

EFFECTIVENESS OF DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION



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Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation SDC

Measuring effectiveness at the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC)

Fourteen years ago the SDC started an ambitious project in Tanzania together with the Tanzanian government, other donors and non-governmental organisations. Its goal: to help people throughout the country protect themselves from malaria – one of the most serious diseases in Tanzania. The project set up a national system for distributing mosquito nets, along with an information campaign to raise awareness among the population about this dangerous disease and ways to prevent it.

To date more than 28 million mosquito nets have been distributed. Thanks to the successful campaign, 80% of Tanzanian families now sleep under mosquito nets. Between 2000 and 2010, the infant mortality rate in the country fell by 48%, malaria-infection rates decreased in the south of the country by 85%, and an estimated 60,000 deaths among small children (under 5) were prevented through the consistent use of mosquito nets.

What does effectiveness in development cooperation mean?

The SDC's mandate is to contribute to worldwide poverty reduction and improve the living conditions of the target groups in its partner countries. Therefore, the SDC must demonstrate that its various projects are properly implemented and that all appropriate measures have been taken to ensure this is the case. In addition, the SDC must show how these measures have improved the living conditions of the intended beneficiaries. To prove their effectiveness and find out why some projects have a greater impact than others, measuring effectiveness is an integral part of the SDC's and its partners' work. The aim is to show both the short- and the long-term effects of the projects in question. The term 'effects' is used to refer to concrete changes brought about by individual projects. Taken together these concrete changes constitute the basis for measuring the effectiveness of the SDC's development cooperation.

How is effectiveness assessed?

Measuring effectiveness begins at the planning stage of the SDC's and its partners' projects. This involves determining how the achievement of the objectives is to be assessed. The following overview explains how the SDC prepares the measurement of effectiveness of its projects and how the various steps are actually put into practice, using the project in Tanzania as an example.

Pregnant women and children are especially threatened by malaria. They can better protect themselves against the disease by using mosquito nets. A project supported by the SDC contributed to a major reduction in cases of malaria in Tanzania.

