SWISSCONTACT

SWISS FOUNDATION FOR TECHNICAL COOPERATION

We are a leading partner organisation in the implementation of international development projects. Founded in 1959 and registered under Swiss law, we are an independent non-profit organisation. We are politically and denominationally neutral.

MISSION

We promote inclusive economic, social and ecological development to make an effective contribution towards sustainable and widespread prosperity in developing and emerging economies.

With this objective in mind, we offer the chance to economically and socially disadvantaged people to improve their lives on their own initiative.

WHAT WE DO

• We strengthen the competencies of people, improving their employability.
• We increase the competitiveness of enterprises, growing their business.
• We foster social and economic systems, promoting inclusive development.

WHAT WE OFFER

• Project Implementation
• Advisory Services
• Training
• Applied Research

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If we take a look back on 2021, then in all modesty we deserve to be a little proud: despite persistent difficult circumstances related to the COVID-19 pandemic and often difficult political situations, we were able to continue implementing or successfully close out over 120 projects. All while embarking on various new endeavours.

Our efforts this past year took on a whole new meaning, as the pandemic hit vulnerable populations in many underdeveloped countries with particular brutality.

The uncertainty and the restrictions required considerably more flexibility, agility, and creativity on our part. This in turn affected our partnerships. Our well-built local and international networks have always been our trademark, and with the pandemic, they have become even more resilient.

That this was even possible in such a situation, we, first of all, have the trust and foresight of our donors and clients to thank, in addition to the commitment of our employees in 40 countries.

**Bridgebuilder for sustainable development**

We firmly believe that responsible private sector-led initiatives are a key prerequisite for sustainable and broad-based development. Collaboration with interested parties in the private sector play an important role in these efforts. Since Swisscontact’s founding, it has been a cornerstone of our work. We are accustomed to achieving win-win situations.

In order to meet Switzerland’s international development targets and achieve the UN’s 17 strategic Agenda 2030 goals, improved coordination between public, private, and civil society organisations is essential. The conditions are in place, and more companies are willing and encouraged to rethink their business and employment models. This will improve the efficacy of our collaboration.

Fusing the various positions constructively with each other and implementing functioning partnerships is a challenge we are all too happy to meet. Public and private sector actors think along different timescales; they have different restrictions, opportunities, and approaches. Swisscontact’s objective here is to invest even more in innovative solutions, expanding its role as a trusted bridgebuilder between the public and private sectors, a reputation it has carried proudly for more than 60 years.

**Towards the future with a stable organisation**

For Swisscontact, 2021 was also a year of internal changes. The change in leadership in the presidium of the Foundation Council and in the Executive Board, completed on June 1st, reflected continuity in a stable and successful organisation. It is a great privilege to be able to continue along the path we have forged with our strong team, moving ahead through the ongoing changes in international development cooperation and transition overall.

**Changes in the Foundation Council**

During the reporting year, both Chairman Heinrich M. Lanz and Michèle Frey-Hilti stepped down from the Foundation Council. We once again would like to offer our sincerest thanks to both former members, especially to our long-time Chairman, for their selfless commitment and solidarity. Dr Sabin Bieri and Thomas Greminger were newly appointed to the Foundation Council.

We wish to thank our partners, clients and donors in Switzerland and abroad for their trust, support, and consistently constructive cooperation. We are pleased and proud to be able to continue counting on them in 2022.

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Thomas D. Meyer  
Chairman

Philippe Schneuwly  
CEO
122 PROJECTS IN 40 COUNTRIES

* Global programmes managed from Switzerland
Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Georgia, Kosovo, North Macedonia, Serbia, Ukraine
15 projects

Burundi, DR Congo, Kenya, Mozambique, Rwanda, South Africa, Tanzania, Uganda
15 projects

Bangladesh, Myanmar, Nepal
14 projects

Lebanon, Morocco, Tunisia
9 projects

Indonesia, Cambodia, Laos, Vietnam
17 projects
SIPPO: OPENING THE DOORS TO WORLD TRADE

Since 2017, Swisscontact has been spearheading the Swiss Import Promotion Programme (SIPPO) on behalf of the State Secretariat for Economic Affairs (SECO). SIPPO’s goal is to foster the integration of developing countries and emerging economies on four continents into the world economy. This is achieved by strengthening business support organisations (BSO), which include business associations, chambers of commerce, and export promotion boards. With their services upgraded to meet market requirements, they open doors to world trade for exporting companies in six sectors: fish and seafood, processed foods, medicinal and aromatic plants, wood processing (“technical wood”), high-value textiles, and sustainable tourism. On July 1, 2021, SIPPO’s second four-year phase began. Pursuant to the SIPPO country strategies and four-year objectives arranged with each BSO, these organisations are undergoing institutional strengthening and modernisation. They will be in an even better position as service providers to help their member companies. While SIPPO staff members provide advisory services in our client countries, the team in Switzerland is providing sector-specific expertise and technical insights on cross-cutting themes of digitalisation, sustainability, and strengthening of export promotion systems.

