addressed more appropriately with nexus approaches.
  - The programme demonstrates capacity to develop innovative approaches with regard to humanitarian-development linkages.<sup>6</sup>
- The proposal demonstrates a capability to deliver a programme working in the humanitarian-development nexus.
  - The NGO demonstrates a track record in having implemented projects and programmes linking humanitarian aid and development cooperation in fragile contexts and fast-changing crisis situations.

## 6. Applying a human rights-based approach to mainstreaming gender and good governance

The promotion of gender equality and good governance, based on the human rights principles, including non-discrimination, inclusive participation, accountability and the rule of law is at the core of promoting sustainable development and humanitarian aid. The SDC is committed to a human rights-based approach in all activities.<sup>7</sup>

### **Criterion for gender equality<sup>8</sup>:**

- Equal opportunities for women and men within the organisation, at strategic level and in the programme proposal
  - The proposal includes data on the share of women in senior management positions.
  - The programme demonstrates a gender sensitive context analysis.
  - The design and implementation include gender equality in the strategic orientation of the programme or in the results.

### **Criteria for Human Rights Based Approach (HRBA) furthering inclusion and non-discrimination:**

- HRBA is applied in the context analysis, including an analysis of power dynamics, identifying the causes for discrimination, exclusion and conflicts; and refers to the international human rights framework. The context analysis pays specific attention to the rights of women and girls and includes gender equality, as well as to the rights of vulnerable groups.
- Human rights principles are reflected at the strategic level, including equality and non-discrimination, empowerment and inclusive participation, transparency, accountability and rule of law.
  - The programme demonstrates approaches for reducing inequalities and promoting good governance.
  - Conflict sensitivity is reflected in programming and risk management (conflict sensitive lens / do no harm).

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<sup>4</sup> See *Erläuternder Bericht zur internationalen Zusammenarbeit 2021-2024* (2019).

<sup>5</sup> See *SDC Management response to the Independent Evaluation of the Linkage of Humanitarian Aid and Development Cooperation at the Swiss Development Corporation* (2019).

<sup>6</sup> See *Independent Evaluation of the Linkage of Humanitarian Aid and Development Cooperation at the Swiss Development Corporation*.

<sup>7</sup> See *SDC Guidance on Human Rights in Development and Cooperation* (2019).

<sup>8</sup> See *FDFA Strategy on Gender equality and Women's rights* (2017).



- Vulnerable, marginalised, and disadvantaged groups are targeted and are the main beneficiary groups of the intervention.
  - The programme reflects the inclusion of disadvantaged and marginalised groups
  - The NGO demonstrates a track record in the inclusion of disadvantaged and marginalised groups (leaving no one behind and HRBA).

## **7. Integrating policy dialogue**

Policy dialogue is an integral part of the SDC's engagement with Swiss NGOs. Swiss NGOs also engage in policy dialogue with national and/or multilateral stakeholders in order to enhance effectiveness in line with the four shared principles of effective development co-operation of the Global Partnership (GPEDC).<sup>9</sup>

### **Criterion:**

- Policy dialogue (at local, provincial or national level) is included as a clear component / integral part of the intervention.

## **8. Promoting multi-stakeholder partnerships and cross-sector mobilisation and cooperation**

Effective international cooperation requires coordination and collaboration between the different institutions present on the ground. SDG 17 recognises that effectiveness is increased when multi-stakeholder partners mobilise and share knowledge, expertise, technology and financial resources to support the achievement of the sustainable development goals, particularly in developing countries. The SDC's engagement with Swiss NGOs should facilitate cooperation between NGOs, the private sector, and academia not only in Switzerland – as noted above – but as well in the partner country and at international level.

### **Criterion:**

- The programme demonstrates that multi-stakeholder partnerships / cross-sector cooperation, collaboration with international institutions or community coordination are part of the intervention.

## **9. Promoting and respecting national ownership of development priorities**

Partnerships for development can only succeed if they are led by developing countries, implementing approaches that are tailored to country-specific situations and needs.

### **Criterion:**

- Use of or reference to country-led development objectives/results embedded in the programme's implementation/long-term sustainability hand-over plan.

## **10. Improving effectiveness, strengthening transparency and accountability**

Effectiveness is the extent to which humanitarian and development outcomes are achieved. Development efforts must have a lasting impact on eradicating poverty and reducing inequality, and on enhancing developing countries' capacities, aligned with their own priorities (second GPEDC principle). In addition, as stated in the fourth GPEDC principle: «Mutual accountability and accountability to the intended beneficiaries of development co-operation, as well as to respective citizens, organisations and constituents, is critical to delivering results. Transparent practices form the basis for enhanced accountability».

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<sup>9</sup> The UN Global Partnership for Effective Development Co-operation (GPEDC) is based on the four principles of effective development co-operation including country ownership, a focus on results, inclusive partnerships and transparency and mutual accountability (<http://effectivecooperation.org/about/principles/>).



***Criterion for outcome orientation to improve effectiveness:***

- Availability of a clear outcome-oriented M&E system with appropriate resources allocated to collecting and evaluating data and space for steering and adapting the programme based on results.
  - Quality of the results framework (incl. SMART indicators at outcome level) and resource allocated to programme M&E.
  - Availability of a steering mechanism for the programme (e.g. self-evaluation and reflection on results, adapting annual plans).

***Criterion for transparency and accountability:***

- The project or programme clearly demonstrates that it is accountable to the beneficiaries; and that it will engage beneficiaries and stakeholders (citizens, organisations, constituents, shareholders) at various levels throughout the programme.
  - The programme demonstrates accountability to beneficiaries.
  - The M&E Framework reflects the principles of non-discrimination and inclusion through gender sensitive data and disaggregated reporting on vulnerability.

**11. Optimising cost effectiveness and minimising transaction costs**

The SDC's engagement with Swiss NGOs is not only measured by results, but also by cost-effectiveness. The international programme budget is appropriate for the expected outcomes. Innovative management techniques, modern communication and digital technology are used to minimise transaction costs including coordination costs (excluding communication and fundraising costs).

***Criteria:***

- The programme demonstrates a budget directly related to the expected results
  - Financial resources of the international programme are allocated to countries identified as fragile contexts.<sup>10</sup>
  - Appropriateness of budget allocation per outcome in relation to the results expected.
- Share of transaction costs that can be co-financed by the SDC in relation to the international programme.
  - The programme demonstrates a percentage transaction costs in line with ZEWO requirements.

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<sup>10</sup> Based on the fragile contexts identified in OECD State of Fragility report available at the time of the evaluation.