



Schweizerische Eidgenossenschaft  
Confédération suisse  
Confederazione Svizzera  
Confederaziun svizra

Swiss Confederation

# International Cooperation Strategy 2025–2028



# Current situation

Major crises in recent years have altered the environment international cooperation (IC) finds itself in. The war in Ukraine, the escalation in the Middle East, the consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic, the energy crisis, food insecurity, the debt burden, inflation and climate change all have a direct impact on developing countries, but also on Switzerland.

Through its IC, Switzerland helps people in crisis-stricken regions and partner countries. It saves lives and secures livelihoods. Switzerland focuses on countries and issues where it can use its expertise to create added value and achieve concrete results.

Additionally, in an increasingly volatile world, IC strengthens Switzerland's credibility and influence at the international level. It promotes values that make up Switzerland's strength: the rule of law and democracy, the market economy, human rights, dialogue, solidarity, and international humanitarian law and humanitarian principles.

## **Some of the results achieved thanks to IC between 2020 and 2022:**

- ▶ 8.9 million people gained access to safe and affordable drinking water.
- ▶ More than 16.2 million people benefited from climate change adaptation measures and approximately 69 million tonnes of CO2 emissions were saved.
- ▶ 1.3 million people participated in vocational training programmes.
- ▶ 510,000 jobs were created, maintained or improved (by generating higher incomes, being formalised or made more decent)
- ▶ The Swiss Humanitarian Aid Unit carried out 660 missions in 73 countries.
- ▶ Switzerland has supported and significantly influenced 21 peace processes (including in Colombia and Libya) and conducted ceasefire negotiations in seven countries (e.g. in Myanmar and Nigeria).
- ▶ Between 2020 and 2022, 59 per cent of expenditure (CHF 3.7 billion) was allocated to projects which included gender equality.

The aim of international cooperation is to eradicate poverty and promote sustainable development in the three dimensions of economy, environment and society. It is guided by the UN's 2030 Agenda and its 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

# Objectives

The four objectives of the previous strategy have proven effective to confront current challenges and will continue to be applied for the period 2025–2028.



**Human development:** Saving lives, alleviating human suffering and supporting access to high-quality basic services for the most disadvantaged.



**Sustainable economic development:** Creating decent jobs through appropriate framework conditions, a dynamic local economy and the private sector.



**Climate and environment:** Guaranteeing environmentally-friendly development, resilient to climate change and natural disasters for the benefit of the most disadvantaged.



**Peace and good governance:** Resolving conflicts, promoting peace, democracy and the rule of law, and upholding human rights.



These four development objectives influence and reinforce each other. They are supplemented by specific objectives which serve as a guide for determining operational priorities.

In all its activities, Switzerland is committed to promoting gender equality, good governance and a human rights-based approach.

# Strategy

The current geopolitical and financial insecurities require IC to exercise a high degree of flexibility in a stable framework.

The following adjustments are being made in the 2025–28 Strategy to address the current paradigm shifts:

- ▶ An increase in the commitment appropriation for humanitarian aid, made necessary by the increase in needs and the duration of interventions in crisis regions.
- ▶ A special focus on certain issues, in particular the promotion of democracy, health, migration, the private sector and the fight against hunger.
- ▶ A multilateral commitment focused on global challenges (peace, security, climate, new technologies, etc.).

▶ Measures that are as close as possible to people, managed as far as possible by local actors to ensure that they are relevant and sustainable.

▶ Promotion of Swiss expertise, particularly in the fields of federalism, vocational training and technological innovation.

▶ Leveraging of synergies between all actors (private sector, academia, NGOs, public administration) in financing and sustainability of global public goods (biodiversity, health, water, etc.).

The war in Ukraine and its consequences are an important part of this strategy. At the same time, IC will be maintained in the other priority regions. This is in accordance with Switzerland's humanitarian tradition and its own interests.