NEW LEADERSHIP DUO

Since early June 2021, there have been two new people at the helm of Swisscontact: Thomas D. Meyer, Chairman, and Philippe Schneuwly, CEO. Thomas D. Meyer has been a member of the Foundation Council since 2020 and its chairman since 2021. He is a Partner in the consulting firm BLR Partners AG, previously having served in leadership roles in the field of business and strategy consulting atAccenture in Latin America, Africa, and Europe.

Philippe Schneuwly has been with Swisscontact since 2009 and a member of the Executive Board since 2019. Previously, he had worked in the field in Latin America, serving as Country Director for Colombia, Deputy Regional Director and finally Regional Director for Central America as of 2016.

The leadership handover from his long-time predecessors, Heinrich Lanz and Samuel Bon, was planned out carefully and flawlessly implemented. Even if this leadership handover reflects a successful organisation’s continuity, both new directors have asserted their leadership and wish to develop new and innovative models for collaborating with the private sector. Only in this way can the Agenda 2030 development goals be achieved.
STARTING THE NEW PHASE OF SWISSCONTACT’S DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME

Swisscontact’s so-called Development Programme encompasses around 30 projects in over 20 countries. It is the centrepiece of Swisscontact’s work. Together with Swiss and international stakeholders from the private and public sectors, new ideas are being tested and innovations are undergoing further development. In this way, the programme supports cross-sectoral approaches and cooperation. In 2021, we entered a new four-year phase of new projects, which for example deal with growing demand by agricultural businesses for affordable technologies in land tilling, harvesting, and post-harvest storage. Sustainable vocational education and training approaches combine theory and practice, and they are based on partnership models with private companies seeking well-trained labour. New inclusive business promotion methods address inequities in the coffee value chain, with resultant improvements in smallholder farmers’ living conditions. Further education of our project managers is paramount. Thematic clusters bundle and foster inter-regional exchange of know-how and experience across the entire programme. Private and public donors are financing the projects. The Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC) is providing guaranteed cost coverage for up to 30 per cent of the entire programme.

EXTENSION OF SKILLS DEVELOPMENT IN VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING PROJECTS

The portfolio for skills development and labour market integration encompasses a broad spectrum of courses. Swisscontact further enhanced this area in 2021 and believes that skills development is key to social integration and economic development, thus contributing sustainably to poverty alleviation. Vocational education and training can only be as good as the curricula on which they are based. Swisscontact, therefore, is giving high priority to reforming teaching curricula in order to strengthen soft skills. Another key factor to success is orienting the curriculum to the needs of the labour market. Important success indicators are student/trainee achievement, such as the question of how effectively students and trainees are using their newfound skills in their work and for their social and personal development. Modern curricula should serve as the basis for sustainable labour market integration – and this over a lifetime of learning. Enhancing the skills of employees in vocational education and training projects was one of our key areas of focus this past year. In all, 68 employees from 24 projects, 20 countries, and 8 regions attended the courses, which lasted over several days.
Central America is currently enduring one of the greatest humanitarian crises in its history: thousands are fleeing poverty, violence, and lack of opportunity and migrating north. At the same time, in 2020 more than 90,000 returned to their countries of origin from the United States and Mexico, and many more had been deported. Since 2016, Swisscontact has been implementing the Nuevas Oportunidades (“New Opportunities”) project for the economic and social reintegration of these returnees.

The Nuevas Oportunidades project has helped certify 417 returnees to El Salvador and Guatemala. This has facilitated reintegration into the labour market for 62% of certified migrants, helping them to increase their average monthly earnings from 260 to 875 U.S. dollars. Furthermore, it has enabled the founding of 44 businesses with an average monthly turnover of 950 U.S. dollars and 144 new jobs.

MORE ABOUT THIS PROJECT IN THE ONLINE ANNUAL REPORT

- Qualification certificate as a key to the labour market
- Video: A new chance for Oscar López
- Returning migrants tell their stories

Claudia Esperanza Castañeda Cruz, El Salvador, a returnee from the USA

“Today, with the certification and skills I obtained in the training, I hope to open my own small restaurant.”
101,800 people, 49.8% of whom are women, have completed programmes in skills development, entrepreneurship, and labour market insertion.*

35,500 people, 44.9% of whom are women, found a job or started their own business. CHF 18.7 million additional income was generated.

* Global results taken from the Vocational Education Working Area. The results are derived from Swisscontact’s impact measurement system and have been rounded. All figures are traceable.
CHF 59.4 Mio.
in additional income generated by farmers and SMEs.

