



POLICY SECTOR:
DEVELOPMENT AND COOPERATION

RESEARCH MASTER PLAN 2008–2011

Short version



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The international community adopted the Millennium Declaration in New York in September 2000. In so doing, they entered into a global partnership to fight poverty worldwide, promote peace, defend human rights and protect the environment. The corresponding Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) include the target of halving global poverty by 2015. Through the Millennium initiative, the international community acknowledges that global problems and risks such as poverty, regional marginalisation, climate change, failed states and migration surpass the capabilities of individual countries (both rich and poor alike) to cope and as such cannot be resolved unilaterally. A global focus on the issues is needed together with multilateral solutions.

Swiss accession to the United Nations has deepened the country's commitment to problem-solving at the multilateral level. The Millennium Declaration and the MDGs were decisive milestones for Switzerland's development policies, which are based on the "global partnership for poverty reduction and human security" strategy.

This strategy has led to the following guidelines for research in the Development and Cooperation policy sector: research efforts should be structured according to the international poverty reduction agenda; research should generate suitable knowledge and methods that can be used for Swiss development cooperation purposes, thereby enabling decision-makers to effectively manage and implement development cooperation activities in keeping with the poverty reduction agenda; moreover, research capabilities and capacities in the south and west should be developed to allow countries in these regions to play an increasingly active role in their own development process, which is a further aim of the Millennium initiative.

This commitment to develop scientific capacities in developing and transition countries can already be found in Switzerland's Sustainable Development Strategy 2002, and Switzerland's bilateral research partnerships have already garnered considerable international recognition.

Research findings in the Development and Cooperation policy sector bear their fruit primarily when used in combination with other international cooperation instruments. Finding efficient solutions to reduce poverty and reaching the Millennium Development Goals are the main focus. Research findings should also lead to practical applications that the various participants in the development chain can use to fight poverty. Research has become increasingly transdisciplinary, getting the persons concerned and users involved at all phases.

I would like to thank all of the people and institutions, both inside and outside the Federal Administration, for having worked on this Research Master Plan.



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1. Introduction

In 1997, the Federal Council decided that a research master plan would be drafted for each policy sector as part of an overall effort to control the quality of federal policy research. Quality control can be broken down into the following stages: (1) Planning (research master plans), (2) Reporting (ARAMIS database), (3) Assessment of research master plan implementation in general or in specific policy sectors.

Policy sector research is research whose findings are used by the Federal Administration for federal policymaking purposes, and for carrying out its tasks. Policy sector research covers:

- Research conducted intramurally by the Federal Administration;
- Commissioned research, i.e., mandates awarded by the Federal Administration to third parties;
- Research contributions granted to research institutes whose research findings can help the Federal Administration carry out its tasks.

Established for each of twelve policy sectors,¹ research master plans provide an overview of all publicly-funded research conducted in the given policy sectors. **The “Development and Cooperation” policy sector falls within the purview of the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC) and the State Secretariat for Economic Affairs (SECO).** The Research Master Plan 2008-2011 is a continuation of the very first one, which was drafted for the period 2004-2007.

SDC research policy² pursues the following three objectives:

- (1) Generate specific **development-relevant research findings**;
- (2) **Strengthen research capacities in partner countries** so that they can conduct research on their own;
- (3) **Work in a targeted manner with Swiss researchers** whose activities have a bearing on key development areas (this objective is always linked to objective (1) or (2).

The SDC aligns its research activities according to the development challenges it has set for itself. The thematic priorities for Swiss development policies are laid out in the SDC’s Strategy 2010 and Midterm Review.

Since it is based on Strategy 2010, on the Midterm Review as well as on the research policies and priorities of the various SDC divisions, the **Research Master Plan is a reflection of existing strategies.**

Legal framework

Article 54 of the Federal Constitution requires the Confederation to “contribute to alleviating need and poverty in the world”. The Federal Act of 19 March 1979 on international development cooperation and humanitarian aid, together with the related ordinances, establishes that development cooperation must be result-driven. The related regulations explicitly state that **science and research must be used as a means of helping people to overcome hardship and poverty.** Research conducted in relation to Swiss development cooperation with Eastern Europe and the CIS as well as in relation to Switzerland’s contribution to EU enlargement falls within the scope of the Federal Act of 24 March 2006 on cooperation with Eastern European countries (Swiss Official Gazette entry: BBl 2006 3529, in German).

¹ The policy sectors are as follows: Health; Social Security; Environment; Agriculture; Energy; Sustainable Spatial Development and Mobility; Development and Cooperation; Security and Peace Policy; Professional Education; Sport and Physical Activity; Sustainable Traffic; Culture and Societal Development. For more details, see: www.ressortforschung.admin.ch

² Research Policy of the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC), 2002.

