



Schweizerische Eidgenossenschaft
Confédération suisse
Confederazione Svizzera
Confederaziun svizra

Consultation

International Cooperation Strategy 2025–28

Objectives

The four objectives identified in the previous 2021–24 strategy have proved their relevance in the face of current challenges, and they have thus been renewed.

For the period 2025–28, the Federal Council has set the following four objectives:



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



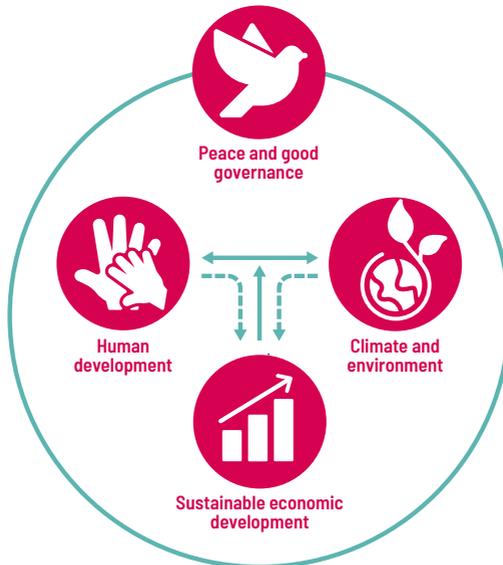
Sustainable economic development: Creating decent jobs through appropriate framework conditions, a dynamic local economy and the private sector.



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



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



These four **development objectives** are mutually reinforcing and interdependent. 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 2021–24 strategy has demonstrated its ability to react flexibly to changing needs. This approach will be continued in 2025–28. The following adaptations have been made for the upcoming period in order to meet current challenges:

- ▶ an increase in the credit for humanitarian aid, made necessary by the increase in needs and the duration of commitments in crisis regions;
- ▶ a focus on issues that deserve greater attention, such as health, migration, the private sector and democracy;
- ▶ a multilateral commitment focused on global challenges (peace, security, climate, new technologies, etc.);
- ▶ activities which are as close as possible to the individual, 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;
- ▶ synergies between all actors (private sector, academia, NGOs, public administration) in financing and sustainability of global public goods (biodiversity, health, water, etc.) will be explored.

Impact

Major crises have altered the international context in recent years. The consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic, Russia's military aggression against Ukraine, the energy crisis, food insecurity, the debt burden, inflation and climate change all have a direct impact on developing countries, but also on Switzerland.

In an increasingly volatile world, international cooperation (IC) strengthens Switzerland's credibility and influence on the international stage. It promotes values that are Switzerland's strengths: the rule of law and democracy, the market economy, human rights, dialogue, solidarity, and international humanitarian law and principles.

IC aims to end poverty and support sustainable development in its three economic, environmental and social dimensions. It contributes to UN's 2030 Agenda, with its 17 Sustainable Development Goals.

Some of the results achieved thanks to IC in 2020 and 2021¹:

- ▶ 4.1 million people have had access to safe and affordable drinking water.
- ▶ Over 9 million people have benefited from climate change adaptation measures and around 48 million tonnes of CO₂ emissions have been saved.
- ▶ 2.1 million people have completed basic or professional vocational training.
- ▶ 205'000 jobs have been created or improved; resulting in higher incomes, formalised jobs or more decent jobs.
- ▶ 262 specialists from the Swiss Humanitarian Aid Unit have carried out 397 emergency aid operations in 59 countries and 1.2 million people have benefited from disaster risk reduction measures.
- ▶ Switzerland has supported and made a significant contribution to 21 peace processes (including Colombia and Libya), and has supported ceasefire negotiations in seven countries, such as Myanmar and Nigeria.
- ▶ 68% of international cooperation expenditure between 2020 and 2021 (CHF 2.5 billion) have been allocated to projects also contributing to gender equality.

¹ Figures were collected on a decentralised basis in the local cooperation offices.

Geographical focus

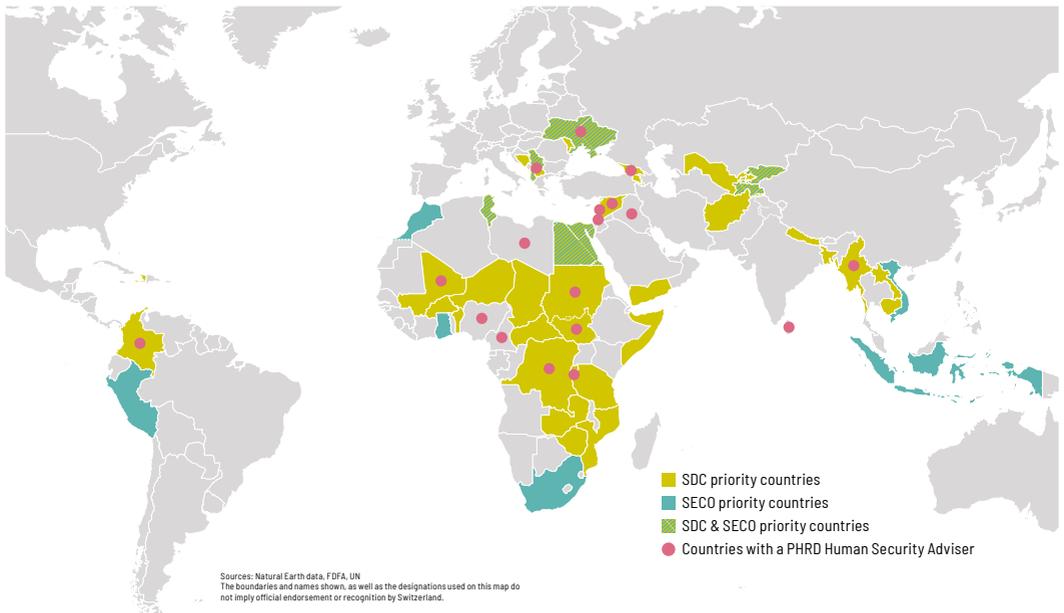
While the war in Ukraine and its consequences are an important part of this strategy, Switzerland's humanitarian tradition require that IC maintains its commitment in the rest of the world. This is also in Switzerland's own interest.

