SWISSAID

Strategy 2025-28

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SWISSAID's main thrusts

SWISSAID builds on its longstanding presence in its operating countries, as well as on its strong partnerships. As SWISSAID, we strive for the following:

1. For an urgent **agroecological transformation of food systems** as THE climate sensitive solution **to end hunger** and increase incomes.
2. For **gender equality as a key to sustainable development.** We mainstream gender in every aspect of our work.
3. For the recognition as a **competence center for agroecology**. Our key role is that of a knowledge provider and networker in the agroecological movement.
4. For an **increase of our capacities and engagement in emergency aid** to end hunger. We are committed to working in the humanitarian-peace -development nexus.
5. For **locally led development**, working in mutually agreed roles and co-decision making in strategic partnerships.
6. For further **decentralization of SWISSAID** by strengthening the local advisory committees and promoting a stronger voice of the global south in institutional decision making.
7. For **financial consolidation, diversifying income sources and** optimizing the return on investment in all income streams. Our annual turnover amounts to at least 25 million CHF.

Results Framework SWISSAID

Overall Goal: To build climate-resilient, equitable and democratic food systems through agroecology and gender-transformative action. **„On the ground, against hunger."**

.... as well as SDG 1 (No Poverty), 6 (Clean Water and Sanitation), 9 (Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure), 12 (Responsible Consumption and Production), 15 (Life on Land), 16 (Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions), 17 (Partnerships for the Goals)

Outcome 1	Outcome 2	Outcome 3	Outcome 4	Outcome 5
Local Food Systems 1 million people - all genders equally – contribute to inclusive local food systems and have improved their nutrition (incl. water) through accelerated agroecological transition.	**Natural resource governance** 500'000 people - especially the most vulnerable people - benefit from fair natural resource governance and have increased their climate resilience and natural resources management capacities.	**Gender Equality** 250'000 women – with the co-responsibility of men – increasingly enjoy a life without gender-based discrimination and violence and strengthen their full sociopolitical and economic potential in a more gender inclusive society.	**Locally led development** 100 empowered national and local partners have increased their agency and decision-making power, and SWISSAID has embraced a more equitable partnership approach, reinforcing locally led development.	**Sensitized Swiss Public** Increased awareness among the Swiss public and willingness of policy makers to support the fulfilment of the right to food in vulnerable countries, recognizing SWISSAID in its leading role.
Quantitative indicators a) Proportion of households with moderate or severe food insecurity (target: reduction of 20% to baseline) *SDG indicator 2.1.2. / SDC indicator AFS TRI 1* b) Proportion of women with a diverse diet (target: 50% increase compared with the comparison group) *SDC indicator AFS TRI 3* c) Proportion of households applying a diverse set of agroecological practices (target: 80%) *SDC indicator AFS ARI 2* d) Number of plant varieties for food and agriculture secured in either medium-	**Quantitative indicators** a) Number of municipalities covered and implementing sustainable land and water use plans or DRR/CCA plans aligned with national strategies SDG indicator 13.1.3 b) Number of hectares being managed without compromising the sustainability of vital ecosystems (target: 20% increase to baseline) SDC indicator WAT TRI c) Number of persons from civil society participating in and influencing public service provision, decision-making and	**Quantitative indicators** a) Number of SWISSAID partners with 30% of women in leadership positions (target: 100%) SDG indicator 5.5.2 GEN ARI 2 b) Proportion of women indicating a substantial improvement of living conditions (target increase of 30% to baseline) c) Proportion of women and girls aged 15 years and older subjected to physical, sexual or psychological violence in the previous 12 months (target	**Quantitative indicators** a) Proportion of partner organisations that have reached co-decision on the Power Assessment Tool in their collaboration with SWISSAID (target: 80%) b) Proportion of SWISSAID funds in the core program allocated to national/local actors (target: 30%)	**Quantitative indicators** a) Number of people that financially support SW in the fulfilment of its mission (target 2025-2028: 75'000) b) Number of interventions in Parliament influenced, discussed, reviewed by SWISSAID (target: 3 p.a.) c) SWISSAID has 50% more articles published in the Swiss Media talking about the topics of Hunger/Global Food Security, compared to the previous Strategy-period. d) Number of participants in events where SWISSAID was

or long-term conservation facilities *SDG indicator 2.5.1.*	budgets in their localities (target: 20% increase to baseline) SDC indicator GOV ARI 1	20% reduction to baseline) SDG indicator 5.2.1/5.2.2		able to gain visibility through its contribution. (target: 3000 p.a./incl. events Sufosec)
Qualitative indicator Documented examples demonstrating the outcomes of an agroecological transition of food systems (target: 9)	**Qualitative indicator** Documented examples demonstrating the responsible use of natural resources backed through improved governance or climate change adaptation management (target: 6)	**Qualitative indicator** Documented examples demonstrating the outcomes of gender equality in law, society, politics, and economics (target: 9)	**Qualitative indicator** Documented examples demonstrating the outcomes of locally led practice and shifting power to national and local actors (target: 9)	**Qualitative indicator** Documented examples of the commitment of stakeholders and donors in Switzerland to SWISSAID (target: 6)
Outputs 1.1: (PUSH) Peasants, especially women and youth, have produced and processed agricultural products **through co-creation and use of climate sensitive agroecological practices** (including water saving techniques), have formed interest groups and have engaged in value addition and diversification blending local and traditional knowledge with scientific evidence. 1.2: (PULL) Market actors, especially women and youth, are engaged in direct marketing and consumers demand for and are willing to pay a fair price for agroecological products with ultimately **strengthened local markets and increased incomes for producers.** 1.3: (POLICY) SWISSAID and its partners have influenced policy frameworks at all levels to respect **pluralistic seed systems** and **agroecology** as key approaches to transform food systems. 1.4: (EMERGENCY): People – all genders equally – have **obtained in emergency situations access to healthy and nutritious diets** (including water) and have built up their recovery capacity by an emergency seed mechanism holding duty bearers fully accountable to their role.	**Outputs** 2.1: Marginalised people, especially women and youth, have individually or as a group made **sustainable use** of land, water, forest, and minerals in a sustainable and conflict-sensitive way or **have received a fair compensation**. 2.2: Communities have analysed their risks and have enhanced their **capacities** to adapt to climate change. 2.3: Communities have protected, restored, and maintained the biodiversity and vital functions of ecosystems (e.g. forest, paramos, wetlands, ...). 2.4: SWISSAID has successfully contributed to more transparency and **good governance of natural resources**, moving stakeholders and duty bearers to implement robust regulations to improve livelihoods and food security in the affected regions, including in the face of climate change.	**Outputs** 3.1: Women have been capacitated to claim and uphold their right to **bodily integrity and autonomy,** and to be **free from the threats of gender based and sexual violence, harassment and exploitation.** Additionally, duty bearers have been sensitized to these issues. 3.2: Women, young people, and other vulnerable groups have effectively organised, formed networks and **assumed leadership roles within social and political spheres.** 3.3: Women, young people, and other vulnerable groups have emerged as active economic actors and have **gained additional income, recognition and compensation** including for care tasks and **men have taken co-responsibility**. 3.4: SWISSAID and its partners have played a significant role in shaping policy frameworks related to **gender-based violence** and have engaged in the 16 days against Gender Based Violence campaign in Switzerland and globally.	**Outputs** 4.1: Communities especially marginalised groups, women led CSOs, right holders and other stakeholders have **increased agency** and **leadership** at local, national, and international level. 4.2: SWISSAID and its partners have co-designed and implemented initiatives strengthening locally led practices and **shifting power towards local actors.** 4.3: SWISSAID has developed and implemented a partnership policy and **increased capacities in the localisation agenda**, gradually transitioning from a top-down country programme design process to a bottom-up localised process. 4.4: SWISSAID has influenced donors to adapt requirements in favour of locally led practice.	**Outputs** 5.1: SWISSAID has positioned itself as a **leading organisation in Switzerland** in terms of the eradication of hunger. 5.2: SWISSAID has positioned itself as a locally led organisation, which uses its **credibility from the ground to convince policy makers, the public and donors** of the need for a transformation of food systems. 5.3: SWISSAID has positioned itself as an organisation that delivers **effective, proven and evidence-based solutions** to acute and systemic food crises. 5.4: SWISSAID has positioned itself as an organisation that **influences policies** in order to build climate-resilient food systems and to improve livelihoods and food security in the affected regions.