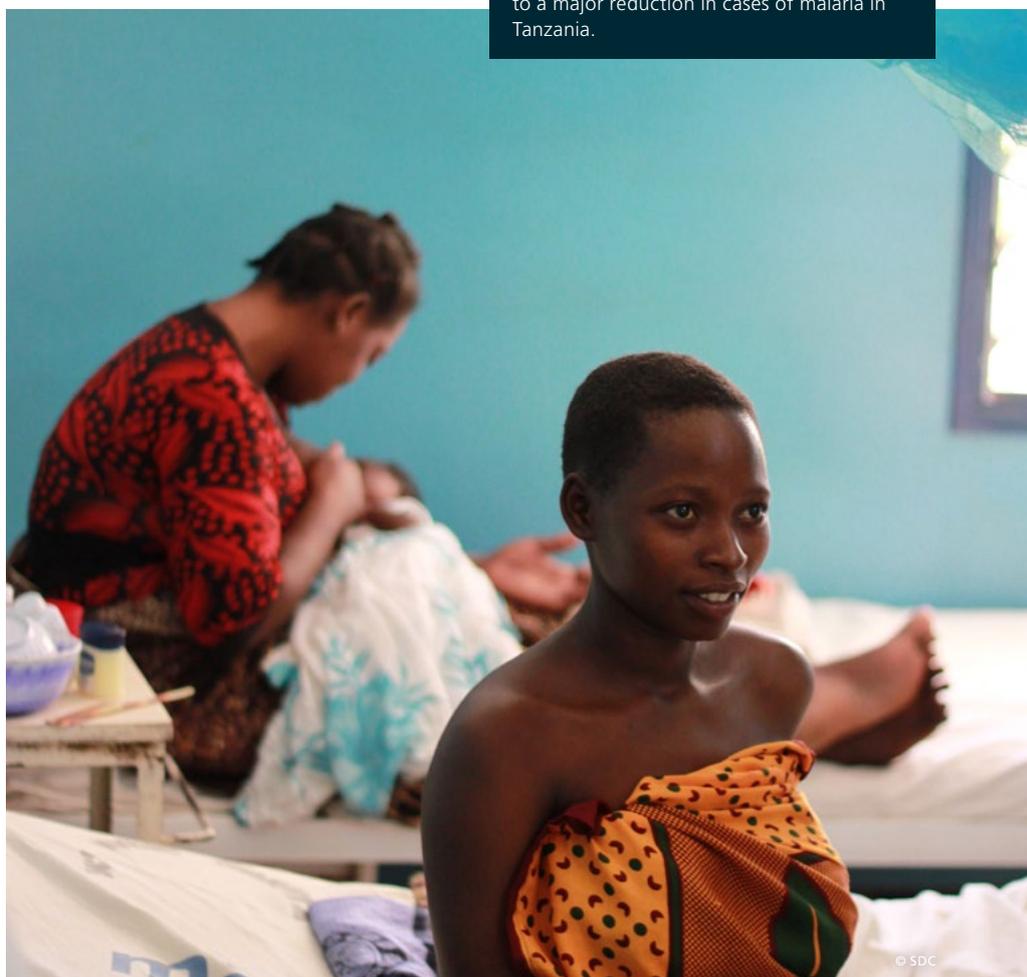
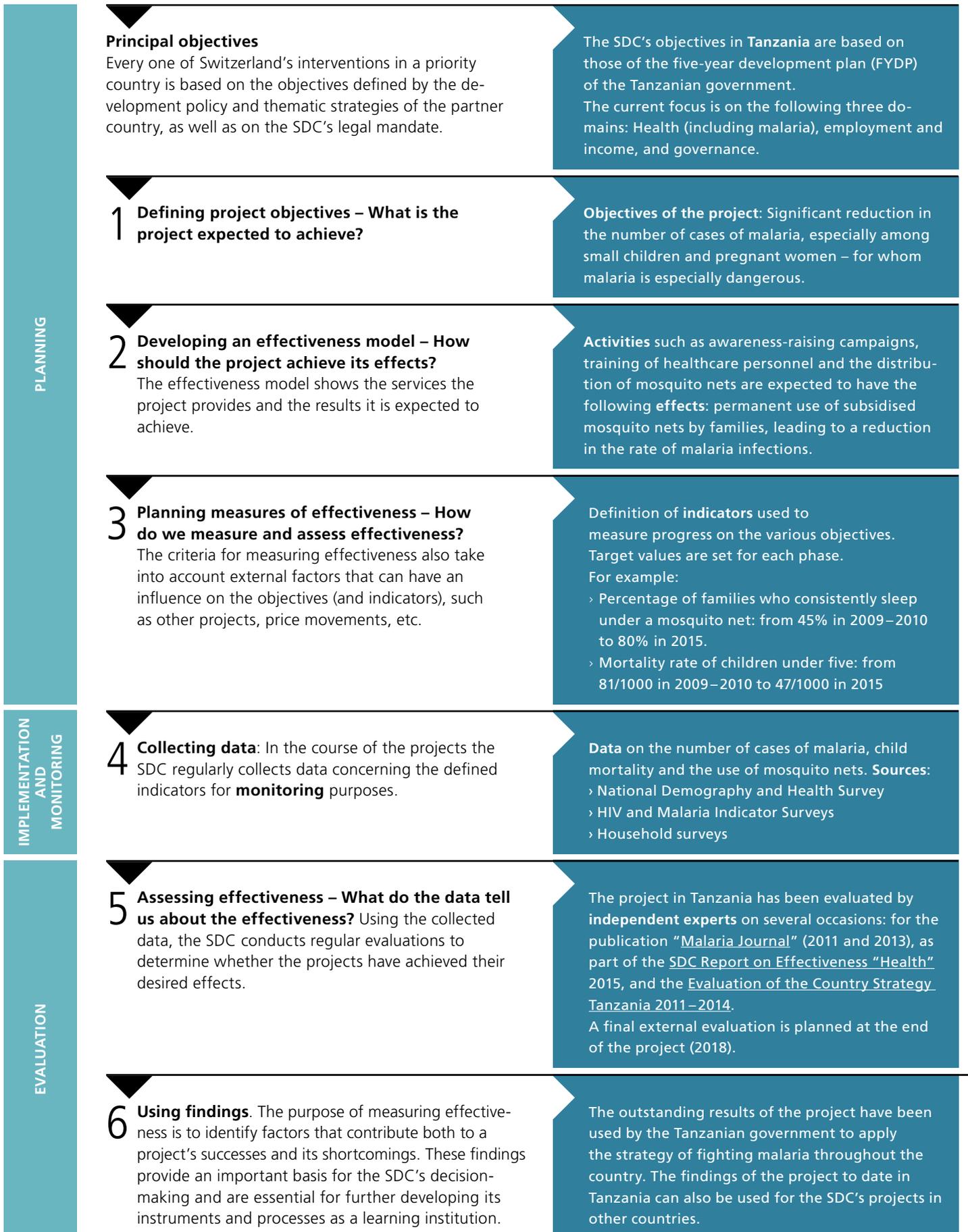


Diagram showing how effectiveness is measured in the SDC



What instruments does the SDC use to prove effectiveness?

Proving effectiveness is not an end in itself but a means to improving the work of the SDC and its partners on an ongoing basis. There are two distinct types of instruments: Monitoring and evaluation.

