



# Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation

The SDC – reliable,  
innovative, effective



Schweizerische Eidgenossenschaft  
Confédération suisse  
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Confederaziun svizra

Swiss Agency for Development  
and Cooperation SDC

# Goals

Swiss international cooperation, which is an integral part of the Federal Council's foreign policy, aims to contribute to a world without poverty and in peace, for sustainable development. The Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC) is responsible for humanitarian aid, development cooperation and cooperation with Eastern Europe.

The international cooperation priorities set by the Swiss Parliament for the 2017–20 period are designed to meet foreign policy challenges and build on Switzerland's unique expertise. These priorities pursue seven strategic objectives:

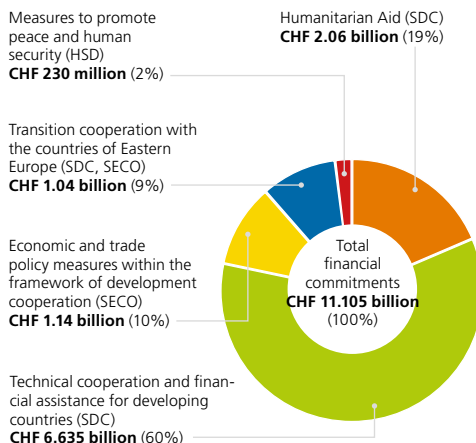
- › Contribute to developing an international framework that responds to global challenges
- › Prevent and manage the consequences of crises, disasters and fragility, and promote conflict transformation
- › Ensure sustainable access to resources and services for all
- › Promote sustainable economic growth
- › Strengthen the rule of law and democratic participation while supporting institutions that serve society and the economy
- › Respect and promote human rights and fundamental freedoms
- › Strengthen gender equality and the rights of women and girls

The SDC focuses its activities on reducing poverty and distress, as well as curbing global risks. It also aims to preserve natural resources for future generations. Because there can be no peace without sustainable development, and there can be no sustainable development without peace, the SDC is stepping up its activities in fragile contexts where almost two-thirds of the world's poor will be living by 2030.

Through its engagement, the SDC enables disadvantaged communities to have better access to basic education and health. It helps solve environmental problems and contributes to the creation of better prospects, especially for young people and women, in particular through vocational education and training and income generation. To address global challenges, the SDC is actively engaged in the search for solutions, particularly in the areas of climate change, food security, water, health and migration.

Since 2016, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, whose 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDG's) have universal application, has provided the framework for all efforts to combat poverty and promote sustainable development, including those undertaken by Switzerland and the SDC.

## Framework credits 2017–2020



# The SDC's partners

In order to implement programmes in partner countries, the SDC works closely with partners in Switzerland, with the countries concerned and with international bodies. First and foremost, the SDC supports its partner countries' own sustainable development efforts and makes its expertise available to them.

Its work on the ground includes dialogue with governments, civil society organisations and the private sector, as well as coordination with other donor countries.

Switzerland is a member of the most important multilateral organisations and funds, including international financial institutions such as the World Bank and regional development banks and UN agencies such as the United Nations Development Programme and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. Multilateral organisations undertake large-scale programmes at the global level and have direct access to governments.

Swiss Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) are key partners in the countries concerned, as they have many years of experience in fighting poverty and in providing emergency assistance during disasters and crises.

In many of its programmes the SDC works with the State Secretariat for Economic Affairs (SECO) and other federal offices. SECO focuses its efforts on economically advanced countries, East European transition countries and countries of the former Soviet Union, as well as the new EU member states. The FDFA's Human Security Division (HSD) is committed to the promotion of peace and human rights.

Swiss companies also contribute their know-how and experience to Swiss international cooperation. To promote sustainable development, Switzerland also establishes partnerships with the private sector, in particular 'public-private development partnerships' (PPDPs).

The scientific and research communities also make a vital contribution to addressing development problems and global challenges. The SDC maintains long-standing collaborative partnerships with universities and research institutes in Switzerland and abroad.

# The effectiveness of the SDC's work

Ensuring and measuring the effectiveness of Switzerland's international cooperation work is of paramount importance. The work of the SDC is effective when it improves the long-term prospects of the poorest groups in society, reduces poverty, and when it promotes the kind of development that uses resources responsibly.

The SDC carries out systematic, critical assessments of its activities in order to ensure that its programmes are impact-oriented and that resources

are being used sustainably. Clear and measurable goals are set for each project. External assessments ensure that projects achieve their goals and that corrective action can be taken where necessary.