---

***In a constantly changing world,  
the strategy addresses long-term goals  
while allowing a flexible response  
to the numerous current and emerging crises.***

# Analysis criteria

The three criteria defined for the strategic orientation of the 2021–2024 IC Strategy have proven effective and will be applied again in 2025–2028.

► **Needs on the ground** of people in developing countries: The needs of people in developing countries are analysed taking into account the humanitarian situation, the level of poverty, the capacity of countries to mobilise their own resources and the challenges in terms of sustainable development.

► **Added value of Swiss IC:** The added value of Swiss international cooperation lies in its specific expertise, recognised skills, capacity for innovation and experience in relevant areas.

► **Switzerland's long-term interests:** Peace, freedom, human rights, democracy, sustainable development, and international security and stability are essential to Switzerland's prosperity.



*The weighting of these three criteria varies according to the context and the type of instrument used*

# Geographical focus

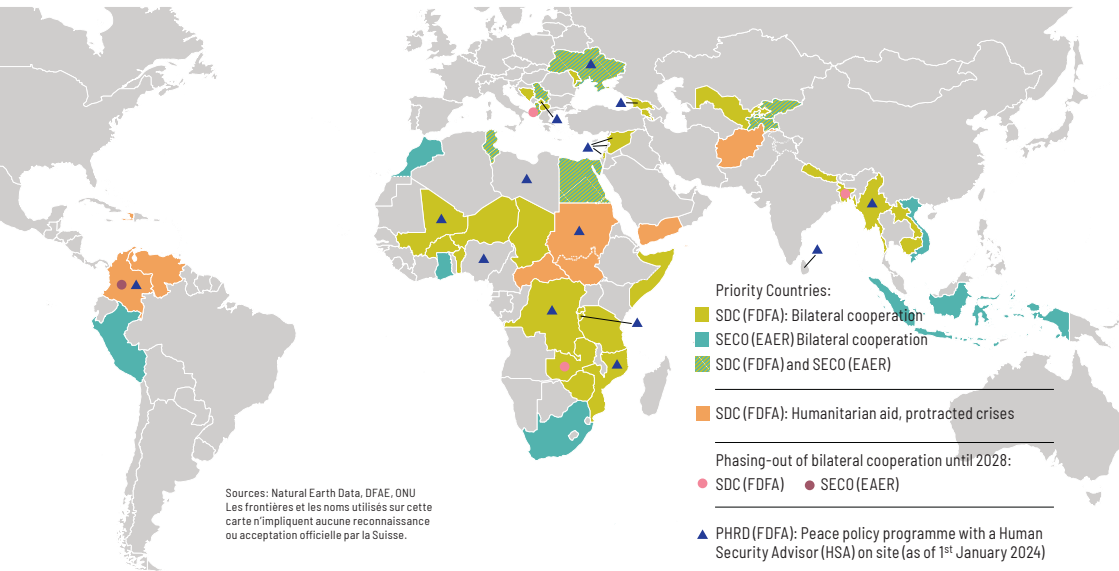
The four priority regions of the 2021–2024 strategy (Sub-Saharan Africa, North Africa and the Middle East, Asia and Eastern Europe) remain relevant and will be retained for the 2025–2028 period.

In the area of bilateral development cooperation, the SDC reduced the number of priority countries receiving long-term support from 35 to 34. Due to the budget cuts decided by Parliament, the SDC will gradually withdraw from bilateral development cooperation in Albania, Bangladesh and Zambia by 2028. SECO will continue its work in Albania and the other priority countries of the 2021–2024 IC Strategy, with the exception of Colombia, where it plans to transition to other foreign economic policy instruments and withdraw by the end of 2028. Morocco will become a new SECO priority country.

The mandate for humanitarian aid is universal. While the response to disasters (earthquakes, floods, famine, cholera, etc.) in 2025–2028 cannot be predicted, many protracted crises require a humanitarian commitment over several years.

Flexible and agile management of peace policy ensures that there is scope to adapt and to seize opportunities. The plan is to concentrate on a maximum of 20 contexts.

