

Country Profile - Switzerland

Agricultural Research for Development

A variety of Swiss institutions with different agendas pursue Agricultural Research for Development (ARD) as members of the Swiss Forum for International Agricultural Research (SFIAR). Activities are principally funded by the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC).

Key ARD objectives

SDC established three interlinked aims in its 2002 Research Policy:

- Generate specific development-relevant research findings.
- Strengthen research capacities in partner countries so that they can conduct research on their own.
- Work in a targeted manner with Swiss researchers whose activities have a bearing on key development areas.



Potato farmers in the Andes
Credit: © Simon Zbinden

Summary

The many actors that make up the Swiss Forum for International Agricultural Research (SFIAR) pursue the whole range of current agendas in ARD, with a coordinating force provided by the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC), the primary funding agency. A larger share of SDC's contributions, however, is in support of the CGIAR and other international centres such as CABI and ICIPE (African Insect Science for Food and Health).

Many of SDC's funding priorities in ARD are therefore focused according to multilateral commitments. The agency seeks synergies between these commitments, research pursued by SFIAR members, and bilateral programme activities. Within the international system, SDC also takes a proactive role in the governance mechanisms of the organisations it funds and is influential in the on-going CGIAR reform process.

SDC's stated central mission is a Swiss contribution to achieving the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), particularly Goals 1 and 7. SDC stands by the sustainable intensification of agriculture by smallholders as a fundamental tool for meeting dietary and economic needs. In seeking this, SDC and its partner organizations in SFIAR address related development challenges as they emerge: the effects of agricultural systems on dwindling natural and genetic resources; global climate change; new pests and diseases; and the role of women in agriculture.

Main ARD budget and beneficiaries for 2010

Contributors

Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC)	CHF 31,140,000
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Recipients

CGIAR	CHF 22,280,000
National Centre of Competence in Research (NCCR) North-South	CHF 2,300,000
CABI	CHF 1,760,000
African Insect Science for Food & Health (ICIPE)	CHF 1,200,000
Indo-Swiss Collaboration in Biotechnology (ISCB-EPFL)	CHF 1,200,000
Research Institute of Organic Agriculture (FiBL) - Farming Systems Comparison	CHF 1,200,000
North-South Centre (ETHZ) - Livestock Systems Research & Research Fellowship	CHF 1,200,000

Geographical focus

Eastern and Southern Africa	CHF 3,760,000
South Asia	CHF 1,200,000
East Asia	CHF 875,000
Global	CHF 25,305,000

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ARD landscape

SFIAR comprises most stakeholders that are active in agricultural research for development. As several national institutions are responsible for individual themes and issues related to ARD, the ARD priorities are defined in consultative processes, but the agenda is not imposed at the national level.

As the principal funding agency, SDC, a directorate of the Federal Department of Foreign Affairs (FDFA), defines the priorities of funded activities. The overriding goal of SDC's research funding is the achievement of the MDGs and the contribution to solving global challenges. SDC's Research Desk is responsible for determining research policy and strategy, while the Global Programme on Food Security coordinates support to ARD in particular, which is the largest component by far.

SDC's thematic focus and support in ARD are set along four priority lines. These are i) the sustainable intensification of agricultural production systems of smallholder farmers, including the reduction of pre- and postharvest losses, and the promotion of inclusive market systems; ii) the support of initiatives aiming at the application and the up- and out-scaling of research products; iii) the understanding, improving and valuing of ecosystem services; and iv) the building of resilience into agricultural livelihoods through diversification and risk reduction.

Main ARD programmes

1. Core funding and restricted programme and project funding for the CGIAR make up more than half of Switzerland's contributions to ARD. SDC's core contribution is a medium-term commitment, including support to the Future Harvest centres and unrestricted funding to CGIAR system-wide and challenge programmes. Major support is also extended to CABI and ICIPE.
2. SDC and the Swiss National Science Foundation came together in 2001 to co-fund a large programme called the National Centre of Competence in Research (NCCR) North-South: Research Partnerships for Mitigating Syndromes of Global Change. The NCCR North-South integrates ARD with wider environmental and social sciences in an agenda of international research cooperation.
3. Switzerland's largest contribution to capacity building is the Research Fellowship Partnerships Programme for Agriculture, Forestry and Environment. It provides postgraduate training to scientists from many countries under the management of the North-South Centre at ETH Zurich.
4. Other programmes include the North-South Centre's research programme Livestock Systems in Support for Poor People; a long term system comparison of organic farming, a public-private partnership in India, Kenya and Bolivia; and the Indo-Swiss Collaboration in Biotechnology (ISCB).

Perspective

SDC recognises the sustainable intensification of agriculture and forestry as fundamental to addressing future food needs and economic development. Increasing the productivity of smallholder production units will therefore remain the focus of SDC's support, modified by new development challenges as they emerge. The autonomous contributions of public and private institutions that make up SFIAR have the potential to be particularly responsive to these challenges.

Further information

- [Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation \(SDC\)](#)
- [Agriculture and Rural Development Network of SDC](#)
- [Swiss Forum for International Agricultural Research \(SFIAR\)](#)
- [Swiss National Science Foundation](#)



SDC promote sustainable intensification of agriculture
Credit: © DEZA

This country profile has been commissioned by EIARD (the permanent ARD coordination platform between the European Commission, Member States of the European Union, Norway and Switzerland) as part of a series providing an overview of policies and support for agricultural research for development by EIARD member countries. EIARD is not responsible for any omissions and inaccuracies contained within this document and the information is only correct up to the date of publishing.

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