

Policy Sector Development and Cooperation **Research Concept** **2021–2024**



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Policy Sector Development
and Cooperation

Research Concept
2021–2024

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1. Introduction

The Swiss Federal Administration initiates and supports scientific research to fulfil its mandate. Federal government research is based on legal principles¹ and covers all types of scientific research (basic research, applied research, development). This includes creating a scientific foundation for formulating policies in the various policy sectors and developing solutions for current politically relevant issues and challenges. The Federal Administration's research priorities are set out in multi-year programmes covering 11 policy sectors defined by the Federal Council.²

Swiss international cooperation aims to alleviate need and poverty and promote respect for human rights, democracy, the rule of law, the peaceful co-existence of peoples and the conservation of natural resources. Addressing global challenges plays an important role here.

Based on its mandate and with a view to achieving the strategic objectives of Swiss international cooperation, the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC) promotes scientific research in the field of development and cooperation. By generating and applying solution-oriented knowledge, this research helps to reduce poverty and global risks, promotes sustainable global development and supports developing countries in implementing the 2030 Agenda.

In contrast to the research investments made by other federal offices, support for scientific research on international cooperation does not take the form of research credits. Instead, it is provided as official development assistance (ODA) in accordance with the Dispatch on Switzerland's International Cooperation.

This Research Concept for the Development and Cooperation policy sector outlines the most important challenges and objectives of Swiss international cooperation as well as the research priorities in regard to development and cooperation.

1 Article 64 of the Federal Constitution (SR 101); Federal Act on the Promotion of Research and Innovation (RIPA; SR 420.1)

2 <https://www.ressortforschung.admin.ch/rsf/de/home/themen/forschung-nach-politischen-bereichen.html>

2. Overview of Policy Sector

2.1. Strategic objectives of Switzerland's international cooperation

The objectives of Swiss international cooperation are enshrined in law.³ The Federal Council sets out objectives for Switzerland's international cooperation strategy in order to fulfil this legal mandate. The Federal Council has set the following four objectives for 2021–24:

 contributing to sustainable economic growth, market development and the creation of decent jobs (economic development)

 addressing climate change and its adverse effects and managing natural resources sustainably (the environment)

 saving lives, ensuring basic services, especially in relation to education and healthcare, and reducing the causes of forced and irregular migration (human development)

 promoting peace, the rule of law and gender equality (peacebuilding and governance)

These four objectives are all of equal importance. They complement one another and contribute towards poverty reduction and sustainable development. Through these objectives, Switzerland will support developing countries in their implementation of the 2030 Agenda.

2.2. Responsibilities and delimitation

The aforementioned strategic objectives determine the type of research supported under the banner of

³ Article 5 of the Federal Act of 19 March 1976 on International Development Cooperation and Humanitarian Aid; Article 2 of the Federal Act of 30 September 2016 on Cooperation with the States of Eastern Europe; Article 2 of the Federal Act of 19 December 2003 on Measures pertaining to Civil Peace Support and the Promotion of Human Rights.

Swiss international cooperation. In addition to the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC), the Human Security Division (HSD) of the Directorate of Political Affairs (DP) within the Federal Department of Foreign Affairs (FDFA) and the Economic Cooperation and Development Division of the State Secretariat for Economic Affairs (SECO) are also engaged in Swiss international cooperation activities.

Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC)

The **SDC** is the international cooperation agency within the FDFA. Working together with other federal offices, the SDC takes charge of the overall coordination of Switzerland's development activities and cooperation with Eastern Europe as well as humanitarian aid delivered by the Swiss Confederation.

The SDC works in four operational areas: South Cooperation, Global Cooperation, Cooperation with Eastern Europe and Humanitarian Aid. As a general rule, scientific research in these four operational areas falls under the Cooperation and Development policy sector. A detailed description of these research activities will be provided in the following sections. An exception to this is research conducted as part of Switzerland's contribution to the enlarged EU. This research is not part of the Cooperation and Development policy sector and will therefore not be addressed in this document.⁴

State Secretariat for Economic Affairs (SECO)

Another organisation working on Swiss international cooperation is the Economic Cooperation and Development Division of the State Secretariat for Economic Affairs (SECO). As part of the Federal

⁴ Further information on Switzerland's contribution to the enlarged EU can be found on this website: <https://www.eda.admin.ch/erweiterungsbeitrag/en/home.html>.