Switzerland's commitment is for the long term, in order to consolidate the results already achieved. However, the way in which Switzerland operates in priority countries can be adapted to rapidly changing circumstances.



As part of this strategy, the Federal Council has decided to allocate CHF 1.5 billion to support Ukraine (13.5%). The remaining funds of the 2025–2028 IC budget (86.5%) will be distributed across the four geographical regions. This amount is distributed across bilateral cooperation, peacebuilding, humanitarian aid, multilateral cooperation, thematic global programmes and contributions to Swiss NGOs. Switzerland's international cooperation will continue to focus on the least developed countries (LDCs): 22 of the 41 LDCs are SDC priority countries.

### **Support for Ukraine**

The scale of the destruction and the death toll in Ukraine are unprecedented in Europe since the end of the Second World War. Around a third of Ukraine's population has been displaced. According to the World Bank, the poverty rate rose from 5.5 per cent in 2021 to 29 per cent at the end of 2023. The cost of reconstruction was estimated at \$524 billion in December 2024.

As Ukraine has been a priority country for IC since 1999, Switzerland's activities in the country are based on long-standing partnerships, focusing on two areas:

1. In the area of humanitarian aid, development cooperation and the promotion of peace, democracy and human rights. (FDFA – CHF 860 million)
2. In the area of reconstruction, where large investments in infrastructure are involved. The aim is to restore and modernise infrastructure (build back better) in order to enable sustainable economic activity. (EAER – CHF 640 million)

The Swiss private sector is encouraged to take a leading role in the reconstruction of Ukraine due to its expertise and its innovative and high-quality products. Of the CHF 1.5 billion earmarked for Ukraine, CHF 500 million will go to measures that specifically involve the Swiss private sector.

The uncertain outlook regarding the development of the conflict and its economic and social consequences requires flexible approaches.

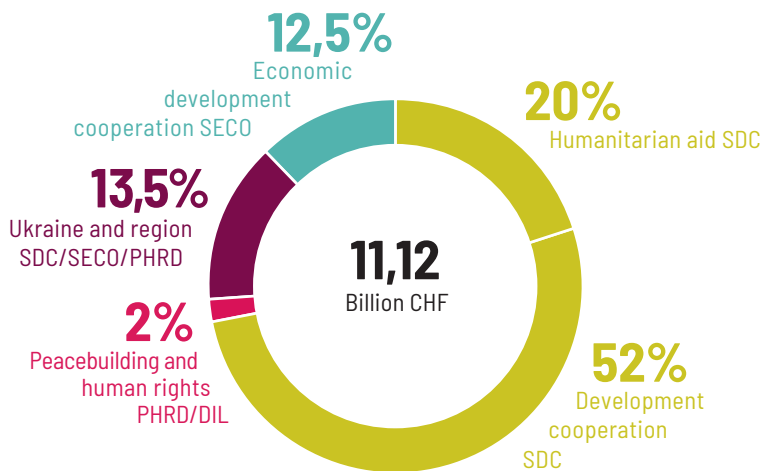
# Finance

The current strategy provides for five commitment appropriations totalling CHF 11.12 billion. These represent an upper limit for the liabilities that the federal government can assume in the years 2025–2028.

Of the total budget earmarked for the 2025–2028 IC Strategy, CHF 1.5 billion has been set aside for Ukraine and CHF 1.6 billion for international climate funding. The remaining funds will be allocated to the four geographical regions, multilat-

eral affairs, thematic priorities and contributions to NGOs in a similar proportion to the previous strategy (2021–2024).

*Adjustments may still be made to budgets during the annual federal budget debates in Parliament.*



Federal Department of Foreign Affairs FDFA  
**Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation SDC**  
**Peace and Human Rights Division PHRD**

Federal Department of Economic Affairs, Education and Research EAER  
**State Secretariat for Economic Affairs SECO**

**Further information:**  
[www.eda.admin.ch/IZA2025–2028](http://www.eda.admin.ch/IZA2025–2028)  
[www.seco-cooperation.admin.ch/en](http://www.seco-cooperation.admin.ch/en)