



## Swiss International Cooperation Program 2022 - 2025 in Uzbekistan at a glance



With the Cooperation Program 2022–25 for Central Asia Switzerland's reaffirmed its continued commitment to international cooperation in Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and at an increased level in Uzbekistan. Responding to the important reform process, Uzbekistan became also a priority country for Swiss International Cooperation.

The overall goal of the Swiss Cooperation Program in Uzbekistan and in the region is to contribute to peace and social cohesion, to responsive and strengthened institutions and to sustainable development. The Swiss Program combines a regional approach with bilateral interventions seeking coherence and synergies. It focuses on three thematic areas: *Water, Infrastructure, and Climate Change*; *Governance and Human Rights*; and *Inclusive and Sustainable Economic Development*. Gender equality and inclusion, good governance and climate change resilience shall be mainstreamed throughout the Program.

This thematic focus supports the priorities as set out in the National Development Plan for the New Uzbekistan 2022 – 2027. Expected results in the thematic areas:



### ***Water, Infrastructure and Climate Change:***

- The legal framework for the implementation of IWRM is approved and implemented at national level.
- People access quality, sustainable and affordable public services.
- Rural communities are better prepared to manage the effects of climate change.

In Water infrastructure and Climate Change, Switzerland aims to:

- Support the development of national legal and policy frameworks for the implementation of integrated water resource management IWRM.
- Improve data collection and sharing to support evidence based water management and adaptation to climate change.
- Improve the capacity of water management institutions at national and regional levels.
- Support the implementation of basin plans in selected basins.
- Promote access to safe drinking water and sanitation (WASH).
- Facilitate collaboration for a more climate-resilient water management.

Major projects include the support to the National Water Resources Management System (NWRM), the Syrdarya Water Supply Project, the Rural Water and Sanitation Supply Project, and new projects such as the Zarafshan River Basin Project and the Water Services and institutional support Program (WASIS).

At the regional level, Switzerland works with the Central Asia Regional Environmental Centre (CAREC) and potentially with the International Fund for Saving the Aral Sea. Switzerland will also strengthen the Hydro Diplomacy through the Blue Peace Initiative to foster intergovernmental dialogue on regional water and climate change issues. Regional projects include support to transboundary water management (Sapphire) and strengthening regional institutions (CAWEP) as well as Glacier Monitoring (CROMO ADAPT).



#### ***Governance and human rights:***

- People have access to information, know their rights and are able to freely express their views and opinions.
- The capacity of authorities' governance systems at all levels is enhanced with regard to transparency and accountability.

In promoting governance and human rights, Switzerland aims at empowering people to know their rights and at assisting authorities to become more effective, transparent and accountable. The program shall facilitate democratic space for engaging in dialogue including through arts and culture. The regional arts and culture program plays an important role in promoting dialog and cohesion across the region.

This newly built up portfolio, includes projects on youth and child friendly governance (UNICEF), fighting gender based violence (ACTED), supporting legal literacy for journalists and a new intervention focusing on access to information.



#### ***Inclusive and sustainable economic development:***

- The employers (MSMEs, government and others) have better access to a higher-skilled workforce that meets their requirements.
- MSMEs and individuals have affordable access to responsible financial services (incl. environmentally friendly and digital ones) in a stable and inclusive financial sector.

Switzerland will foster economic recovery, resilience, and reforms. It will stimulate sound macroeconomic conditions, a conducive business environment and improved access to less risky and more affordable financing. Switzerland supports the reform of the VET system (VET4UZ) promoting skilled youth that get decent jobs, matching the needs of the fast growing labor market (focus on hospitality sector). Projects include the Support to Small and Medium Enterprises and to Trade Facilitation and ICT 4 girls, as well as digital skills development.

At the regional level, Swiss Cooperation will support the management of labour migration, including fostering fair and ethical recruitment, skills matching and recognition between countries of origin and destination, and decent working conditions.

#### **Partnerships and Modalities:**

Switzerland will continue and deepen its partnerships with Ministries and governmental agencies. In addition, Switzerland works with UN Organizations (UNDP, UNICEF, UNESCO, OSCE), IFIs (EBRD, WB, ADB and AIIB) and bilateral development partners (BMZ/GIZ, AFD) as well as regional bodies (CAREC, IFAS), NGOs (Helvetas, Caritas, Acted) and cultural actors.

Switzerland works with a mix of modalities including with mandates to implementing organizations and with contributions to projects implemented by multilateral organizations or bilateral development partners. In 2023 the total annual budget includes approx. 10 Mio CHF in grants.