External assessments allow the SDC to continuously improve the quality of its work and to continue its long-term efforts to contribute to a more just and peaceful world. The SDC publishes reports that meet transparency requirements and thereby hold the agency accountable to the Swiss public and Parliament.

# Effectiveness of SDC programmes – some examples

**Basic education:** Despite difficult conditions, the SDC has achieved successes in the field of basic education in Chad, a country racked by violence and extremism. In 2016 nearly 200,000 children, almost half of whom were girls, were able to attend one of the 800 primary schools supported by the SDC in the country. This was an increase of 180% on the previous year. Although Chad's illiteracy rate decreased slightly as a result, at over 70% it remains one of the highest in the world.

**Rule of law:** In Tajikistan, over 13,000 people (72% of them women) have received legal and psychosocial support free of charge since 2013. As a result, many victims of domestic violence have for the first time in their lives received benefits such as a child allowance, a pension, divorce assistance or support to enrol their children in school.

**Vocational education and training:** The SDC's strategy of increasingly aligning the vocational education and training system with the needs of potential employers and expanding job placement and counselling services has proved successful in the Western Balkans. Despite a tight labour market, some 16,000 young people have been able to find jobs in Bosnia and Herzegovina. The SDC designed and implemented these measures in close cooperation with the competent authorities, public and private job placement agencies, and with the companies involved.

**Health:** As part of its commitment to the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria (GFATM), since 2012 the SDC has worked to ensure that efforts are not only focused on these three epidemics but also on building the health systems of the countries concerned. These efforts have been successful: the GFATM has included the long-term strengthening of health systems as one of the goals of its 2017–22 strategy.

**Disaster risk reduction:** The SDC has helped 23 universities in Central America to integrate disaster risk reduction and climate change adaptation into the curricula of over 30 degree programmes. As a result, future decision-makers who will play a part in developing the agricultural and infrastructure sectors are currently being trained in risk-based planning.

**Activities in fragile contexts:** The SDC launched its most extensive humanitarian operation to help the victims of the Syrian crisis. It provided over CHF 250 million during the first five years after the outbreak of the war, primarily to support the International Committee of the Red Cross, humanitarian UN agencies and NGOs. The education sector is a case in point: about 120 schools in Jordan and Lebanon have been renovated with SDC assistance, allowing more than 60,000 refugee and local children to attend school safely. Switzerland also seconded Swiss Humanitarian Aid Unit specialists to organisations working in the crisis region.

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## Swiss Humanitarian Aid

The mission of the SDC's Swiss Humanitarian Aid Department is to save lives and alleviate suffering. Swiss Humanitarian Aid is guided by international humanitarian law and the internationally recognised principles of humanity, neutrality, impartiality and independence.

As an expression of Switzerland's solidarity with people in need, Swiss Humanitarian Aid activities are centred on the victims of crises, disasters and conflicts and are founded on shared values such as the inalienable dignity of every individual.

Swiss Humanitarian Aid efforts are focused on three core areas:

- › Emergency aid and survival assistance
- › Sustainable reconstruction
- › Disaster risk reduction and prevention

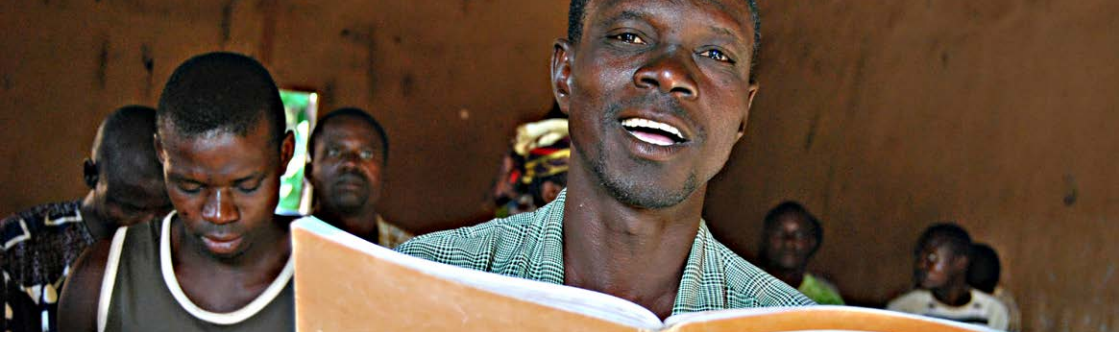
The lion's share of Swiss Humanitarian Aid resources is allocated to emergency aid in order to protect civilian populations that are most affected by crises, especially women, children, refugees and

internally displaced persons. Specifically, the aim is to ensure the provision of basic necessities such as emergency shelter, drinking water, sanitary facilities and medical supplies. The Swiss Humanitarian Aid Unit (SHA) provides direct assistance in regions affected by conflict or natural disasters. In addition, it seconds specialists to multilateral organisations.