2. Previous priorities and achievements

Over the past few years, the SDC's research activities in the Development and Cooperation policy sector have focused on sustainable use of renewable natural resources (Water, Soil, Agricultural Production), social issues (Health, Education, etc.), socioeconomic issues (Employment, Income, Market Access) and political issues (Governance, Human Rights, Democracy). Switzerland is active in **major international research programmes** (CGIAR; New Global Health Initiative; International Human Dimension Programme on Global Environmental Change, etc.).

Of the total of CHF 52 million (2005 figures), roughly CHF 9 million was paid out in third-party research mandates and CHF 41 million in research contributions or grants. The 2005 figures fall in line with those of previous years and are therefore indicative of the average amounts spent each year.

Agricultural research received the lion's share of funding (over CHF 20 million in 2005), most of which went to CGIAR research projects. A recently conducted study on the overall impact of CGIAR research on economic and social development showed very positive results in terms of increased food production and simultaneous preservation of natural resources.

The second largest share went to **Health research** (over CHF 4 million in 2005). On various occasions, research findings could be put into practice, which led to **direct measures designed to improve the poverty situation**. A good example is the Ifakara Health Research Center in Tanzania where the widespread use of impregnated mosquito nets as a preventive measure against Malaria resulted in a significant decrease in the number of Malaria cases. Research findings in the area of maternal health have also helped to shape international health policies. Thanks to its commitment to this policy sector, Switzerland has established a solid international reputation and has been able to take part in international policymaking initiatives.

Considerable funding was also devoted to research in the areas of **Governance and Conflict Prevention**. Local ownership programmes in West Africa (Association ACE-Recit) are a perfect example of **successful capacity building resulting from long years of assistance** by the SDC and other donors.

Economic research funding stood at about CHF 1 million. This included research on ways to open up market access for agricultural products in Latin America (AgroPyme) and technical assistance to help develop Bolivia's financial sector (PROFIN).

Approximately CHF 7 million was used for **research partnerships and capacity development**. The National Centre of Competence in Research North-South (NCCR N-S) received the largest portion of this funding to help it find ways to mitigate syndromes of global change. As co-founder, the Swiss National Science Foundation (SNSF) also provided funding in support of this project. Funds were also used by the SNSF and the SDC in their special and regional programmes for common research projects (SCOPES and North-South research partnerships).

Switzerland's strong commitment to **research partnerships** has proven its merits and enjoys a high-degree of **international recognition**. One of the main reasons why these partnerships have garnered so much support is that Swiss universities have managed to initiate research with developing countries rather than simply concerning them.

The impact of research partnerships has been documented at several different levels:³

- a) Knowledge and methods, changes in researcher behaviour;
- b) Usefulness to policy makers and members of society in general; and
- c) Reinforcement of individual and institutional capacities.

Research partnerships have made Swiss researchers more aware of issues relating to the southern hemi-

³ Maselli, D, Lys J-A, Schmid J. 2006: Improving Impacts of Research Partnerships. Swiss Commission for Research Partnerships with Developing Countries, KFPE. GEOGRAPHICA BERNENSIA, Bern, 86pp., 2nd edition.

sphere and have enabled them to take part in international research initiatives. Finally, they have been able to strengthen and make use of North-South capacities and skills.

3. Strategic direction

Strategic framework

When Switzerland joined the United Nations in 2002, it took on the obligations of the UN Charter. In the area of development cooperation, these include the UN Millennium Declaration (2000) and its eight Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).

In its Strategy 2010, the SDC explains that knowledge is one of the fundamental values underpinning its activities. Emphasis has been placed on the development of knowledge and expertise as well as know-how and capacity in the SDC's priority sectors. In the Midterm Review released in 2005, the SDC adjusts and focuses its programmes and activities **on the basis of current challenges**. With its Agenda 2010, SECO's main strategy is centred on **fighting poverty** in a consistent and coherent manner.

Global partnerships to address poverty and human security: with these words, the Federal Council in 2006 established the frame of reference for Swiss development policies.⁴ Development efforts are to be directed to poor countries, particularly Africa. Strengthening of human and institutional capacities becomes the primary means of achieving sustainable growth.

The accompanying table shows the **position** that the various Swiss development activities (arranged according to themes) hold **on the International Development Agenda**, which is based on the Millennium Declaration and the MDGs. It also shows the corresponding themes that have been the subject of research. While **fighting poverty is highest on the list of priorities** of Swiss development cooperation, development depends on the constant **interplay between the three dimensions of poverty reduction, human security and global partnership**. Research in the Development and Cooperation policy sector is guided by the development challenges to be addressed by Swiss development cooperation (see table in Chapter 3.2 of the main text).

