

In brief

South Caucasus



Schweizerische Eidgenossenschaft
Confédération suisse
Confederazione Svizzera
Confederaziun svizra

Swiss Agency for Development
and Cooperation SDC

SWITZERLAND IS ACTIVE IN THE SOUTH CAUCASUS BECAUSE



...it wants to help safeguard peace and security in a geopolitically complex and conflict-prone region in relatively close proximity to Switzerland; therefore, it assumes its responsibility to promote democratic values and equal development opportunities for the people who live there. In the South Caucasus, Switzerland wants to build trust through dialogue and support government reforms towards democratic societies and inclusive economic development.

BACKGROUND

The collapse of the Soviet Union and the emergence of Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia as three independent republics triggered secessionist conflicts (South Ossetia, Abkhazia, Nagorno-Karabakh), which have led to political instability, high unemployment and economic isolation in those countries. The unresolved conflicts continue to hamper economic and social development and pose a threat to stability and peace in the region. The great strategic importance of the South Caucasus makes the region vulnerable to external influence, and has led the three countries in different geopolitical directions. Vulnerability to climate-related natural hazards is something that Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia have in common. These climate-related risks and a lack of economic prospects in rural areas have encouraged people to migrate to cities or emigrate.

EXPECTED RESULTS

Switzerland's regional cooperation strategy for the South Caucasus 2017–2020 has a budget of roughly CHF 76 million. With these funds, Switzerland is making optimal use of the specialist expertise of the competent federal offices, which seek to achieve complementary results:

SDC (Armenia and Georgia): Farmers develop more sustainable livelihoods through better agricultural training and access to markets. Citizens are more aware of and involved in political and economic matters in their communities; women improve their status by actively participating in the economy. Local authorities are better able to manage natural hazards. Scientific research informs national policies incorporating measures to adapt to climate change.

SECO (Azerbaijan): An improved business environment encourages a more diverse, competitive private sector. At the macroeconomic level, the government improves transparency, efficiency and public accountability in areas such as monetary policy, inflation and debt management, and core areas of public finance.

Human Security Division (Georgia): Representatives of Georgia and the breakaway regions of Abkhazia and South Ossetia build trust through dialogue and find pragmatic ways to work together to benefit their populations. Communities' active engagement with past conflict contributes to reconciliation. Minorities are better integrated in society to avoid future conflicts.