

Schweizerische Eidgenossenschaft
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Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation SDC

PROGRAMMATIC FRAMEWORK MIGRATION AND FORCED DISPLACEMENT 2025–2028

Thematic context

Migration is part of human history. People have always moved in response to economic, social, political, security, and environmental challenges. Today, 304 million people are international migrants, 60% of them labour migrants. They bring skills, labour, remittances, and investments to origin and destination countries. In 2024, remittances to low- and middle-income countries reached $685 billion, surpassing foreign direct investment and official development assistance. Yet migrant workers, especially women in low-wage sectors, face risks of exploitation, discrimination, and xenophobia.

While migrants have represented less than 4% of the global population for decades, the number of forcibly displaced people has surged to over 120 million in 2024, including 75 million within their own countries. These displaced women, men and children endure harsh conditions, socio-economic challenges, and rights violations, putting the low- and middle-income countries that host 75% of refugees under strain.

Renewed efforts are needed to fulfil commitments under the 2030 Agenda. Durable solutions – such as socio-economic inclusion and a rights-based approach to migration – remain essential to harness migration's benefits for sustainable development.

Switzerland plays a leading role in global migration governance, as a founding supporter of the Global Forum on Migration and Development and a pioneer in durable solutions for internal and disaster displacement. Migration is a priority in Switzerland's International Cooperation (IC) Strategy 2025–2028, which aims to create conditions for safe and regular migration, improve integration and protection, and strengthen migration's contribution to development. The IC Strategy aligns with Switzerland's foreign policy on migration and reflects Swiss interests: it leverages labour migration and decent work for inclusive growth while protecting people on the move and bringing stability to host regions. As a small country with a highly globalised economy, Switzerland is committed to a migration governance system that mitigates the risks of unsafe migration and displacement while maximising the benefits of regular migration.

The SDC and its Migration and Forced Displacement Section (MFDS) contributes to protecting migrants' rights and leverages their contributions to development. It adopts a long-term, multi-stakeholder approach, engaging local actors, fostering transnational collaboration, and scaling innovations to influence regional and global norm-setting and policy.

Results and lessons learnt 2021–24

Switzerland helped make labour migration safer along key corridors in Asia, Africa and towards the Middle East: over 186,000 migrants accessed safe migration services, including legal aid, and 82,000 found better jobs. Regional dialogues in Asia and Africa have been strengthened with regard to key issues such as ethical recruitment, heat stress, wage theft, and social protection, which allowed countries of origin to take a more coherent and assertive role in inter-regional dialogues on labour migration. A major development, triggered by Swiss-supported interventions, was the Doha Dialogue, launched in May 2024 by the African Union and Qatar to promote labour mobility governance between Africa and the Gulf. Partnerships with Africa's Regional Economic Communities harmonised labour migration policies, enabling safer mobility across the continent. Switzerland also supported the integration of ethical recruitment standards into global business codes of conduct.

In mixed migration contexts, partnerships with cities granted 80,000 migrants and displaced persons access to inclusive basic services and socio-economic opportunities. Initiatives supported municipal actors in building inclusive communities and amplified local voices in global forums, including the Global Refugee Forum. Switzerland played a key role in global discussions on durable solutions for internally displaced persons and supported the creation of the Internal Displacement Solutions Fund, accelerating national strategies through dedicated funding.

Some 659,000 migrants accessed digital remittance services, leveraging their contributions and boosting financial inclusion and security. Startups and fintech firms developed scalable, innovative solutions for affordable cross-border transactions.

In its engagement, Switzerland remained alert to emerging issues: it helped put climate-induced mobility on the policy agenda. The IGAD Protocol on Free Movement of Persons, adopted in 2021, recognised free movement as vital for climate resilience.

Looking ahead, international cooperation remains crucial. Regional and global dialogues involving governments, cities, civil society, and the private sector must continue to shape migration policies and affordable solutions for sustainable development. It will be equally crucial to ensure that migrants' lived experiences and gender-sensitive, rights-based evidence inform and drive these dialogues and policy changes.

Priorities 2025–28

The Migration and Forced Displacement Section will continue promoting a comprehensive, inclusive approach to migration, focusing on migrants in vulnerable situations. Swiss engagement builds towards three interconnected outcomes:

Prosperity

Migration's socio-economic benefits are leveraged for sustainable development, recognising the contributions migrants can make in safe, fair, and dignified conditions. Ensuring safe labour migration and decent work remains central to achieving sustainable incomes and inclusive growth across migration corridors. Improved financial inclusion and remittance systems strengthen resilience for migrants and families in low- and middle-income countries. In displacement contexts, investments in innovative and cohesive socio-economic solutions are pursued for displaced and host communities, including through private-sector engagement.

