

Swiss development cooperation in Africa

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The Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation and the State Secretariat for Economic Affairs run cooperation programmes in Africa that constitute one of the oldest and most continuous channels of relations between Switzerland and the continent. These programmes cover health, education, agriculture, governance, water and climate. They now form part of the federal strategies for Africa, the first of which, adopted on 13 January 2021, covered sub-Saharan Africa, while the second, adopted on 20 December 2024, covers the whole continent for the period 2025-2028.¹

Swiss cooperation long gave priority to the French-speaking countries of West Africa and to the countries of the Great Lakes region, where Switzerland developed expertise and networks. It relies on non-governmental organisations, several of which are established in Geneva, on the international organisations of International Geneva and, increasingly, on the private sector, through partnerships and blended finance instruments.

For the financial centre, development cooperation constitutes an indirect but real channel of relations with Africa. The projects financed by cooperation create markets, skills and institutions from which economic actors benefit. Blended finance instruments combine the public capital of cooperation with Geneva's private capital. And cooperation contributes to Switzerland's reputation on the continent, from which the financial centre benefits.

1 Notes

1. Federal Council, Sub-Saharan Africa Strategy 2021-2024, 13 January 2021; press release of 20 December 2024, admin.ch. ↩

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