→ **Monitoring:** Monitoring involves regularly collecting data on predefined indicators to measure how well the objectives are being achieved. It allows the SDC to know whether the project is on track and to react quickly if it is not progressing in the intended way. Occasionally activities have to be adjusted in order to achieve the planned objectives.

As a donor country Switzerland has committed itself with the 2005 Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness to base its strategies on the needs and priorities of its partner countries. For example, in the case of Tanzania, the government's priority is on the health, employment and income, and governance domains. Consequently, the SDC also bases its country strategy, which is defined for four years, on these domains and sets corresponding objectives.

In addition, the SDC carries out approximately five **independent evaluations** each year. These are coordinated by the Evaluation and Corporate Controlling Division of the Directorate Staff Unit and mandated to external experts. The division works independently from the SDC's operational departments. These comprehensive evaluations cover an en-

In addition, the SDC's work is regularly reviewed by the Development Assistance Committee (DAC) of the OECD. The results are published in the [DAC Peer Review](#).

The quality of its evaluations is crucial for the SDC. All the independent evaluations are carried out according to the international evaluation criteria of the OECD-DAC. The SDC also complies with the directives and standards of the Swiss Evaluation Society (Seval). The most important evaluation criteria are:

- **Relevance:** Is the right thing being done in this context?
- **Effectiveness:** Are the project's objectives, e.g. consistent use of mosquito nets, being achieved?
- **Efficiency:** Is the least amount of resources used to achieve the desired objectives?
- **Sustainability:** Will the results have a lasting positive impact?
- **Impact:** Are the overall goals, e.g. fewer cases of malaria in Tanzania, being achieved?

How can the contributions to international organisations be evaluated?

Contributions to international organisations, such as UNICEF and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), are also systematically evaluated. The SDC subjects its contributions to international organisations to regular monitoring and has developed its own instrument for this purpose, the Core Contribution Management tool. Evaluations are designed and carried out together with other donors within the framework of the Multilateral Organisation Performance Assessment Network ([MOPAN](#)).

→ **Evaluation:** An evaluation is an external perspective on one or more projects or strategies. It assesses the results and indicates the effectiveness of the project, but also assesses its relevance, efficiency and sustainability. Evaluations therefore use the data from the monitoring and often collect more evidence through visits to projects and discussions with implicated actors and beneficiaries.

tire portfolio of projects, mostly in one of the thematic priorities of the Dispatch on International Cooperation. All independent evaluations are published on the [FDFA website](#). The SDC's senior management takes a position on every independent evaluation and decides on an action plan to implement the recommendations of the evaluation.

Is it always possible to prove effectiveness?

Yes. The SDC has a wide range of instruments to measure and demonstrate the effectiveness of its projects. The method used for measuring is tailored to the type of project and the environment in which it is carried out. This can be challenging: On the one hand, the influence of external

Every year, the SDC carries out approximately 120 **project evaluations**, corresponding to roughly 10% of the total portfolio of projects. They are carried out by project implementers of the SDC (self-evaluation) or mandated to an external party (invitation procedure or public tender).

The SDC Evaluation and Corporate Controlling Division regularly produces Reports on Effectiveness that show the effectiveness of the SDC (and in certain cases SECO) in a specific field over a prolonged period (c. 10 years). So far, Reports on Effectiveness have been produced on the water, agriculture, climate and health sectors. The next report is expected to be published in 2017 on the effectiveness of the SDC's and SECO's international cooperation in the field of employment.

factors (changing prices, political instability, natural disasters) must always be taken into account. On the other hand, the complexity of measuring effectiveness as such varies, since effects are not always quantifiable. For example, the effects of the SDC's projects for improving human rights are more difficult to measure and prove than a reduction in cases of malaria as a result of the health project in Tanzania. While the number of cases of malaria is recorded in national statistics, improvements in human rights have to be assessed through qualitative estimations.

More links

Effectiveness reports and reports on the SDC's results:

- www.deza.admin.ch
 - > Results and impact
 - > Effectiveness and annual reports

Video on the Effectiveness Report "Health":

- youtube.com
 - > EDA-DFAE-FDFA health

All SDC evaluations:

- www.deza.admin.ch
 - > Publications and services
 - > Publications
 - > Range of publications
 - > Evaluations

OECD-DAC – Peer Reviews:

- www.oecd.org
 - > Peer reviews of DAC members
 - > Peer reviews by country

OECD-DAC evaluation criteria:

- oecd.org
 - > search
 - > DAC Criteria for Evaluating
 - > Development Assistance

SEVAL

- seval.ch

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Scientific studies have shown that the free distribution of mosquito nets has a bigger impact than the sale of subsidised nets. The [International Initiative for Impact Evaluation \(3ie\)](#) aims to ensure that such findings are used in the planning of development cooperation projects.



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