



Schweizerische Eidgenossenschaft
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Swiss Agency for Development
and Cooperation SDC

**PROGRAMMATIC
FRAMEWORK
HEALTH & FOOD**
2025-2028

Thematic context

The global need for improved health and food systems is immense: nearly two billion people face severe financial hardship due to out-of-pocket spending for health services and products, and more than half the world lacks access to essential health services. One-third of the world's population cannot afford a healthy diet, and 10% of the global population experiences daily hunger. Lack of food, unsafe food, and unhealthy diets account for almost a third of the global disease burden.

Switzerland relies heavily on well-functioning global food and health systems. Because of its climate and the limited yield of its arable land, Switzerland has a high demand for diverse, high-quality food, which it must import. As such, it benefits from global market efficiency and lower production costs in other countries. Investing in health and food contributes to economic prosperity, social cohesion, stability, and peace in Switzerland.

Switzerland has a strong pharmaceutical industry and leading academic institutions, and within the international system, Geneva is a centre for defining global health policy and action. Investing in quality standards and sustainable funding for health strengthens Swiss industry and research while creating opportunities for innovation. However, as health challenges become more complex and interconnected, Switzerland remains vulnerable to global health threats.

Addressing the health and food crises calls for coordinated efforts between governments, financial institutions, the private sector and civil society. Switzerland brings added value through its unique expertise, experience and credibility as an honest broker in international negotiations. Furthermore, Switzerland shares its technical expertise with partner countries in areas such as sustainable agricultural practices, food safety, mental health, and digital

health services. Its unique Health Foreign Policy, supported by an interdepartmental structure, ensures a coordinated and strategic approach to global health challenges. Switzerland promotes a well-functioning global food system by supporting agroecological food production, research, and innovation. It promotes sustainable practices for smallholder farmers and finances climate-resilient agricultural solutions globally.



Two health professionals reviewing data related to noncommunicable diseases in Kyrgyzstan. © SDC

Results and lessons learnt 2021–24

Between 2021 and 2024, the SDC advanced global health by supporting bilateral projects and multilateral organisations, such as the **World Health Organization** and the **Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria**. The SDC supported the strengthening of health systems by developing innovative health products for poverty-related diseases, improving access to affordable health services for disadvantaged populations, and promoting sustainable health financing. For example, the **Drugs for Neglected Diseases** initiative introduced the first oral treatment for acute sleeping sickness in East and Southern Africa in 2023. The SDC also addressed health determinants, gender equality, and human rights, supporting the **International Planned Parenthood Federation** to provide 230.5 million sexual and reproductive health services to 67.5 million people in 2024.

Over the same period, the SDC contributed to making the global food system more sustainable, inclusive, and resilient by promoting agricultural innovation, inclusive market systems, better nutrition, and agroecology. Key objectives included improving smallholder farmers' livelihoods, strengthening local value chains, and supporting sustainable agriculture for climate and environmental benefits. The SDC supports **PlantWisePlus**, a global programme reducing crop losses through national agricultural advisory services and a global plant clinic network. From 2021 to 2024, it supported 5.6 million smallholder farmers across regions, improving plant health, yields, and incomes. **CROPS4HD** supports local farmers by strengthening seed systems and advocating for seed policy reforms in countries such as Tanzania, Chad and Niger. This promotes biodiversity in agriculture, helps communities adapt to

climate change, and secures livelihoods. These efforts complement multilateral initiatives, such as the **International Fund for Agricultural Development** and the **Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research**.

A key lesson from 2021 to 2024 is the importance of addressing the health–food interface to prevent and tackle future health threats, food insecurity, and unhealthy diets. This means addressing root causes of food insecurity, poor health, and malnutrition, while improving access to health services and resource-efficient, affordable food. Nutrition is the bridge between global health and food systems, impacting health outcomes, economic growth, environmental sustainability, and equity. The Health and Food Section will focus on this interface in the coming years.



Vegetable vendor packing carrots at the Bazirete market, Rwanda. © Alice Kayibanda, Swiss TPH, Fairpicture

Priorities 2025–28

Health and food security are priorities of *Switzerland's Foreign Policy Strategy 2024–27* and *International Cooperation Strategy 2025–28 (ICS)*.