SECO's contribution relates to the same thematic areas: "Promoting free-market economies and **sustainable growth**, encouraging greater integration in world markets, mobilising private resources" to help reduce poverty; "promoting **good governance and economic governance**" to help improve human security; and "strengthening **Switzerland's influence in multilateral development banks**" to reinforce participation in global partnerships.

The scientific and foreign policy activities of the State Secretariat for Education and Research (SER) are designed to consolidate Switzerland's position as a research-intensive country. In a general sense, the SER's activities are complementary to those of the SDC.

Objectives

New **knowledge is a key to development**. Applying not only to the industrialised world, "knowledge" is the only way that countries of the South and East can overcome major development challenges in areas such as, e.g., health and education, sustainable use of natural resources, and food security. Research in the Development and Cooperation policy sector seeks first and foremost to **develop the knowledge needed to understand existing development issues** and find **practicable solutions**. The relevance of research

4 Discussion paper - Foreign Policy Report 2006, May 2006.

findings can be seen in their applications, feasibility and usefulness. For Swiss international cooperation actors, research provides the foundation upon which effective cooperation strategies can be built.

Many developing and transition countries are particularly affected by global and regional problems. And yet the means and infrastructures available to them are far behind those of developed countries. The so-called “knowledge gap” is constantly increasing and has led to considerable dependence. The second goal of research funding is therefore **to strengthen institutional and individual research capacities in partner countries** and help them develop their own research systems, thereby reducing their dependence on industrialised countries.

4. Future emphasis

Within the Millennium initiative and the global debate on development cooperation, there is consensus on the importance of **greater international solidarity and synergies**. Nevertheless, concerted global action does not take away from the importance of targeted **local or regional action** to reduce dire poverty through sustainable activities. Multilateral and bilateral programmes should be made complementary, also as far as thematic research is concerned.

In the coming years, research in the Development and Cooperation policy sector can be carried out largely on the basis of existing activities, namely by **getting involved in international initiatives and research programmes** to assume global responsibility and by developing **the necessary knowledge in theme-specific or country-specific activities** to sustainably deal with local development challenges. As before, the development of research skills in developing and transition countries remains an urgent objective of research promotion efforts.

For the years 2008-2011, SDC research funding for the Development and Cooperation policy sector in developing and transition countries will remain **within previous levels** (subject to possible changes if new development challenges are added). Priorities in the future are expected to remain essentially the same.

Bilateral development cooperation will change somewhat as policies are **adjusted to take into account global political changes**. The SDC is currently revising its cooperation with India, which is considered an anchor country. India is an emerging economic power where on the one hand tremendous investments are being made in technology and scientific progress but on the other hand most of the population suffers from poverty and discrimination. Currently, India seeks to become more integrated in the global economy. The SDC has therefore readjusted its **future cooperation with India** along the lines of a “partnership programme”, where the interests of both countries can be met without reducing the poverty focus. **Science and Technology** will be part of this cooperation effort.

In relation to Switzerland’s **commitment to EU enlargement**, it is likely that major expenditures will be made in the area of research and development. The following two targets have been set: strengthening of **human scientific capacities** by facilitating access to education and running targeted support programmes; and **promotion of the use of knowledge** through applied research and development. These targets can be reached through a series of instruments such as capacity building, scholarships or partnerships, which will be adapted to suit the needs of individual member states.

5. Research principles in the development and cooperation policy sector

The experience gained by the SDC after long years of promoting research, along with the conclusions drawn from assessments of research partnerships and international programmes, enables us to define the main strategic principles of policy sector research:

Focus on strong points

Switzerland has achieved international recognition in many scientific fields that are also important for development cooperation. The presence of a strong pharmaceutical industry has been a driving force for health research. Switzerland is also a world leader in the field of biotechnology research. The development of sustainable farming began in the German-speaking part of Switzerland with Swiss researchers contributing significantly to the expansion of organic farming techniques for both crops and livestock. Switzerland's experience managing fragile ecosystems in the Alpine region, for example, predestined the country for its role as an initiator of international knowledge-sharing in the area of mountain region development. In addition, its long tradition of federalism makes Switzerland the ideal partner for matters relating to federalist conditions and mechanisms. In these areas, Switzerland can make a major contribution to the international research landscape.