1,133,400
farmers and SMEs gained access to improved products and services.*

56,300
jobs created or saved.*

* Global results taken from the Business Promotion Working Area. The results are derived from Swisscontact’s impact measurement system and have been rounded. All figures are traceable.
Prospects for the labour market

Tunisia faces great social and economic challenges. Its economy is weak and there is persistently high youth unemployment. A further problem is that those seeking jobs do not have the requisite skills to satisfy the demands of the labour market. The project promotes practical, hands-on vocational education and training and young people’s integration into the labour market.

Over the past five years, project activities have created an active network of public institutions, employer associations, and private partners involved in vocational education and employment creation. In addition, three functioning training models have been established. Over 500 private sector companies recruit employees through these platforms. 6,335 people benefited from both long- and short-term vocational training courses. 54 percent of these beneficiaries were women. More than 70 percent have since found jobs.

More about this project in the online annual report:

- Video: How an SME works in vocational education
- Expanded technical and rural trainings
- Internship companies for service jobs

Mahmoud, an employee at a tyre company

“I completed my training as a mechanic and loved everything about this training. It gave me a solid foundation in a profession that completely fascinates me.”
SUSTAINABILITY CRITERIA

ENVIRONMENTAL RESPONSIBILITY
Swisscontact fosters competencies and skills for environmental protection, actively seeking solutions for the sustainable use of resources. In various projects “green sectors” such as recycling and sustainable transportation are supported with the corresponding know-how, while environmentally-friendly businesses are strengthened. The “Markets for Recycling” in Bolivia supports local businesses to build business models for processing and monetizing waste materials from the transportation sector. These materials include tyres, lead batteries, and scrap metal. This lowers CO₂ emissions, and fewer pollutants contaminate the environment. At the same time, new jobs are created and businesses grow. Working together with local actors, the project team is implementing various initiatives: for example, laws are drafted that obligate manufacturers to use resources conservatively and implement recycling; various webinars, events, and sensitisation campaigns on the topics of waste management and circular economy are held. In addition, an app has been developed that brings together waste producers, green businesses, and waste collectors, in order to facilitate the recycling of materials.

GENDER EQUALITY AND SOCIAL INCLUSION
Swisscontact promotes gender equality and the social inclusion of all people. As an employer, we place particular emphasis on balanced leadership structures with family-friendly work conditions. We include the gender perspective in all our project activities. An example is the “Rural Opportunities” project in Honduras. Its objective is to improve the productivity and increase incomes of vulnerable population groups, which include young men and women working in the tourism, cashew nut, fruits, and dairy sectors. Based on an in-depth analysis, the project team developed a strategy to overcome gender-specific discrepancies. It was determined that women are underrepresented in leadership positions of cooperatives, even though their participation as members is essential for successful cooperation. Therefore, these organisations were given close guidance to foster women’s participation. This has resulted in women now heading committees at cashew nut processing facilities and dairy processors. Additionally, sensitisation campaigns were launched on social media to raise awareness of the different workloads faced by women and men. The introduction of time-saving technologies (such as weeding machines and wheelbarrows) has had a sustainable effect on women’s workloads, and they are now more able to participate in decision-making processes.
GOOD GOVERNANCE

Swisscontact promotes transparent, responsible, participatory, and effective decision-making processes, strengthening government institutions, economic growth, human development, and social cohesion. The Skills Development Programme (SDP) in Cambodia helps young men and women with low qualifications in rural areas to access gainful employment and earn higher incomes. The Inclusive Systems Development (ISD) approach is applied to systematically analyse the barriers young people encounter in accessing vocational education and employment. In order to overcome these barriers, representatives from government, the private sector, and education together identify actions to take. Partners have a high sense of personal responsibility from the get-go, as they are leading the work themselves, while our Swisscontact project team plays the role of moderator. As a result of this process, detailed agreements with goals and milestones for implementing vocational education and employment initiatives are worked out, along with financial plans detailing the costs and responsibilities of all stakeholders involved.

FINANCIAL INCLUSION

By facilitating access to transparent and affordable financial services and channels, Swisscontact is helping entrepreneurial people to participate actively in economic life. An example of microfinancing is the “M4C – Making Markets Work for the Chars” project in Bangladesh. The river areas of Bangladesh, commonly known as chars, have the potential to become an important zone of production. However, the poorly performing market system lacks investment, and credit institutions are not interested in investing, because frequent flooding in the region constitutes a risk of production failures that is much too high. The project team initiated dialogue with numerous financial institutes and national development programmes to advocate for the construction of branch offices in these areas and issue seasonal loans. These services would then be available once farmers started paying for equipment or other agricultural investments. The repayment plans consider the fact that farmers depend on revenues from the sale of their harvests or cattle. Char farmers have proven themselves as dependable loan recipients who comply with repayment conditions, with very few defaults.
The private sector is the engine of economic development: it generates income and jobs. Working for and with the private sector lies therefore at the heart of Swisscontact’s activities.

