



# Swiss Humanitarian Aid

Saving lives, alleviating suffering



Schweizerische Eidgenossenschaft  
Confédération suisse  
Confederazione Svizzera  
Confederaziun svizra

Swiss Agency for Development  
and Cooperation SDC

# Mandate

“The main objective of Swiss Humanitarian Aid is to help save human lives where they are at risk and to alleviate suffering through preventative measures and relief. The primary focus is on the victims of natural disasters and armed conflict.”

Federal Act of 19 March 1976 on International  
Development Cooperation and Humanitarian Aid

Swiss Humanitarian Aid fulfils its mandate in a spirit of neutrality and impartiality, independently and free of any political considerations. It assists victims without distinction of race, sex, language, religion, political opinion or social status. Swiss Humanitarian Aid is an expression of Switzerland's solidarity with people in need, basing its commitment on the Geneva Conventions of 1949 and their Additional Protocols of 1977.

Humanitarian Aid, one of the four departments of the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC), has offices in several countries in South America, Southeast Asia, North Africa and the Middle East.

# Outlook

Swiss Humanitarian Aid pursues the following strategic objectives between 2013 and 2016:

- increasing its involvement in the field;
- reducing the risk of disasters in priority countries;
- providing better protection for civilians in conflict zones;
- exerting greater influence on international humanitarian policy.

# Priority areas



Swiss Humanitarian Aid focuses on the following areas:

1. Emergency assistance
2. Reconstruction and rehabilitation of disaster-stricken areas
3. Disaster risk reduction

The victims are at the heart of Swiss Humanitarian Aid. All its programmes and activities take account of gender equality, human rights, the environment and good governance. At the multilateral level, it promotes an international system that responds more effectively to humanitarian crises.

## Emergency assistance for the victims of the Syrian crisis

In addition to efforts to support the Syrian people affected by the conflict that began in 2011, Swiss Humanitarian Aid is also responding to the needs of neighbouring countries. In Lebanon, for example, it is providing financial support to improve the living conditions of families that are hosting Syrian refugees.

## Rehabilitation of villages in northern Sri Lanka

Swiss Humanitarian Aid has supported the reconstruction of some 4,800 homes destroyed as a result of the internal conflict that ended in 2009 and the tsunami of 2004. This programme has also enabled affected villages to get back on their feet through measures aimed at rebuilding both the socio-economic fabric and community infrastructures.

## Improving the resilience of pastoral communities in the Horn of Africa

Swiss Humanitarian Aid supports prevention programmes that reduce the risks associated with famines. It works with pastoral communities, training them in drought-related risks and measures they can take before they see the first signs of food insecurity.

# Duration of involvement



Swiss Humanitarian Aid works to protect the interests of vulnerable populations before, during and after conflicts, crises and natural disasters.

Linking emergency assistance to medium- and long-term projects makes its commitment on the ground more sustainable.

## Example: The earthquake of 2010 in Haiti

12.01.2010	In the days immediately after the earthquake	6 months later	1 year later	October 2012
A magnitude 7 earthquake strikes Haiti, claiming more than 230,000 lives and leaving 1.5 million people homeless.	Swiss Humanitarian Aid launches the largest operation in its history. More than 110 experts from the Swiss Humanitarian Aid Unit – doctors, logistics staff, water specialists – and more than 170 tonnes of material are sent in the first months after the earthquake.	Launch of a Competence Centre for Reconstruction (CCR) to provide training for Haitian bricklayers and labourers in higher building standards and earthquake-resistant construction.	Launch of building projects in accordance with earthquake-resistant construction standards. Swiss Humanitarian Aid focuses on school infrastructures in close coordination with Haitian authorities.	Inauguration of the first schools in Léogane and Petit-Goâve in time for the new school year. More than 1,600 pupils are able to attend classes in favourable conditions.



# Operational resources



## The Swiss Humanitarian Aid Unit (SHA)

Organised as a militia corps, the SHA is composed of around 700 experts divided into 10 expert groups. SHA members are deployed abroad to implement the programmes of the Swiss Humanitarian Aid.

### SHA expert groups

- Coordination and administration
- Support/Logistics
- Construction
- Water and environmental sanitation
- Environment and disaster risk reduction
- Medical
- Telecom
- Rescue
- Security
- Information

## Rapid response teams and Swiss Rescue

The rapid response teams are composed of SHA members. Their job is to identify the needs of victims of crises or disasters as quickly as possible and to organise humanitarian response efforts. Swiss Rescue springs into action in the immediate aftermath of an earthquake or other natural disaster. Its members specialise in locating and rescuing victims and providing emergency medi-

cal care. It is composed of eight partner organisations from the private, public, civilian and military sectors. It can be deployed within ten hours. The rapid response teams and Swiss Rescue work in close cooperation with the local and national authorities of the affected countries as well as in coordination with other international humanitarian organisations.

## Swiss food aid

Food aid is an integral part of the SDC's rapid response efforts during emergencies and situations of chronic undernourishment. Every year Swiss Humanitarian Aid also distributes nearly 3,000 tonnes of dairy products to more than 400 pro-

jects primarily assisting young children in Africa, Asia, South America and Eastern Europe. Food aid is delivered in 38 countries via 22 Swiss relief agencies and the UN's World Food Programme (WFP).

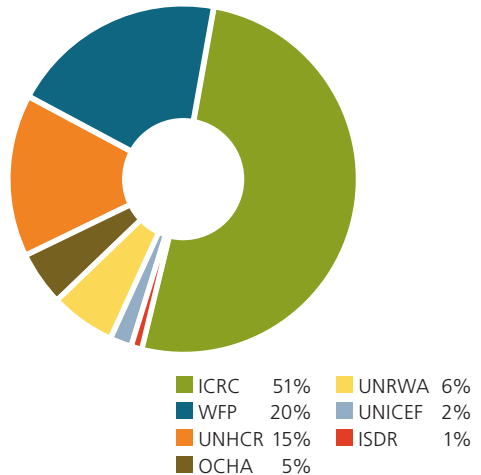
# Partnerships



## Multilateral organisations

The challenges faced by Swiss Humanitarian Aid require coordination with international organisations that operate in the same context. Swiss Humanitarian Aid therefore carries out its activities in close cooperation with its UN and International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) partners – partners with which it shares common values. Upon request, it also seconds SHA experts to support their programmes. Significant contributions are made to these organisations to enable them to fulfil their respective mandates. On average, Swiss Humanitarian Aid allocates two-thirds of its budget to multilateral cooperation. This corresponds to more than CHF 1 billion for the 2013–2016 period.

Contributions to multilateral partners (2013–2016)



## Other partners

Swiss relief agencies are important partners, as their activities are an active expression of Swiss solidarity. Swiss Humanitarian Aid also works with local and national authorities, local and international NGOs and with the affected communities.

# Facts and figures



- In 2012, SHA staff members carried out more than 500 missions abroad.
- In 2012, SHA staff members completed more than 50,000 working days, the equivalent of 135 full-time jobs.
- Between 2010 and 2012, rapid response teams were deployed 31 times.
- Two-thirds of Swiss Humanitarian Aid's budget are allocated to multilateral cooperation; the rest is used for direct operations in the field.
- The budget for the 2013–2016 period: more than CHF 2 billion.



**Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation SDC**

Humanitarian Aid and Swiss Humanitarian Aid Unit

Freiburgstrasse 130, 3003 Bern, Switzerland

Tel. +41 (0)31 322 31 24

[info@deza.admin.ch](mailto:info@deza.admin.ch)

[www.sdc.admin.ch](http://www.sdc.admin.ch)

[www.skh.ch](http://www.skh.ch)