

# COUNTRY FACTSHEET



Schweizerische Eidgenossenschaft  
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## ZIMBABWE 2019

Embassy of Switzerland  
**Swiss Cooperation Office for Southern Africa**



The boundaries and names shown and the designations used on this map do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by Switzerland.

### SWISS DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION

Switzerland is contributing towards reducing poverty and vulnerability in Zimbabwe by increasing resilience through enhanced food security, reducing new HIV infections among young people, Child Protection, Harmonised Cash Transfers and by promoting employment among young people, who represent more than half of the population.

### Context

Zimbabwe has been facing political and economic challenges since the early 2000s. This has halved its Gross Domestic Product, the sharpest contraction of its kind in a peacetime economy. Consequently, poverty rates have increased leaving a fifth of the population in extreme poverty. Health, education, and other basic services – once regional models – have largely collapsed, and the Human Development Index stands at 156 out of 189 countries.

The country's food security situation is fragile. Like other countries in Southern Africa, Zimbabwe is prone to droughts and flooding resulting in crop failure, making it difficult for farmers to be food secure. HIV/AIDS affects young people, commercial sex workers and prisoners more than any other group. Although new HIV infections rates have generally been going down, they have been increasing among young people.

### Switzerland's support

Switzerland started humanitarian operations in Zimbabwe in 2008 responding to a large cholera epidemic by providing emergency aid and logistical support. Zimbabwe is part of the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC) Regional Programme for Southern Africa. Under the 2018-2022 Cooperation Strategy, the programme focus is on the prevention of HIV/AIDS, promotion of food security among poor and vulnerable households and creation of employment for young people. Switzerland has also been working with Zimbabwe's Government, Parliament, civil society, churches and private sector to promote peace and democracy. Support has also been provided to the country's efforts in aligning its laws to the Constitution; dealing with the past and developing capacity in negotiation and mediation.

### Bilateral relations

After recognising Zimbabwe's independence on 18 April 1980, Switzerland opened a consulate in Harare, which became an Embassy in 1981. The regional office of the SDC was relocated from Pretoria to Harare in 2016 and was integrated to become part of the Embassy. Relations between Switzerland and Zimbabwe have strengthened in recent years. The implementation of economic reforms and democratic principles could pave the way for a further deepening of relations to promote socio-economic development, trade and investment.

### Key aspects of diplomatic relations

In 2017, Switzerland and Zimbabwe signed an International Cooperation Agreement on Humanitarian Aid and Technical and Financial Cooperation. The agreement provides for strengthened cooperation for the realisation of humanitarian, technical and financial assistance projects that contribute to sustainable poverty alleviation, democratic development, the promotion of peace, respect for human rights and the rule of law.

Switzerland is supportive of Zimbabwe's intentions to clear its debt arrears and normalise relations with the international financial institutions, in order to revive the economy and improve investment in the social sectors.

### Economic cooperation

Several Swiss companies have a long-standing presence in the country, producing goods and creating jobs. Since 2001, Switzerland and Zimbabwe are bound by a Bilateral Investment Protection Agreement (BIPPA). Swiss farmers who were dispossessed during the 'fast track land reform program' of the early 2000s are yet to be compensated.

## SDC PROGRAMMES

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### Food security

Switzerland contributes an average of US\$3.5 million per year from the Regional Programme to Zimbabwe's food security interventions. Through the **Seeds and Markets Programme**, support is enabling the establishment of community-owned seed and commodity enterprises with the aim of improving the availability and access to adapted seed at the local level and linkages to markets. As a result, farmers have increased household incomes and food and nutrition security. In addition, support is also provided to traditional/farmer-led seed systems with the aim of supporting farmers to share, exchange and benefit from indigenous seeds of diverse crops that are nutritious and adapted to conditions through the **Seed and Knowledge Initiative**.

Through the **R4 Rural Resilience Initiative**, poor rural households are equipped to better protect and improve their food security situation and livelihood through a comprehensive risk management approach, which include work for productive assets, weather based insurance, access to loans and credit as well as savings.

Through the Southern African Development Community (SADC) Secretariat, the SDC also supports the Regional Vulnerability Assessment and Analysis Programme which provides timely information on weather patterns enabling authorities and the humanitarian community to react better in assisting the most vulnerable and food insecure.



Through the various food security projects smallholder farmers are increasing agricultural production and diversifying their diets.

### HIV/Sexual and Reproductive Health & Rights

Switzerland contributes an average US\$4.6 million per year from the Regional Programme to Zimbabwe's HIV&SRHR response. This response contributes to Sustainable Development Goal 3.3, which is to end the epidemic of HIV by 2030. HIV prevalence in Zimbabwe is 14 percent. Achieving "Zero new infections" is the guiding principle in this intervention.

Prevention of new HIV infections, particularly among young people, access to health services including antiretroviral treatment, care and support are at the centre of the SDC's intervention in Zimbabwe.

The **Care and Support for Teaching and Learning (CSTL)** programme is strengthening systems in the Min-

istries of Education in order to integrate care and support and HIV prevention in the sector to improve education outcomes.

Switzerland supports the **Child Protection** programme through the National Action Plan for Children's vision which stipulates that all children should live in a safer and more conducive environment that ensures their care and protection and supports sound growth and development.

Zimbabwe receives particular attention and the biggest share of Switzerland's contribution in the region through the Ruedi Lüthy Foundation which operates the **Newlands Clinic** in Harare. The Clinic is a Centre of Excellence on HIV/AIDS treatment, counselling, research, training of doctors and nurses and care and support of underprivileged adults, youths and children in Zimbabwe.

Through the **Harmonised Social Cash Transfers**, Switzerland together with other donors assists over 52,000 food poor and labour-constrained households with a monthly cash transfer in 8 districts of Zimbabwe.

Support to the SADC Secretariat on **Strengthening Monitoring, Evaluation & Reporting Systems for Orphans, Vulnerable Children & Youth (OVC&Y)** enables Zimbabwe to make sound evidenced based decisions on issues that are relevant for OVC&Y, in particular on HIV/AIDS programming, by improving their monitoring and evaluation systems.



The HIV/SRHR programme is working towards reducing new infections among young people and is ensuring that they adhere to treatment for continued viral suppression.

### Transversal themes: Gender equality, HIV/AIDS, governance, and climate change

Switzerland places high importance in achieving **gender equality** and improvements in governance issues across all programmes. **Gender equality** is a priority at programme and institutional level. **HIV/SRHR** is mainstreamed in all food security activities, in order to reduce the burden of labour for people living with HIV. Three of the most important dimensions of **good governance** (non-discrimination, participation, accountability) are also mainstreamed in all programme activities working closely with Government structures at various levels. **Climate smart** approaches are also used in programme design and implementation in order to address the specific vulnerabilities in various communities.

### Partners

World Food Programme - Biowatch South Africa - Africa Centre for Agrobiodiversity - GRM Zimbabwe International - Food and Agriculture Organisation - United Nations Population Fund - UNICEF - Media in Education Trust - Ruedi Lüthy Foundation - Sexual Reproductive Health Rights Africa Trust - SADC Secretariat.

### Impressum

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