Department of Economic Affairs, Education and Research, **SECO** promotes economic cooperation with selected developing countries in the Global South and with countries of Eastern Europe, the Commonwealth of Independent States and new EU member countries. SECO projects focus on sustainable economic growth with the aim of creating a foundation for market economies and integrating partner countries into the global economy. SECO can commission its own research projects within the scope of its remit.

Directorate of Political Affairs (DP)

The FDFA's **Directorate of Political Affairs** (DP) also engages in Swiss international cooperation activities through its Human Security Division (HSD). The HSD promotes peace and human security, focusing on the security of the individual and protection against violence, war and arbitrary treatment. Security and peace policy research is carried out by the Federal Department of Defence, Civil Protection and Sport (DDPS) and described in the research concept for security and peace policy. Such research will therefore not be addressed in this document. Information on this topic can be found on the Federal Administration's research website (de, fr).⁵

Research within the Education, Research and Innovation (ERI) sector

The **State Secretariat for Education, Research and Innovation** (SERI) is the federal government's specialised body for education, research and innovation. Switzerland's international ERI strategy was adopted by the Federal Council on 30 June 2010 and updated in 2018. It is based on the plan to continue developing Switzerland's internationally competitive educational, research and innovation system and to strengthen it over the long term by defining priorities and clear objectives. Switzerland's international ERI strategy covers the activities that are financed according to the policies and measures outlined in the ERI dispatches. The strategic objectives of Swiss international cooperation determine the type of research supported in the context of Switzerland's development activities and cooperation with Eastern Europe.

Research (funded by ERI or Swiss international cooperation framework credits) can contribute to solving global problems, support the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and play a part in cross-border interaction and international understanding.

In contrast to international scientific research cooperation and the promotion of bilateral research partnerships under the ERI dispatch, ODA-funded research always focuses additionally on reducing poverty in line with the SDC's mandate.

2.3. Importance of research

Today the world is undergoing profound and fundamental changes that have a wide-ranging impact on the development opportunities of poor countries. Scientific research allows us to better understand, anticipate and strategically respond to these changes and their effects on multiple levels. This requires not only traditional approaches to research but also the use of transdisciplinary methods and international research partnerships. Additionally, social and political innovations will be just as necessary as advances in technology. Only in this way can research findings and scientific innovations help to overcome development challenges and global issues.

Swiss international cooperation has gained access to international networks, research expertise, innovation and know-how in areas that are relevant for development thanks to cooperation stretching back many years with research institutions in Switzerland, Africa, Asia, Latin America, Eastern Europe and Central Asia along with investments in global research partnerships and programmes. Integrating research into international cooperation activities can also be understood as a way of safeguarding Switzerland's standing as a location for research and as a contribution to implementing the 2030 Agenda.

Main purpose of research

For the SDC, research and innovation are not ends in themselves but rather a means to promote global sustainable development without poverty. The SDC's ODA-funded research generates new findings and innovative solutions and helps to put them into practice. In certain cases, research can also serve the purpose of analysing the impact of Swiss international cooperation. In this way, SDC research

⁵ <https://www.ressortforschung.admin.ch/rsf/de/home/themen/forschung-nach-politischen-bereichen/sicherheits-und-friedenspolitik.html>

BOX 1: Research on the implementation of the 2030 Agenda

At the United Nations summit in September 2015, heads of state and government adopted the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The scientific community has also been called on to play a part in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) outlined in the 2030 Agenda. According to the 2019 Global Sustainable Development Report, the power of science is needed to develop creative, transformative solutions that lead the way out of social, economic and political dead ends and lay the groundwork for profound, permanent change. For this reason, the scientific community should focus on the goals of the 2030 Agenda, work together across borders, systematise their knowledge and work closely with policymakers and other non-academic stakeholders.⁶



The 17 SDGs. Source: sustainabledevelopment.un.org

As a general rule, the scientific research activities funded by SDC are focused on the 2030 Agenda with the aim of helping to achieve the SDGs. By focusing on alleviating poverty and need, the SDC's research activities are in line with the central promise of the 2030 Agenda to leave no one behind.

⁶ Independent Group of Scientists appointed by the Secretary-General (2019), *Global Sustainable Development Report 2019: The Future is Now – Science for Achieving Sustainable Development*, United Nations, New York.

helps reduce poverty and global risks, promotes sustainable development across the globe and assists developing countries with implementing the 2030 Agenda. Research findings inform development policy decisions made by Switzerland, its partner countries and the programme work of the SDC, which helps to improve the effectiveness, efficiency and long-lasting impact of their programmes.