Sustainability is key to reconstruction and disaster risk reduction. Earthquake- and hurricane-proof constructions ensure that people will be better protected against future disasters.

The SDC's Humanitarian Aid Department works closely with Swiss relief organisations and international organisations, both on the ground and at the international level. The International Committee of the Red Cross, UN agencies such as the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and the World Food Programme, as well as humanitarian NGOs are important partners of Swiss Humanitarian Aid.





## South Cooperation Department

The SDC's South Cooperation Department contributes to reducing poverty in 21 countries and regions of Africa, the Middle East, Asia, Latin America and the Caribbean. Its main priority is to provide disadvantaged communities with access to basic services (basic healthcare and education) and infrastructure (water), as well as employment and income.

More than half of these countries and regions are fragile or affected by conflict: state institutions are weak or unstable, and time and again populations living in extreme poverty fall victim to violence and arbitrary political persecution. Despite difficult conditions, the South Cooperation Department is stepping up its activities in these regions in order to improve the economic and social situation of affected communities. It continuously adapts its programmes to the rapidly changing environment.

The South Cooperation Department currently runs over 800 projects focused on ten themes, with activities geared to the needs of the SDC's partner countries:

- › Peacebuilding, conflict prevention and promotion of human rights
- › Basic education and vocational education and training
- › Employment and economic development
- › Food security and nutrition
- › Water
- › Health
- › Migration
- › Climate Change
- › Gender equality
- › Governance (democratisation, decentralisation, the rule of law)





## Cooperation with Eastern Europe Department

In Eastern Europe, Switzerland contributes to the promotion of security and stability as well as sustainable economic growth. Cooperation with Eastern Europe includes transition cooperation and Switzerland's contribution to the new member states of the EU.

Through transition cooperation, the SDC and SECO promote the rule of law, democracy and the social market economy, and strengthen civil society. In this way, Switzerland contributes to stability in politically troubled regions and provides people there with better prospects.

Around 55% of financial and technical aid goes to five countries in the Western Balkans, and the remaining 45% is deployed in the eight countries of the former Soviet Union.

The Cooperation with Eastern Europe Department focuses its transition cooperation work on the following priority areas:

- › Democratisation, decentralisation, local governance and combating corruption
- › Reform of the health sector
- › Sustainable agricultural development
- › Bringing vocational education and training systems into line with the needs of the labour market
- › More efficient and equitable water management
- › Prevention of conflicts and promotion of the rule of law

By helping to reduce economic and social disparities in the new member states, Switzerland is promoting stability and prosperity in the enlarged European Union. It thereby also fosters stronger relations with the new member states and with the EU as a whole, Switzerland's most important partner in terms of foreign policy. Switzerland's contribution to the enlarged EU is not counted as official development assistance.







## Global Cooperation Department

The Global Cooperation Department works to improve the chances for poor countries to adapt to global changes. Because poverty, the effects of climate change, water scarcity, migration and health are transnational issues, solidarity among all peoples, all countries and all organisations is more necessary than ever.

That is where global programmes and multilateral cooperation come into play, fostering political dialogue and developing broad-based solutions underpinned by practical knowledge.

Multilateral organisations such as the UN, the World Bank and the regional development banks can realise major undertakings thanks to the extensive knowledge, the long years of experience and the considerable resources they have at their disposal. Through the funding it provides and its secondment of staff to multilateral institutions, Switzerland is able to participate in large-scale projects.

The combined knowledge of individual countries and international organisations helps ensure effective use of the funds invested and helps improve project outcomes.

As a contribution to pro-development globalisation, the Global Cooperation Department is implementing worldwide programmes in the areas of climate change, food security, migration, water and health. At the heart of these programmes lie multilateral political dialogue, the development of innovative solutions and the dissemination of knowledge.

Their added value rests on drawing together specialist knowledge, practical relevance and the setting of international standards. Global programmes primarily come into play where transnational solutions are possible. Accordingly, they are not bound geographically and operate in regions where they have the most effect.