Overall Management Outcome

SWISSAID has prepared itself for fundamental changes in the aid sector through solid funding, committed and trained staff, clarity on roles, enhanced innovation capacities and full transparency on objectives and purposes under global leadership.

Outputs

- We promote an internal culture of innovation and transparency, systematically addressing trends and future topics in relation to our core mission and drive forward the digitalisation of our organisation.
- We clarify and increase the focus in our core roles in the different project implementation modalities and in our partnerships and are handing over responsibilities to partners.
- We build up the necessary internal skills to make the best possible contribution to achieving our organisational goals and to be able to adapt to changing requirements.
- We improve the balance of decision-making power within SWISSAID between north and south.
- We continue investing in ensuring that our code of conduct regarding anti-corruption, protection from power abuse and sexual exploitation and harassment is respected by our staff and partners, as well as investing in staff and partner safety and security.
- We achieve a balanced budget by further increase of incomes and by optimising the return on investment in various income streams.

Indicators

- Innovation process has been introduced.
- SWISSAID's roles and responsibilities are described in proposals, and all positions calculated in project budgets and covered by donors.
- Number of trainings in digital competencies, agroecology, and mainstreaming skills (Gender, Climate Change, Risk Management)
- All offices have a local advisory committee.
- All breaches of the Code of Conduct are documented, analysed annually and all cases are dealt with promptly.
- Staff survey results demonstrate staff satisfaction, commitment, sufficient training opportunities, and doable workload.
- Overall Income Target: 25 Mio. CHF
- Budget deficit CHF 0 per annum

Programme Key Approaches 2025-2028

	Agroecological Approaches	**Gender Transformative Approach**	**Triple Nexus / LRRD Approaches**[1]	**Human Rights-Based Approach**
Short description	Agroecology is the overarching approach of SWISSAID. Agroecology is both a social movement and a set of principles and practices that enhances resilience, adaptation to climate change and sustainability of food, seed, and farming systems as well as biodiversity.	Gender inequality is one of the most pervasive threats to sustainable development. It has negative impacts on access to, use of and control over a wide range of resources and power, and on the ability to fulfil human rights for everyone. Gender equality is a key element to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals. It includes work with all genders.	Nexus is an approach that aims to strengthen collaboration, coherence, and complementarity of international cooperation. It seeks to reduce overall vulnerability and the number of unmet needs, strengthen risk management capacities and address root causes of conflict.	Respecting the principles of a HRBA such as universality and indivisibility the strength and focus of SWISSAID is to enhance the human right to food, the right to land and the right to water. SWISSAID advocates for the right to freely exchange and sell peasant seed and equal access to land especially for women and youth, as well as the right to fair compensation from businesses if natural resources are exploited by them.
Reference to conceptual frameworks	Agroecology policy SWISSAID 13 Principles of Agroecology (HLPE) / 14th Principle of SWISSAID (gender) 10 Elements (FAO) 5 Levels of Gliessmann Position paper pluralistic seed systems	Gender policy SWISSAID Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) Beijing Declaration	Triple H-P-D Nexus and Humanitarian Aid guideline SWISSAID The recommendations by the OECD DAC provide the general framework for SWISSAID's "Nexus thinking", adding a "project/programme" perspective that considers the specific context where partner organisations operate.	UN human rights declaration UN Declaration on the rights of peasants UNDROP Right to Food (International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights) The Plant Treaty (ITPGRFA) The Biodiversity Convention EITI Standards
SWISSAID role and approaches and tools	SWISSAID as a facilitator and sponsor: Support and facilitate if demanded learning and dissemination processes. Tools: Farmer led/participatory research; participatory assessments (e.g. on climate change risks); peer learning such as Farmer Field Schools / escuela agroecológica / campesino a campesino, including strengthening farmer organisations. SWISSAID as a convenor and knowledge broker:	SWISSAID as a sponsor and coach: Tools: Organising and supporting empowerment processes in women groups; awareness trainings for duty bearers and right holders; engaging with men and boys and women and girls to challenge gender biased social norms and enhance co-responsibility; reducing the work burden of women and enhancing the care economy; counselling from feminist and mental health perspectives; supporting Women's Economic Empowerment, Women's	SWISSAID as a sponsor: Support humanitarian aid with a conflict sensitive lens and a midterm perspective. Tools: Provide funding to local partners. SWISSAID as a convenor: Support the complementarity of the different roles of actors. Tools: Convene meetings and bring together government, CSOs and other stakeholders if necessary.	SWISSAID as a coach, trainer, and knowledge broker: Finance and support the selection of appropriate and skilled trainers. Tools: Rights awareness trainings for duty bearers and right holders, coaching and capacity building processes, participatory budgeting, support to organisational development processes. SWISSAID as a facilitator, convenor and networker:

	Convene and create dialogue & grow our network to include decision makers to enhance natural resource governance. Tools: Participatory Mapping; farm, market analysis; market approaches using PMCA and PGS and consumer awareness campaigns (OLIA); landscape approaches; convening events & conferences. SWISSAID as an advocate and amplifier of voices: Financial support and strengthening of legitimate policy advocacy actors; promoting multi-actor platforms connecting field with policy level or research/advocacy projects; linking national/international advocacy. SWISSAID as an analyst: Gender mainstreaming in agroecology (14th principle); monitoring and assessment tools like ACT, B-ACT and TAPE; supporting climate change risk assessments	Political Participation and Women's literacy. SWISSAID as a convenor, networker: Provide trainings and trainers to strengthen the organisational skills of CSOs. Tools: Trainings on rights and obligations, opportunities, and networking with likeminded organisations SWISSAID as an advocate and trainer: Enhance a non – binary gender language and an open dialogue on diversity. SWISSAID as a dialogue partner: Committed to an open and appropriately challenging dialogue with partners.	**SWISSAID as a networker:** Participate in meetings of the UN food cluster system at country level and link information and actors. **SWISSAID as an implementor:** Implement projects in close collaboration with local authorities and implementing partner organisations handing over power and capacities. Tools: Beneficiary selection, result based management in cash, food aid and seed distribution (voucher systems in seed fairs)	Offer services as a backstopping organisation doing secretariat work and providing protection as relevant. Tools: tri-policy dialogue with civil society, government, businesses, conferences, investigative reports, and strategic litigation SWISSAID as an advocate, amplifier of voices: Provide critical evidence by publishing and disseminating reports, participating in conferences, inviting, and sponsoring the participation of southern Human Rights actors.
SWSSAID commitment	SWISSAID aims to move towards landscape level 3 and 4 (Gliessmann) approaches and focus on element synergy, land and resource governance, circular and solidarity economy.	SWISSAID recognizes gender transformative work as fundamental to achieve all strategy outcomes. All interventions are at least gender-sensitive, with the aim of becoming gender transformative.	SWISSAID is committed to the principle of the Triple Nexus, understood as the interlinkages between the three pillars of humanitarian, development and peace action and has the commitment to coordinate and collaborate with authorities and specialist organisations and programmes in situ.	SWISSAID is committed to expand, learn and share its knowledge and principles of the HRBA across the programme and with duty bearers and right holders.
Learning and support mechanisms	One thematic advisor agroecology, 2 policy advisors on climate change and seeds & biodiversity SWISSAID as a sponsor and coach: Tools: Organising and supporting empowerment processes in women groups; awareness trainings for duty bearers and right holders; engaging with men and boys and women and girls to challenge gender biased social norms and enhance co-responsibility; reducing the work burden of women and enhancing the care economy;	One thematic advisor at HO level Focal points in all Coof 1 annual meeting of the community of practice (CoP) at international level and regional level Sufosec Learning Group on Gender Equality SDC Gender Equality Network Icfg Uni Bern - baseline and WAVE knowledge management process External mandates for specific studies	Focal point at SWISSAID head office Sufosec Advisory Network for Nexus and Conflict Sensitivity Programme Management Regional African coordinator Expert network in Africa	Focal point at SWISSAID head office Advisory Network Sufosec disseminates good practices. The network facilitates joint learning and training events.

	counselling from feminist and mental health perspectives; supporting Women's Economic Empowerment, Women's Political Participation and Women's literacy. SWISSAID as a convenor, networker: Provide trainings and trainers to strengthen the organisational skills of CSOs. Tools: Trainings on rights and obligations, opportunities, and networking with likeminded organisations SWISSAID as an advocate and trainer: Enhance a non – binary gender language and an open dialogue on diversity. SWISSAID as a dialogue partner: Committed to an open and appropriately challenging dialogue with partners. Focal points in all Coof 2 annual meetings of the community of practice (CoP) at international level and regional level SDC FS network Thematic Group Sufosec (supporting outcome 1) FAO (TAPE unit) Mainstreaming process of climate change, gender, and conflict in programmes			

[1] Linking relief, rehabilitation, and development

SWISSAID Programme Principles 2025-2028

Mainstreaming of key principles	Risk informed actions Climate change and disaster risk sensitivity	LNOB Leave no one behind	Gender just actions Gender Sensitivity	Localisation Locally led development	Do no harm Conflict Sensitivity
Short description	Climate Change and DRR calls for more **risk informed investments**. Project designs must have an understanding of future climate change and natural hazard scenarios. Our time horizon is the mid-term (one generation). In project design, we must consciously define what can happen and what is "not allowed to happen".	The principle of leaving no one behind (LNOB) calls for **better inclusion of all marginalised groups**. Which groups require special attention and effort largely depend on the context. It is mainly about recognising the diversity and intersectionality of multiple discriminations. Most often it refers to landless people, race or ethnicity, religion, gender identity, sexual orientation, age, disability...	Gender sensitiveness calls for an in depth understanding of gender roles, and the **short-term needs and longer-term strategic interests** of all genders in the contexts where we work. In order not to unintentionally replicate discrimination based on gender stereotypes, those must first be detected, understood, and then deconstructed and transformed.	In order to find the most appropriate development solutions in given contexts and apply the principle of subsidiarity, national and local actors must fully own the development agenda and take co-leadership roles. In recent years the localisation agenda has gained traction in all areas of development cooperation and humanitarian aid.	To avoid unintentionally reinforcing or triggering conflicts or **doing harm,** any project in a conflict prone or affected location must be conflict sensitive. At a minimum, conflict sensitivity calls for an understanding of conflict topics and parties as well as their conflicting interests and requires identifying do's and don'ts related to the conflict.
Information documents, Indicies, etc	INFORM	Human Rights Index (incl. UPR) Countries	CEDAW country reports	ODI report on localisation 2021 / Sufosec and SDC reports / OECD DAC guidance documents	ACLED Conflict maps
Tools	CEDRIG, PACDR etc.	LNOB trees	Gender analysis, GAD, GAP	Power Assessment Tool OCO-CAT tool	Do no harm tool
SWSSAID Minimum Standard	Projects do not increase risks. More and more projects include actions to adapt to climate change.	Projects are LNOB informed and promote diversity. Some projects have LNOB-disaggregated data.	Programs and projects are subject to a gender analysis. Every project has one gender indicator / data sex-disaggregated. Country programmes have one project focusing on gender equality. Gender ratio of staff analysed yearly	Each Coof has 3-5 strategic national/local partners. SW has a partnership policy.	Projects do no harm, are not gender, conflict, or climate blind (especially in conflict areas).