The four priority regions of the 2021–24 strategy – sub-Saharan Africa, the Middle East and North Africa, Asia and Eastern Europe – remain relevant and will be maintained for the 2025–28 period.

The SDC will keep the current 35 priority countries for bilateral cooperation. Six countries have been added. These countries are subject to a protracted crisis for which a multi-year commitment of humanitarian aid is foreseen.

SECO will maintain its commitment in the priority countries of the 2021–24 strategy, with the exception of Colombia, where it plans to move towards other types of economic cooperation and withdraw from IC by the end of 2028. Morocco will be a priority country.

In total, Swiss IC will focus on 47 priority countries, seven of which will be priority countries for both SECO and the SDC. 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.



Focus on Ukraine

The level of destruction and loss of life in Ukraine is on a scale not seen in Europe since the end of the Second World War. Around a third of the Ukrainian population is displaced. The poverty rate was estimated by the World Bank to be 25% at the end of 2022 (compared with 5.5% in 2021). Reconstruction costs were estimated at USD 411 billion in March 2023.

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:

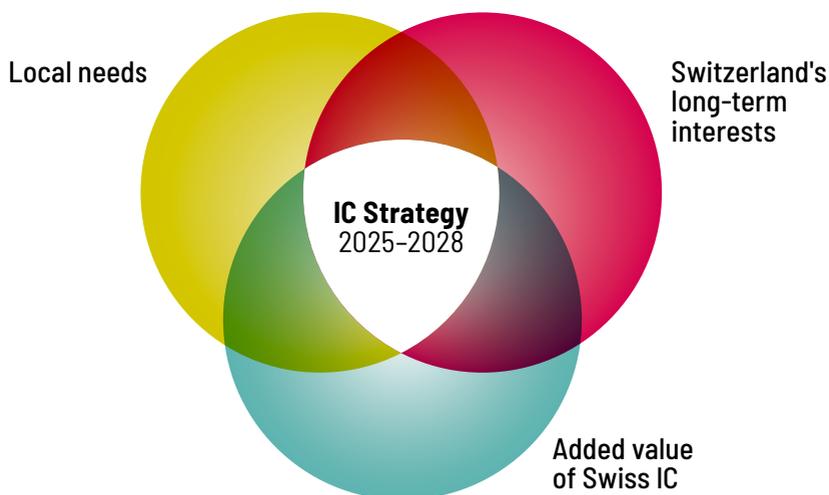
- 1. Development cooperation and humanitarian aid.** For the period 2025–28, between 5 and 10% of the total IC budget is earmarked for humanitarian aid and development cooperation in Ukraine and the neighbouring region (Moldova, etc.).
- 2. Recovery.** Re-establishing and modernising socio-economic infrastructures to ensure a sustainable reconstruction of the country (good governance, demining, return of displaced persons). The uncertain outlook as to how the conflict will evolve, and the economic and social impact it might have, calls for a high degree of flexibility.

The Federal Council has decided to allocate CHF 1.5 billion for this commitment as part of the current strategy.

Criteria

Having proved their worth, the three criteria set out for the strategic orientation of the IC strategy 2021–24 will continue to apply in 2025–28.

- ▶ The **needs of people** in developing countries. Analysis of these needs takes 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.
- ▶ The **added value** of Swiss IC. This is based on our specific knowledge, skills, capacity for innovation and experience in the fields concerned and experience in the fields concerned.
- ▶ Switzerland's long-term **interests**. Peace, freedom, human rights, democracy, prosperity, sustainable development, and international security and stability are essential to our prosperity.

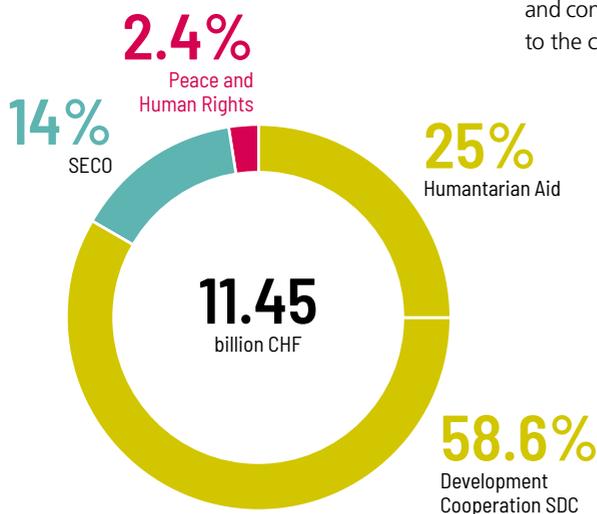


The weighting of these three criteria varies according to the context and the type of instrument used.

Finance

This strategy proposes five credits totalling CHF 11.45 billion, representing the maximum amount the federal government can grant for the period 2025–28.

Of the total credits earmarked for Swiss IC in 2025–28, CHF 1.5 billion will be devoted to Ukraine and CHF 1.6 billion to the fight against climate change. The remainder of the budget will be divided between the four geographical regions, multilateral affairs, thematic priorities and contributions to NGOs in a similar proportion to the current strategy (2021–24).



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 FDFA

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

Further information:
www.dfae.admin.ch/CI2025-2028
www.seco-cooperation.admin.ch/strategie