The SDC supports research programmes and international research networks with a partnership-based approach, and it promotes the production, dissemination and implementation of knowledge and innovation in fields with relevance for development. The SDC uses the current Swiss international coopera-

tion strategy (2021–24) as a basis for the direction and planning of its research funding.

The goal is for ODA-funded research to help strengthen research expertise and networks in development-related fields and to create a positive impact on the institutional research environment in Switzerland and its partner countries. However, Swiss international cooperation does not focus on higher education or building domestic research capacity.

During the 2021–24 period the SDC will increasingly lend its support to applied research that leads to social, political and technological innovations. The aim

BOX 2: Definition of scientific research and innovation

Scientific research is closely linked to the creation, interpretation or application of knowledge. The aim is to conduct studies based on **scientific methods** used in social and political science, economics, life sciences, natural and environmental sciences, earth sciences, engineering, medicine, pharmacology, mathematics or the humanities.

Research is based on **research questions** that are used to generate **hypotheses**. This can take the form of basic research or applied research.

Advisory services, teaching and the implementation of development projects by higher education institutions are not regarded as scientific research.⁷

Innovations are new ideas or inventions that can be successfully **applied** in one or more areas. This can include new products, services, methods, interactions or processes. In addition to technological innovations such as new machines, social innovations involve planned and controlled changes within a social system. Social acceptance and pathways to change play an important role when it comes to an innovation being applied successfully.⁸

Scientific research and innovation are closely linked, and scientific research often serves as the basis for innovations.

⁷ OECD (2015), Frascati Manual 2015: Guidelines for Collecting and Reporting Data on Research and Experimental Development, The Measurement of Scientific, Technological and Innovation Activities, OECD Publishing, Paris.

⁸ SERI (2016), Research and Innovation in Switzerland 2016 (full report), SERI, Bern; Bornstein et al. (2014), Zur Bedeutung von Sozialer Innovation in Wissenschaft und Praxis (study on behalf of the SNSF), W.I.R.E, Zurich; Zürcher et al. (2019), Empfehlungen für eine wirksame Förderung der Geistes- und Sozialwissenschaften zuhanden der Träger und Organe des BFI-Bereichs, SAGW, Bern.

is to accelerate the implementation of established international cooperation goals and achieve the SDGs outlined in the 2030 Agenda. Here the SDC has a particular interest in supporting new types of partnership-based research models in which scientists, policymakers and non-academic stakeholders work together to develop joint solutions.

Basic principles for investment in research

ODA-funded research should adhere to the following principles:

- Research must be related to the SDC's long-term strategic **objectives**.
- It must be **solution-oriented with practical applicability**. Many development challenges and future issues are proving to be complex and require international and interdisciplinary research cooperation alongside regular exchange and close cooperation with policymakers and practitioners.
- **Communicating, disseminating and applying** research findings have high priority. The following elements are considered to be part of research projects funded by the SDC: examining the potential impact of expected results when solving development challenges, analysing the potential utility for impoverished segments of the population in developing countries, and reviewing the options for translating findings into policymaking decisions and real-world applications.
- Research cooperation should be **partnership-based**. The 11 principles established by the Swiss Commission for Research Partnerships with Developing Countries (KFPE) serve as a frame of reference.⁹
- Research that is exemplary in terms of both **scientific quality** and **relevance to development** should be promoted.
- **Research freedom** in terms of formulating research questions and selecting methods must be respected.
- Research grants are awarded and strategic research partners are selected on a **competitive basis**.
- The results of ODA-funded research are subject to the **open access** principle where possible.
- Where adequate and useful, the SDC collaborates with other donors and **coordinates** its support for research at the national and international levels.

⁹ http://www.naturalsciences.ch/organisations/kfpe/11_principles_7_questions

Box 3: Swiss Programme for Research on Global Issues for Development (r4d)

Through the r4d programme, the SDC has supported making knowledge available as a public good in five priority areas for Swiss development cooperation. The programme has supported a total of 57 transnational research projects involving nearly 300 researchers in 50 different countries. Transformation accelerating grants are an additional r4d instrument that was launched in 2019. These grants enable researchers and project partners (governmental and non-academic stakeholders) to jointly try out solutions in order to accelerate the uptake and utilisation of research findings from r4d projects.