Abbreviations

AE	Agroecology
DRR	Disaster Risk Reduction
CCA	Climate Change Adaptation
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women
CoP	Community of Practice
CSO	Civil society organisation
CSPM	Conflict-sensitive programme management
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
GAD	Gender and Development
GAP	Gender Action Plan Tool
HRBA	Human rights-based approach
IFAD	International Fund for Agricultural Development
IPCC	Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change
LNOB	Leave no one behind
MEL	Monitoring, evaluation and learning
NGO	Non-governmental organisation
OECD DAC	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development - Development Assistance Committee
OHCHR	Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights
Paris Agreement	Paris Agreement under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change
PSEAH	Prevention of sexual exploitation, abuse and harassment
RFW	Results Framework
SDC	Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
SUFOSEC	Sustainable Food Systems and Empowered Communities
TOC	Theory of Change
UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
WASH	Water, sanitation and hygiene
WFP	World Food Programme
WHO	World Health Organization

Annex

Context (based on SUFOSEC Programme 2025-28)

Global context

According to the SDG Report 2023 (UN 2023), the world has "entered an age of polycrisis". Hard-earned achievements towards the SDGs are in danger as we are recovering from the **COVID-19 pandemic** and its impacts on poor and vulnerable communities amid the Russian military aggression against the Ukraine, which has created a **food and nutrition crisis** that is hitting poorest countries hardest. The pandemic has caused the largest rise in **social and economic inequality** between countries in three decades. While people are coping with these acute crises, greenhouse gas emissions continue to rise, perpetuating the **climate crisis** and increasing the frequency and severity of extreme weather events. It therefore comes as little surprise and it is high time that the UN in its SDG Report 2023 sounds the alarm, stating that "the SDGs are in deep trouble". If current trends continue, 575 million people will still be living in extreme poverty and only one-third of countries will have halved their national poverty levels by 2030. SWISSAID is part of the Alliance SUFOSEC and therefore is cooperating with more than 250 Global South actors, mostly CSOs, representing millions of marginalised rights holders. We are committed to building on and supporting their efforts to realize their right to food and improve their livelihoods, thus contributing to a turn-around towards reaching the SDGs.

Particularly in fragile and poverty-stricken countries, however, people face multiple challenges and barriers rooted in social, economic and gender inequalities. The SUFOSEC Alliance, in which SWISSAID fulfills leadership roles, has identified and analysed the four most relevant, interrelated global challenges that shape its joint programme (Figure 2): the food and nutrition crisis, the climate crisis, fragility, and the shrinking space for civil society.

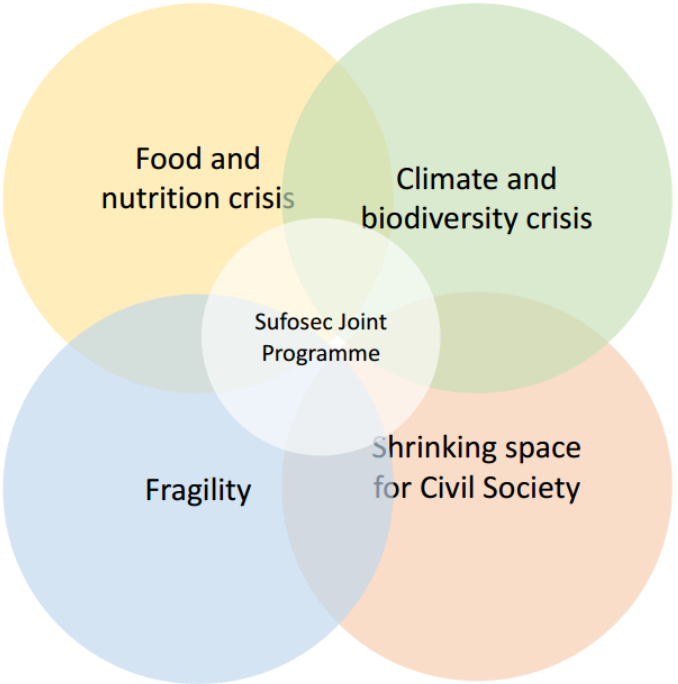


Figure 1. Most relevant global development challenges of relevance to the Sufosec joint programme

Food and nutrition crisis

Since 2015, hunger is once again on the rise. The aim of SDG 2 is to end hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition. In 2022, 30% of the world's population, around 2.4 billion people, was moderately or severely food insecure compared to 25% in 2019. The indicators are even worse when it comes to the quality of nutrition: in 2021, 42% of the world's population was not able to afford a healthy and nutritious diet. **In three SWISSAID programme countries more than 50% of the population is food insecure**, as shown in the table below. In its recent report on the state of food and agriculture, the FAO convincingly argued that the current agri-food system has a hidden cost of US Dollar 10 trillion by jeopardising human health and accelerating global warming. It has been scientifically proven that an agroecological transition can make a significant contribution to ensuring that low- and middle-income countries not only improve the food security of their populations, but also achieve climate adaptation and mitigation goals.

The climate and biodiversity crisis, conflicts, economic instability, food waste, and unfair trade and tax systems are the main drivers of world hunger. While climate change is provoking extreme weather events such as unprecedented droughts in East Africa that affect livelihoods and food and seed stocks, the ongoing war in Ukraine has disrupted food supply chains, affecting the prices of food, feeds and fertilizer and energy.

In his report entitled Conflict and the right to food (OHCHR 2022), the Special Rapporteur on the right to food, Michael Fakhri, argues that the current global food system produces "structural inequalities and systemic violence": **while transnational corporations in the agri-food sector are increasing their wealth, the food crisis endangers the lives and livelihoods of billions of people**. The extractive character of the global food system leaves the environment degraded, depleted, and destroyed, with small-scale food producers and workers underpaid and exposed to hazardous working conditions. People's access to food is denied or impeded based on their identities, and they are deprived of the means and entitlements needed to obtain it. To end all forms of structural violence in food systems, the Special Rapporteur advocates for strong land and labour rights, a just transition to agroecology, and the conservation, protection, development, and dissemination of traditional knowledge.