Rights

Prosperity depends on rights. MFDS promotes human rights-based, gender-sensitive migration policies and practices, addressing protection risks such as exploitation and abuse along migration routes. Access to justice and the empowerment of migrants enhances rights protection. Durable solutions for forcibly displaced persons, including internally displaced persons, aim to safeguard rights and ensure self-reliance. Cities, whose growth will be further enhanced by diverse population movements, will be supported in their ability to integrate new residents and foster social cohesion. Their preparedness and response to climate-induced mobility will receive particular attention.

Governance

MFDS strengthens governance so that labour migration meets market needs while upholding rights and providing decent work. Addressing power asymmetries between origin and destination countries is vital for fair treatment and unlocking the development potential of regular migration pathways. Investments will target robust governance frameworks, including climate-induced mobility, and foster coordinated responses among humanitarian, development, and peace actors to deliver protective, inclusive, and durable solutions for displaced and host communities, preventing protracted displacement.

Partners

Through its programmatic engagement, MFDS is active at the regional (Horn of Africa, West Africa, Middle East, and South and Central Asia) and global levels, thereby complementing and leveraging Swiss bilateral engagements. It closely coordinates its work with Swiss representations and the Swiss cooperation offices in the targeted regions.

To achieve its objectives, MFDS fosters multi-stakeholder approaches and works with a mix of partners: UN agencies (ILO, IOM, UNHCR, OHCHR, UNCDF)[1], regional economic communities and institutions (IGAD, ECOWAS, EAC, African Union, Gulf Cooperation Council)[2], cities (through

1 International Labour Organisation (ILO), International Organisation for Migration (IOM), United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), United Nations Capital Development Fund (UNCDF)

2 Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD), Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), East African Community (EAC)



With support from SDC and its partners, a woman who fled the conflict was able to purchase a plot of land and build a home for her family in Central African Republic. © UNHCR, Fidélia Bohissou

Cities Alliance, Mayors Migration Council), civil society organisations and the private sector.

In line with the International Cooperation Strategy 2025–2028, a special focus is placed on promoting locally led actions by supporting migrant-led initiatives and engaging with cities and diasporas. Engagement with the private sector is pursued to develop innovative and scalable solutions (digital tools for migrants' financial inclusion, social impact entrepreneurship initiatives, refugee lens investing).

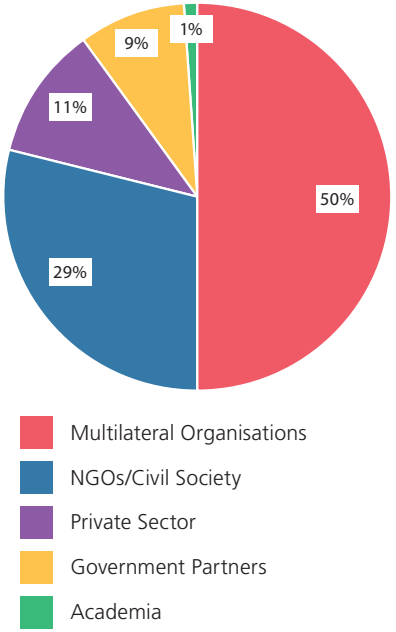
At the Swiss level, MFDS cooperates with all relevant units within the FDFA and with all involved federal offices. It plays an active role, in close cooperation with the State Secretariat for Migration, in fostering the coordination and coherence of Switzerland's commitments in the field of migration, representing the SDC and its mandate in the Interdepartmental Structure for International Cooperation on Migration.

Within the SDC, MFDS is leading the institutional anchoring of migration as a priority international cooperation theme. It provides in-house strategic and policy guidance, thematic advice, and peer- and cross-sectoral learning opportunities for SDC staff through a dedicated network.

Programmatic Framework 2025–28

Budget: CHF 96 million
(subject to parliamentary approval)

Breakdown by type of partner (*approximations*)



Thematic Priorities

Prosperity



Migrants and forcibly displaced persons (MFD) drive socio-economic prosperity and sustainable development in their home and host countries.

Rights



MFDs enjoy their human rights and are integrated and engaged in society.

Governance



Effective and evidence-based governance frameworks put MFDs' protection, wellbeing and agency front and centre.

Through the Amahoro Fellowship Programme, supported by SDC and other partners, entrepreneurs in Uganda are transforming discarded banana stems into durable reusable bags, creating jobs while reducing plastic waste. ©Amahoro Coalition

Imprint

Published by:
Federal Department of Foreign Affairs FDFA
Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation SDC
www.deza.admin.ch

Layout:
Mark Manion, Commusication Arts

Photo captions and credits under photos except:
Cover picture
Fresh fruit on display at a market in Borama, Somalia, where small-scale traders contribute to local food systems, economic activity and community resilience. © Cities Alliance

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