SDC contributes to...

- enhancing the thematic relevance, quality, credibility, innovation and impact of health and food interventions at global, regional, national and local levels.
- positioning Switzerland in international policy and advocacy at the health–food interface through an evidence-based and whole-of-government approach.
- setting norms and generating knowledge and robust evidence to feed into global thematic guidance and policies on health and food systems while leveraging SDC operations at country level.

The main priorities are:

1. Healthy and sustainable diets for improved nutrition

Improve nutrition by strengthening global policies and frameworks, empowering vulnerable rural and urban consumers, and promoting food and nutrition security through a human rights-based approach, with a focus on women, children, and adolescents.

2. Equitable access to health services

Improve access to high-quality, equitable, efficient, and affordable health services for all, including in fragile contexts. This includes strengthening primary healthcare with a focus on essential nutrition, access to medicines and technologies, sexual and reproductive health, and communicable and non-communicable diseases. The Health and Food Section also contributes to optimising health financing and leveraging digital solutions to improve health outcomes.

3. Improved access to food applying agroecological principles

Improve food access and food systems by promoting agroecological practices that protect biodiversity, improve soil health, and conserve resources. Agroecology provides a holistic approach which empowers farmers, supports communities, and fosters sustainable livelihoods, while strengthening local food markets and encouraging inclusive land and seed governance.

4. Strengthened global health and food systems architecture

Improve global health and food systems by promoting sustainable financing, and ensuring better performance, transparency, and compliance of health and food institutions.

The SDC is committed to gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls. It continues to advocate for inclusive policies that address everyone's needs, especially those of young people.



A clinician sorting antiretroviral medicines at Kibera Health Centre in Nairobi, Kenya. © Brian Otieno, The Global Fund

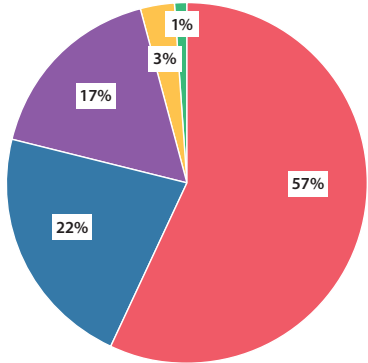
Partners

To promote healthy living environments and resilient food systems, the Health and Food Section supports public innovation and applied research, engages in public-private blended financing and encourages participatory, inclusive governance. It applies a gender equality and equity lens and supports global civil society networks and international NGOs. The SDC addresses both short- and long-term needs in its target regions. In the short-term, it provides thematic support for humanitarian responses to health and food crises, using the “humanitarian-development-peace” nexus to ensure continuity with long-term solutions. For long-term needs, it addresses structural causes of ill health, hunger, and malnutrition through policy dialogue and multi-country programmes, focusing on the determinants of health and agroecology. The Section works from local to global level, linking in-country work, supported by SDC country offices, with policy and advocacy at regional and global levels. For instance, mental health financing schemes have been

developed through long-term collaboration with SDC programmes in Eastern Europe, helping leverage regional and global initiatives to address bottlenecks and support the SDC’s overall coherence.

At the multilateral level, the Section helps shape global standards and normative frameworks. It strengthens global health through partnerships with the **Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria** and the **World Health Organization**. Switzerland sits in governing bodies of specialized UN-agency and international finance institutions, such as the **International Fund for Agricultural Development**. The Section contributes thematic expertise and bilateral experience in global forums to transfer innovative solutions. It conducts international policy dialogue in collaboration with the Swiss missions in Rome, Geneva and New York and other federal offices, such as the Federal Office of Public Health and the Federal Office of Agriculture.

Programmatic Framework 2025–28
Budget: CHF 410 million
(subject to parliamentary approval)
Breakdown by type of partner (*approximations*)



- Multilateral Organisations
- Academia
- NGOs/Civil Society
- Government Partners
- Private Sector

Thematic Priorities

Healthy and sustainable diets for improved nutrition



Improved access to food applying agroecological principles



Strengthened global health and food systems architecture



Equitable access to health services





Health



Agriculture &
Food Systems

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A Plantwise Plant Doctor helping a farmer in a
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