Figure 2. SWISSAID programme countries with more than 50% food insecurity 2020-2022*

Programme country	% of moderate or severe food insecurity	Programme country	% of moderate or severe food insecurity
Guinea Bissau	77.8	Tanzania	58.7
Niger	71.4		

* measured as country average Food Insecurity Experience Scale.
Source: FAO, IFAD, UNICEF, WFP and WHO (2023).

Countless grassroots movements and campaigns around the world (e.g. the Movement for Food Sovereignty, the Campaign for the Right to Food, and the peasant movement La Via Campesina) are actively campaigning for better nutrition literacy and the right to food. By **linking local and global initiatives, many social movements successfully influence national policies towards more sustainable and equitable food systems**. India, for example, adopted the National Food Security Act in 2013, shifting the paradigm from a welfare-based to a rights-based approach to food security. The COVID-19 pandemic has exposed the weaknesses of the current global agri-food system and has shown that organised communities and local movements working in solidarity based on agroecological principles can increase people's resilience to shocks.

Climate crisis and biodiversity loss

Between 2023 and 2027, there is a 66% likelihood that the annual average near-surface global temperature will be more than 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels for at least one year. And there is a 50% probability that long term average global warming will pass 1.5°C between 2030 and 2035 if greenhouse gas emissions continue to rise at the current rate (IPCC 2023). This warming will increase both the intensity and frequency of disasters, with more and more deadly heat waves, and an increasing number and extent of floods and storms. According to the Global Climate Risk Index, **four SWISSAID programme countries are highly exposed and vulnerable to extreme and rapid-onset weather events**, see the table below. Droughts and water shortages caused by more erratic and variable precipitation are already now mainly affecting those who have not been emitting the greenhouse gases, depriving them of their

livelihoods and forcing them to migrate. The Paris Agreement and the Biodiversity Convention, which are both binding international agreements, have set the targets and goals, including a finance mechanism, that guide the Alliance's policy and actions.

These climatic shifts are occurring against a backdrop of dwindling natural resources of all kinds, such as arable land, virgin forest, fertile soil and uncontaminated drinking water. The global overconsumption of resources and the massive pollution and exploitation of these resources for the benefit of a few has led to greater economic inequality and a mass extinction of both fauna and flora. In this context, the international community's decision in December 2022 to place 30% of the Earth's surface under protection by 2030 is a positive sign. Even more important is the recognition that **indigenous peoples and local communities are central to the protection, restoration and sustainable use of biodiversity**. The latest IPCC Report (2023) also explicitly recognizes that scientific, indigenous and local knowledge is necessary for understanding and assessing climate change mitigation and adaptation. However, indigenous and local communities are still unilaterally portrayed as passive victims of the impacts of the climate crisis instead of being respected as partners. Therefore, for SWISSAID, the key to achieving positive change in this difficult environment continues to lie in empowering local communities, strengthening their rights and valorising their culture and knowledge of biodiversity conservation.

Figure 3. SWISSAID programme countries with high climate risk (Global Climate Risk Index < 50)*

Programme country	Climate risk score	Programme country	Climate risk score
India	17	Myanmar	31
Niger	18	Colombia	36

* The Global Climate Risk Index measures exposure and vulnerability to extreme, rapid-onset weather events, such as storms, floods and heat waves, but not droughts. 0=high risk; 100=low risk.
Source: GERMANWATCH (2021).

Fragility

Conflicts and fragility are on the rise and international stability is under pressure. The Fragile States Index Report 2023 (Fund for Peace 2023) stresses that the post-COVID effects and Russian aggression against Ukraine **led to high inflation, fuel riots and a global food price shock worsening the acute food insecurity in 58 countries.**

Growing economic uncertainty has led to **more political unrest**, i.e. in 2022 over 12,000 food- and fuel-related protests were recorded globally and as the SIPRI Yearbook 2023 confirms, "worldwide, there was more war, higher military spending and increased acute food insecurity". In total, 56 states experienced armed conflicts, an increase of 5% over the previous year. Africa remains the continent with the most armed conflicts and coups d'état. According to the Fragile State Index, three SWISSAID programme countries, two of them in sub-Saharan Africa, are considered in the "alert" status of fragility.

International development organisations have adapted to the changed conditions. Understanding fragility in a given context has become an important aspect in the planning and implementation of development programmes. In fragile contexts, international NGOs, including the organisations of the Sufosec Alliance, **apply conflict-sensitive programme management (CSPM), follow a human rights-based approach (HRBA) and work on the Triple**

Nexus between development, humanitarian aid and peacebuilding. Staying engaged before, during and after crisis as well as operational flexibility have become guiding principles of programming in fragile settings. Against a backdrop of political instability, conflict, weak governance and social disintegration, **civil society organisations play a critical role** to empower communities, advocate for human rights, provide healthcare and education and hold duty bearers accountable.

Figure 4. SWISSAID programme countries with fragility status "alert"*

Programme country	Fragility status 2023
Chad	alert
Myanmar	alert
Niger	alert

* as indicated on the Fragile States Index. Source: Fund for Peace (2023).

Shrinking space for Civil Society

An independent and empowered civil society is an essential component of a healthy democratic system (Council of Europe 2016). **CSOs build on the strength of citizens and ensure their voices are heard.** They can advise policy-makers and local governments, help draft legislation drafting and in general support government decision-making, thus ensuring that policies respond to citizens' needs. Promotion of policy dialogue at all levels is thus a key aim of SWISSAID. CSOs also have a major role to play in monitoring governments' activities and holding them accountable for their actions, especially when these infringe on human and environmental rights. They are vital vehicles for active citizenship, and require appropriate legal, financial and policy frameworks to operate freely and sustainably.

Their current situation reflects the declining strength of democracies especially during the last decade (International IDEA 2022). **Global levels of democracy are backsliding, and advances made over the past 35 years are being undermined.** Most of the drastic changes have taken place within the last ten years: today, 72% of the world's population live in autocracies, the level of democracy enjoyed by the average global citizen in 2022 is down to 1986 levels and 46% of the global GDP is accounted for by autocracies. The consequences for CSOs are repressive acts such as physical harassment and murder, as in Colombia, which has the highest murder rate of human rights activists in Latin America (Human Rights Watch 2021). Studies of civil society and activists across various contexts reveal different ways in which civil society adapts and resists, and how different forms of activism emerge and become amplified. Online activity can also be an arena where, despite restrictions, activists carve out new spaces for collective discussion and action. Since the turn of the century, a **growing number of governments around the world have introduced or tightened restrictions on CSOs**.