One example is our collaboration with fertilizer manufacturers, the aim of which is to introduce organic fertilizers to the market. Thanks to improved access to these new, environmentally friendly fertilizers, smallholder farmers can improve their harvests. Consequently by which they increase sales and finally their incomes.

Partnerships with private sector companies involve contributions made by both sides. The goal is to foster positive and sustainable change for our target groups. For example, the private sector makes in-kind project contributions with time, effort, and facilities to implement activities.

**1,151 PRIVATE PARTNERS AND THEIR CONTRIBUTIONS TO 74 PROJECTS**

- **17.8 million Swiss francs** in private sector orders
- **35.3 million Swiss francs** in contributions by private implementation partners
- **16.3 million Swiss francs** in support by strategic private sector partners
- **1.2 million Swiss francs** in in-kind contributions

**1,085 PRIVATE IMPLEMENTING PARTNERS AND THEIR CONTRIBUTIONS**

- **1,036 local private implementation partners**
- **1,085**
- **49 international private implementation partners**
- **14.8 million Swiss francs** in cash contributions
- **16.3 million Swiss francs** in in-kind contributions
- **1.5 million Swiss francs** in support by strategic private sector partners

More about this project
www.swisscontact.org/report2021/results
FINANCIAL STATEMENT
2021

EXPENDITURE

Project expenditure per region in CHF million

SOURCE OF FUNDS

Return in CHF million

EXPENSE CATEGORIES 2021 IN RELATION TO TOTAL EXPENSES (IN %)

* including Switzerland (SEC, DC dVET, expenditure in Switzerland for global programmes, small projects managed from Switzerland)
ORGANISATION
(AS PER 31.12.2021)

FOUNDATION BOARD

Dr. Paul Hälg
Dr. Christoph Lindenmeyer
Armin Meier
Isabelle Welton

Thomas Bergen
Dr. Sabin Bieri
Monique Bourquin
Dr. Anna Crole-Rees

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Director, Centre for Development and Environment CDE, University of Berne

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Managing Director Boyden global executive search, Zurich; Member of the Board of Zug Estates Holding AG, Zug; Kibag, Zurich; Ameos Group, Zurich; IFAH Holding, Zurich; Evaluateur Holdings, Zug; IBS Software Services, Singapore

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Isabelle Welton (Vice chair Swisscontact and Member of the Foundation Board)
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Auditors
PricewaterhouseCoopers AG, Zürich

Further mandates and vested interests of the members of the Foundation Council can be seen online in the annual report.
WE THANK ALL OUR PARTNERS
IN ALPHABETICAL ORDER

PUBLIC PARTNERS

Agence Française de Développement, Paris, France
Australian Aid, Australian Government, Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, Barton, Australia
Canton of Basel-Land
Canton of Zurich
City of Zurich
Danish International Development Agency, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Denmark, Copenhagen, Denmark
Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit GIZ, Bonn, Germany
European Union / Europaid, Brussels, Belgium
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The MasterCard Foundation, Toronto, Canada
World Economic Forum, Cologny/Geneva
zCapital AG, Zug

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Bain & Company Switzerland, Inc. Zurich
Berner Fachhochschule BFH, Bern
BHP – Brugger & Partner AG, Zurich
Centre for Import Promotion CBI, The Hague, Netherlands
CEMETS, The ETHZ Reform Lab for VET Systems, Zurich
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Lucerne University, Lucerne
Import Promotion Desk, Bonn and Berlin, Germany
International Trade Centre, Geneva
Kansas State University, Manhattan, Kansas, USA
McGill University, Montreal, Canada
SFIVET Swiss Federal Institute for Vocational Education and Training, Bern
SHL Schweizerische Hotelfachschule Luzern, Lucerne
SNBI Swiss Educational Innovation Network, Basel
The SEEP Network, Washington, USA
Swiss Platform for Sustainable Cocoa, Bern
University of St. Gallen, St. Gallen
University of Zurich, Zurich
World Tourism Forum, Lucerne
We create opportunities

Swisscontact

SWISS FOUNDATION FOR TECHNICAL COOPERATION

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Cover: Metalworking and welding workshop in Chad
Photos: Swisscontact employees and friends
Layout: Pierre Smith, South Africa

**ZEW-O-Seal of approval:** Swisscontact was awarded the Seal of Approval from ZEWO. It is awarded to non-profit organisations for the conscientious handling of money entrusted to them, proves appropriate, economical and effective allocation of donations and stands for transparent and trustworthy organisations with functioning control structures that uphold ethics in the procurement of funds and communication. Swisscontact is regularly audited on the adherence to these criteria. (Source: ZEWO)

Swisscontact is a member of Transparency International and UN Global Compact.