Long-term involvement

Switzerland's long years of individual **partnerships with research facilities in the southern hemisphere in specific thematic areas** have produced good results. Its cooperation with the Centre Suisse de Recherches Scientifiques en Côte d'Ivoire (CSRS), for example, has led to discoveries relating to areas such as malnutrition and food security or tropical forest biodiversity and the biological properties of medicinal plants. Continuity and long-term focus enable research to effectively contribute to development processes.

Capacity development

Research cooperation is not only designed to produce research findings but also to **help strengthen research systems**. In part due to the prevalence of health problems in Bangladesh, the International Centre for Diarrhoeal Disease Research in Bangladesh (ICDDR, B) has become a leading centre for research and knowledge sharing in the areas of diarrheal illness, obstetrics and paediatrics. Here again, this was made possible thanks to Switzerland's **many years of constant commitment** to developing local capacities.

Practical uses for research

New knowledge can only contribute to development if its **potential is tapped by putting research findings into practice**. At first glance, research into methods to reduce arsenic concentrations and solar water disinfection (SODIS) to eliminate microorganisms seem unspectacular. However, the implementation of EAWAG's research to produce clean drinking water in Bangladesh has had an enormous impact on the health situation of the population. The key factor determining the relevance of research is whether it can be applied and disseminated on a massive scale (scaling up).

Partnership-based

Research partnerships between institutions in Switzerland and developing and transition countries are an important instrument for both knowledge development and capacity building at the institutional and individual level. Partnership-based approaches ensure that **research activities match the needs of developing and transition countries**. Jointly established targets and shared responsibility are important principles in partnership-based approaches. CABI is active in many different countries, promoting local skills in the field of integrated pest management (IPM), which is a very knowledge-intensive discipline.

Demand-driven

Cooperation with institutions in developing and transition countries offers the chance to orient research **towards the needs and priorities of these countries**. This corresponds to the philosophy underpinning the new methods for international cooperation (country-led strategies – poverty reduction strategies), which encourage developing and transition countries to take on greater responsibility. Research cooperation priorities are set in accordance with development needs. This demand-driven approach is manifested in the form of research contributions.

Transdisciplinary – Actor-driven – Systematic

Over the past few years, **research** in the Development and Cooperation policy sector has become **increasingly systematic**. Rather than devoting time and energy to isolated sector-based research, emphasis has been placed on understanding the real situation and quality of life of inhabitants as well as on finding ways to reduce poverty. Approaches are becoming increasingly **transdisciplinary**, which means local ownership of the process from start to finish: the people concerned as well as potential users determine their own needs, take part in conducting research and help implement research findings. Greater attention is being paid to “Joint learning” and “Knowledge” as a means of ensuring sustainable strategies for survival as well as universal accessibility. For example, research conducted in the field of infectious diseases focuses more on their relation to (dysfunctional) social structures rather than solely on the underlying biochemical processes.

6. Instruments

Switzerland supports research in the Development and Cooperation policy sector in two main ways. First of all, **commissioned research** is used to develop knowledge in specific areas. In such cases, the originator of the research mandate has full control over the activities carried out. Secondly, **research contributions** are used to support programmes and projects that can help solve priority development challenges and build capacities. In such cases, the institution providing the funding and the grant recipient jointly decide what research activities will be carried out.

Commissioned research

Research commissioned for the purpose of bilateral cooperation or in relation to thematic areas: The aim of these mandates is to develop solutions that can be implemented within the framework of bilateral development cooperation programmes.

Research contributions

Research contributions: The SDC lends support to research that generates development-relevant knowledge. International agricultural research, for example, can lead to food security and income opportunities for

populations living in rural areas. Research relating to water and settlement sanitation should reduce health risks of marginalised inhabitants. Research contributions also strengthen institutional capacities of research partners in the southern hemisphere and lead to skills development.

Programmes to promote research: Swiss universities, federal institutes of technology and universities of applied sciences are involved in **research partnerships with developing and transition countries** and conduct development-relevant research. Research partnerships also serve to develop the research skills of the partners involved. The SDC and the SNSF, for example, co-fund the activities of the NCCR N-S, which enables researchers in eight regions of the southern and northern hemispheres to work together on matters relating to global change and come up with corresponding strategies.

In addition, Switzerland lends support to scientific cooperation with developing and transition countries through **annual scholarships**, which enable students and scientists from developing countries to **undergo training or advanced, specialized training in Switzerland**.⁵

Finally, to help its own research endeavours, the SDC is also part of **international networks** and knowledge-sharing forums. Any new knowledge gained can then be used to improve its working methods, adjust its strategies and realign its policies. This applies specifically to research on development policy issues.

5 This falls within the purview of the State Secretariat for Education and Research (SER).