In seven SWISSAID programme countries, the civic space is considered "repressed" or even "closed", see the table below. The Sufosec Alliance strives to support civil society's adaption processes and underlines the importance of **strengthening CSOs in their own right**, in line with the OECD DAC Recommendations on Enabling Civil Society in Development Co-operation and Humanitarian Assistance, thus laying the basis for healthy democratic structures.

Figure 5. SWISSAID programme countries with "closed" or "repressed" civic spaces*

Programme country	Civic space score	Programme country	Civic space score
Chad	repressed	Niger	repressed
Colombia	repressed	Tanzania	repressed
India	repressed	Myanmar	closed
Nicaragua	closed		

* measured as respect for the freedoms of association and peaceful assembly and the expression of civil society. Source: CIVICUS MONITOR (2023)

"Decolonising aid" and strengthening locally led practice

Over the past few years, the voice of Global South actors and networks **calling for new cooperation modalities that shift power to local actors** are finally being heard. The COVID-19 pandemic has disrupted the way we cooperate in international cooperation and the Black Lives Matter movement has put discussions about racism and colonialism again at the forefront of the agenda, giving the needed attention to actors from the Global South who criticize the power structures within the international cooperation sector.

As a consequence, the landscape in international development cooperation has shifted towards enabling local civil society actors to reach greater representation, voice and agency in the development ecosystem. This involves multiple aspects, including shaping policy and development priorities, establishing more equitable partnerships between Global South and North, and direct ownership of implementation modalities. Global commitments made in both the development and the humanitarian fields, such as the Busan Partnership Agreement or the Grand Bargain, illustrate the changing environment and put forward arguments from an ethical, strategic and financial perspective.

While there is widespread agreement amongst various development stakeholders on the need for reform, **moving from policy to practice and from intention to action remains an arduous journey**. Financing institutions and donor agencies are grappling with the system change required and the operational challenges associated with **shifting resources and power closer to the communities** they are meant to serve. Global South actors are learning to navigate the procedural and relational labyrinth that constitutes the international development system and international NGOs are rethinking their role and value-added in development cooperation, and experiencing mounting demands for system change and reform from both donors and local players. SWISSAID is actively engaged in this process of reflection, recognizing the need to invest in building up its own expertise and to strengthen the dialogue with its Global South partners. **Building on already strong localisation practices that empower partners in their own right**, SWISSAID has decided to take further steps in its joint programme 2025-2028 with SUFOSEC. It will notably focus on fostering more collaborative, equal and transparent partnerships, promote mutual accountability and work with Global South actors at programme level to strengthen their role as catalysts for locally led change processes.

Prevention of abuse of power (corruption/sexual assault)

Sufosec defines abuse of power as the misuse of a position of power to harm, harass or disadvantage other people or to gain personal advantages that favour oneself. This includes corruption and sexual assault, but also all other forms of exploitation, acceptance of advantages, preferential treatment, discrimination and unethical behaviour.

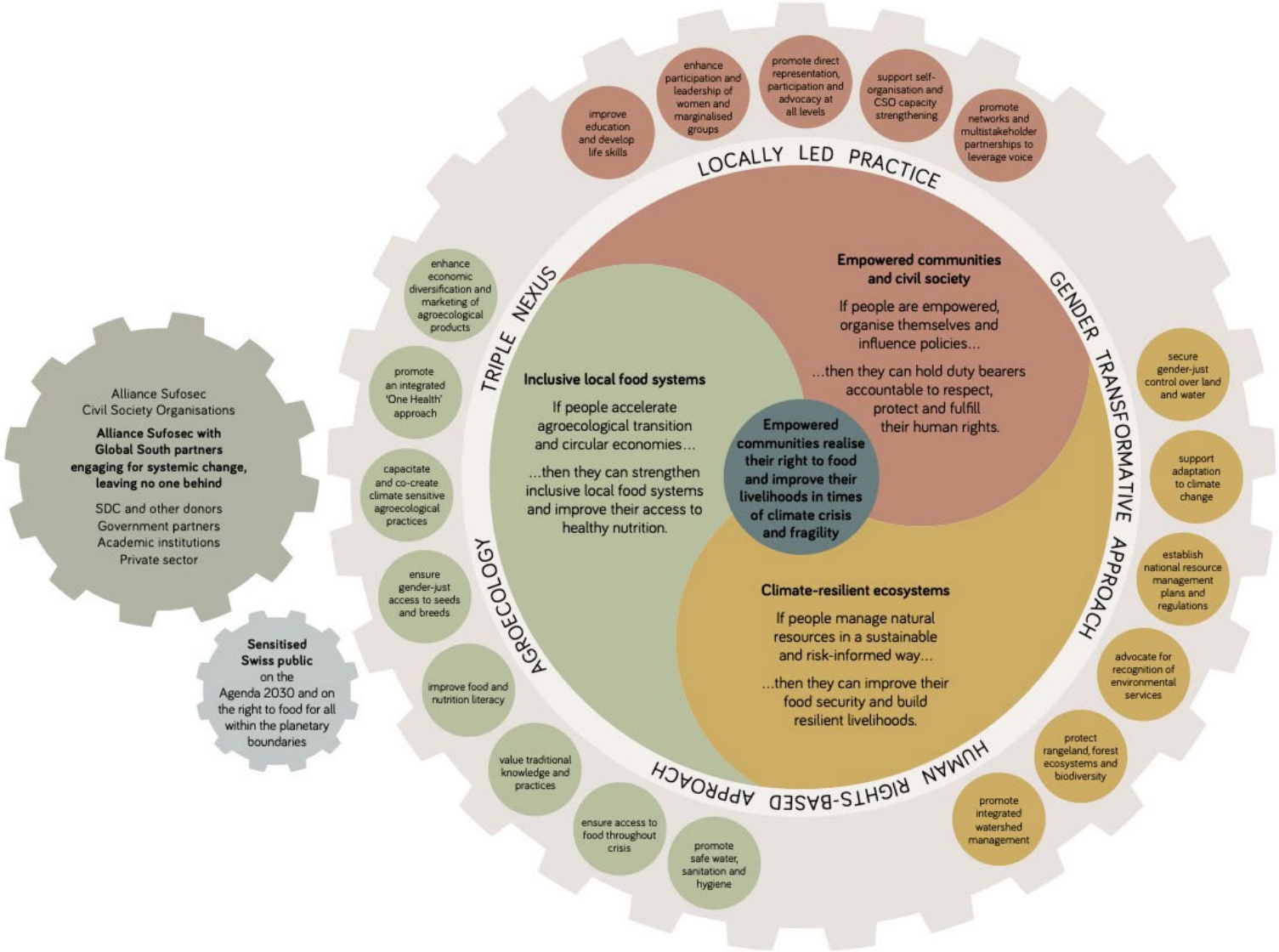
The Alliance organisations are aware that abuse of power can occur in their workplaces and in partner organisations and that working with vulnerable populations carries an inherent risk that some individuals will take advantage of their position of power. The Sufosec Alliance and its partner organisations therefore make significant efforts to prevent abuses of power such as fraud, corruption, sexual abuse and harassment within the joint programme through a multi-faceted approach that combines education, collaboration, audits, community engagement and other measures.

SWISSAID will not tolerate any form of abuse of power by their staff, volunteers, consultants, partner staff or other representatives associated with their work. Policies (Anti-Corruption, Child Protection, PSEAH, safety & security) are put in place and – in cooperation with experts from the respective contexts – we will constantly undertake the following:

- raising awareness and increasing knowledge and capacities at all levels;
- fostering, extending and adapting complaint mechanisms;
- handling incoming cases and sharing learnings between Sufosec Alliance organisations and with relevant stakeholders (e.g. partners, SDC).

In the next phase of the programme, the Sufosec-CoP for PSEAH will be expanded to cover abuse of power in general (and thus also anti-corruption), with a focus on promoting a common approach to ensuring effective compliance mechanisms at all levels to identify and follow up on cases of abuse of power, as well as sharing cases and providing peer coaching in case handling.

Theory of Change and Results Framework Sufosec



Source: SUFOSEC Programme Document 2025-28, p. 22

Rationale

In the context of the unprecedented and intolerable rise of hunger worldwide, the Sufosec Alliance has developed a Theory of Change with the overall expected impact that communities are empowered to realise their right to food and improve their livelihoods, particularly vulnerable and marginalised people (Figure 9). To this end, the Alliance organisations and their Global South Partners will cooperate in line with five major interdependent strategies:

First, the Alliance and its partners will contribute to inclusive and gender-just local food systems and improve people's access to healthy nutrition through accelerated agroecological transition. The underlying assumption is that agroecological practices promote diversified and locally adapted food production and help communities become more self-reliant and less dependent on external inputs. Climate-sensitive agroecological practices, improved access to drinking water, peasant-owned seed systems, food processing and marketing, and the integration of crop and livestock agriculture are at the heart of this strategy.

Second, the Alliance and its partners will promote climate-resilient ecosystems through sustainable management of natural resources. Communities will be supported in their efforts to access and manage land, water, forest and rangeland in a way that restores and protects ecosystems and biodiversity, and to adapt to the local effects of climate change. The underlying assumption is that sustainably managed natural resources and climate change adaptation ultimately contribute to improved food security and resilient livelihoods.

Third, the Alliance and its partners will empower right-holders, in particular people left behind, and communities by strengthening their capacities to organise themselves so that they can influence policies for positive change and gender justice and hold duty bearers accountable. The underlying assumption is that empowerment is a prerequisite to all the other strategies and that strong community-based organisations, movements and networks are key to shaping inclusive policy environments to realise the right to food for all.

Fourth, the Alliance – in dialogue with its partners – will critically reflect and further develop cooperation modalities for more equal partnerships, stimulate locally led initiatives by shifting power to local actors, and ensure co-creation and learning processes value and strengthen local expertise. The underlying assumption is that locally led practice based on more equal partnerships between Global South and Global North actors are key for systemic change.

Fifth, the Sufosec Alliance, supported by its partners, will raise awareness and call on the Swiss public to maintain global efforts to attain the SDGs. The underlying assumption is that global challenges need global action and solidarity.

Across the above outlined strategies, the Sufosec Alliance will apply **five approaches** across the programme: **first** and foremost, it will pursue and promote agroecology, understood as a social movement and a set of principles and practices that enhances the resilience and sustainability of food and farming systems while preserving social integrity. **Second**, the Alliance and its partner organisations will promote locally led practice. **Third**, they will pursue a gender transformative approach, engaging all genders together for a structural transformation aimed at gender equity, addressing power imbalances and the root causes of gender inequalities. **Fourth**, the Alliance commits itself to mainstreaming a human rights-based approach throughout its programme with a focus on leaving no one behind. And **fifth**, when operating in fragile contexts, the Alliance will link developmental, humanitarian and conflict-sensitive operations – strengthening the triple nexus – so as to stay engaged in times of crisis.

Through this programme, the Alliance and its partners are committed to help attain the SDGs, especially SDG 2 (Zero Hunger) but also SDGs 1 (No Poverty), 5 (Gender Equality), 6 (Clean Water and Sanitation), 10 (Reduced Inequalities), 12 (Responsible Consumption and Production), 13 (Climate Action), 15 (Life on Land), 16 (Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions) and 17 (Partnerships for the Goals).

Overall Goal: Empowered communities realize their right to food and improve their livelihoods in times of climate crisis and fragility				
Outcome 1 **Inclusive Local Food Systems** People - all genders equally – contribute to inclusive local food systems and have improved their nutrition through accelerated agroecological transition. **Quantitative indicators** a) Proportion of households with moderate or severe food insecurity (target: reduction of 20% to baseline) *SDG indicator 2.1.2.* *SDC indicator AFS TRI 1* b) Proportion of women and men with a diverse diet (target: 80%) *SDC indicator AFS TRI 3* c) Proportion of households applying a diverse set of agroecological practices (target: 80%) *SDC indicator AFS ARI 2*	Outcome 2 **Climate-resilient Ecosystems** People - all genders equally - manage and use their natural resources in a risk-informed, climate-resilient, and sustainable way. **Quantitative indicators** a) Number of communities implementing sustainable landscape or DRR/CCA management plans (target: 20% increase to baseline) b) Number of hectares being managed in an integrated manner (target: 20% increase to baseline) *SDC indicator WAT TRI 3*	Outcome 3 **Empowered Civil Society** Communities and Civil Society Organisations are empowered, organise themselves, influence policies, promote gender justice, and hold duty bearers accountable to respect, protect, and fulfil their human rights. **Quantitative indicators** a) Proportion of partner CSOs with at least 30% women in leadership positions (target: 100%) *SDC indicator GEN ARI 2* b) Number of people participating in and influencing public service provision, decision-making and budgets in their localities (target: 20% increase to baseline) *SDC indicator GOV ARI 1*	Outcome 4 **Global Partnerships** Alliance organisations and their partners cooperate in more equitable partnerships, reinforcing locally led change. **Quantitative indicators** a) % of partner organisations with perceived co-decision power (target: 80%)	Outcome 5 **Sensitized Swiss Public** The Swiss public is aware of the universal right to food, based on the Sustainable Development Goals. **Quantitative indicators** a) Increased proportion of Swiss people who are familiar with and concerned about global poverty *ETH/NADEL Swiss Panel Global Cooperation Survey*
Qualitative indicator Documented examples demonstrating the outcomes of agroecological transition of food systems (target: 12)	**Qualitative indicator** Documented examples demonstrating the outcomes of improved natural resource management or climate change adaptation (target: 24)	**Qualitative indicator** Documented examples demonstrating the outcomes of policy influencing by partner civil society organisations (target: 12)	**Qualitative indicator** Documented examples demonstrating the outcomes of locally led practice, shifting power to national and local actors (target: 12)	
Outputs **1.1:** Peasants have improved production through the co-creation and use of agroecological practices, valuing local and traditional knowledge. **1.2:** Market actors have engaged in value-adding and economic diversification, such as food processing, marketing and reuse. **1.3:** Consumers have enhanced their knowledge of and access to healthy and nutritious food and quality drinking water, also in emergencies.	**Output** **2.1:** People have equal and improved access to land, water and forest and use them in a sustainable and conflict-sensitive way. **2.2:** Communities have enhanced their adaptive capacities to increase their resilience against climate change, in cooperation with other stakeholders. **2.3:** Communities protect, restore and maintain forests, rangelands, other ecosystems and biodiversity, advocating and connecting with other stakeholders.	**Outputs** **3.1:** People have been empowered through gender transformative action, education and occupational training, and have developed life skills. **3.2:** People, in particular women, young people and other vulnerable groups, have organised, networked and taken leadership in social, political and economic life. **3.3:** Communities, CSOs and other stakeholders have been empowered and engage in policy dialogues at local, national and international level.	**Outputs** **4.1:** Alliance organisations and their partners work in partnership modalities that foster the leadership of national and local actors and strengthen alliances and networks led by global South actors. **4.2:** Alliance organisations and their partners have co-designed and implemented initiatives strengthening locally led practice and shifting power towards local actors. **4.3:** Alliance organisations and their partners have strengthened their expertise, balancing different priorities, and have jointly developed, shared and applied knowledge prioritizing South-South exchange.	**Outputs** **5.1:** People in Switzerland have engaged in awareness-raising activities organised by or with the support of alliance organisations. **5.2:** People in Switzerland have been reached by the awareness-raising actions of alliance organisations. **5.3:** Information products of the Alliance demonstrate the effectiveness of the joint programme towards the Swiss public.

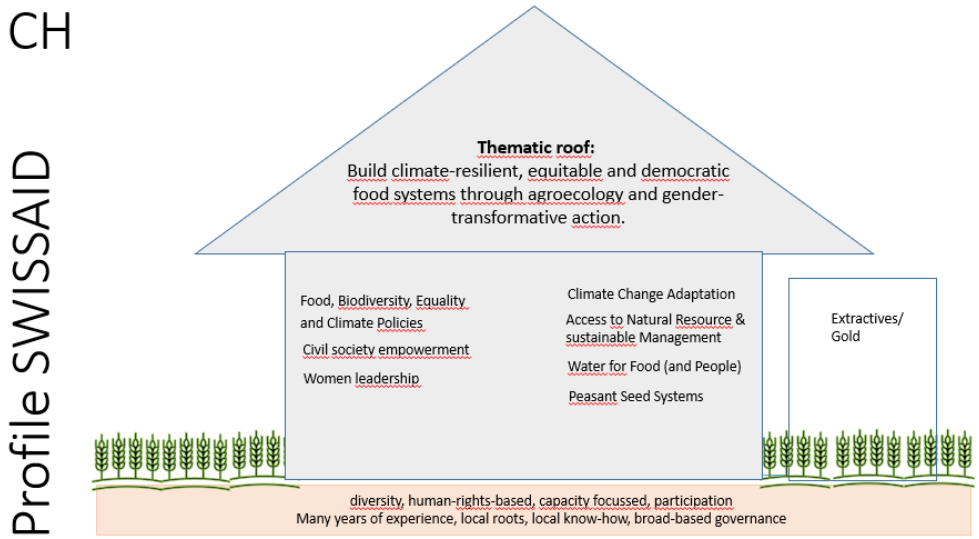
Positioning SWISSAID

Our donors, the general public and other stakeholders should have a clear picture of what SWISSAID's focus is. We want to convince these target groups that we are their preferred partner when it comes to fair and sustainable solutions to the global food crisis. Our "thematic leadership" in this topic plays a crucial role in our future viability and thus in fulfilling our mission. Given an increasingly competitive market environment, we need to devote our limited resources more than ever to strengthening our core brand, building up expertise and evidence in our core field of work, and becoming a preferred specialist service provider with a clear positioning when it comes to SDG 2 in general and the topics of agroecology and gender in particular. This can only succeed if we create synergies both in the field and with our stakeholders in Switzerland, set coherent goals and combine forces with others, while at the same time exploiting opportunities and niches that lie "at the margins".

The needs of SWISSAID differ due to the different contexts in the nine southern countries and Switzerland. Nevertheless, the common positioning using a symbolic house should have a stronger orienting effect in the future. All coordination offices (CoOfs) and the headquarters (HQ) make the main house their own, which stands under the common roof:

Building climate-resilient equitable and democratic food systems through agroecology and gender-transformative action.

Some CoOfs and HQ also have one or two outbuildings in their portfolio that only partially fit under the common thematic umbrella. These outbuildings are contextually justified and will remain operational if the need continues to exist, and funding is secured. Nevertheless, the organisation must always strive to fit those contents as well as possible under the common thematic umbrella to further strengthen the central positioning.



If SWISSAID succeeds in proving the benefits of agroecology through farmer-led research and the publication of knowledge products, the public attention and the willingness of policymakers to change will increase, and SWISSAID's services will be in greater demand and (financially) supported. As a result, SWISSAID will be able to expand its project activities and continuously increase its active contribution to achieving the goal of "Zero Hunger".