The r4d programme's global network of research partnerships. The graphic shows both the North-South partnerships and the partnerships between countries in the Southern Hemisphere. Source: www.r4d.ch

A comprehensive **synthesis initiative** was launched in 2019 to compile findings from the programme's various projects, using innovative formats to make them part of the dialogue with important stakeholders from the scientific community, government and civil society. The results of the synthesis initiative have been published in various formats (videos, policy briefs, etc.) on this website: www.k4d.ch.

2.4. Legal basis and mandate

According to Article 54 of the Federal Constitution, the Swiss Confederation contributes to *"alleviating need and poverty in the world while promoting respect for human rights and democracy and contributing to the peaceful coexistence of peoples and the conservation of natural resources"*. This serves as the basis for the Federal Act of 19 March 1976 on International Development Cooperation and Humanitarian Aid and the related Ordinance of 12 December 1977.¹⁰ Support for scientific research on development cooperation is explicitly called for in Article 29 of the Ordinance. Switzerland's cooperation with Eastern Europe is based on the Federal

Act of 30 September 2016 on Cooperation with the States of Eastern Europe.¹¹

2.5. Review of 2017–20

Implementation of the SDC/SNSF r4d programme

The SDC and the Swiss National Science Foundation (SNSF) have been jointly funding the **Swiss Programme for Research on Global Issues for Development (r4d programme)** since 2012. The programme has funded a total of 57 joint research projects executed in collaboration between researchers from Switzerland and countries in Africa, Asia and Latin America. During this period the r4d programme has conducted high-quality inter- and

¹⁰ Federal Act of 19 March 1976 on International Development Cooperation and Humanitarian Aid (SR 974.0); Ordinance of 12 December 1977 on International Development Cooperation and Humanitarian Aid (SR 974.01)

¹¹ Federal Act on Cooperation with the States of Eastern Europe (SR 974.1)

transdisciplinary research on issues with relevance for development. This research has helped to develop new products and solutions, promote sustainable development and reduce poverty and global risks in poor countries. This is demonstrated by two exemplary research projects in East Africa: the Woody Weeds project, which dealt with invasive plant species, and the e-POCT project, which addressed the use of digital instruments in the healthcare system. Research projects funded under the r4d programme were asked to proactively share their findings with policymakers and civil society and to work on developing solutions together.

SDC support for international agricultural research

Most SDC research funding went to agriculture and food security projects during the 2017–20 period. The SDC supported CGIAR, a global partnership for agricultural research, as part of its multilateral commitment to agriculture. The SDC has signed a memorandum of understanding with CGIAR in order to establish partnerships between Swiss institutes of higher education and CGIAR research centres. Additionally, there is a new document that sets out the future direction of this research area, with a focus on agroecology and nutrition. The document was jointly developed and widely discussed by the SDC and the Swiss scientific community. Furthermore, the SDC is strengthening the working relationship between its South Cooperation and Global Cooperation departments and improving coordination and focus when it comes to supporting different institutions and research projects.

Impacts and possible uses of digitalisation

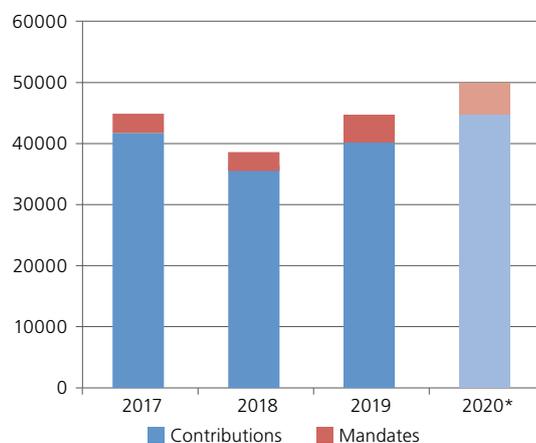
The SDC has supported various research projects on the possible uses of digitalisation for sustainable development. By supporting the Climate Ledger Initiative, the SDC promoted research on using blockchain technology for recording the impacts of and responses to climate change.¹² The SDC promoted research on using digital technologies in the healthcare sector through the e-POCT¹³ (Electronic Point of Care Tests) project under the banner of the r4d programme. The SDC's online Tech4Good¹⁴ platform also collected various examples of how to use digital technologies for sustainable development.

2.6. Funding for 2017–20

In contrast to the research investments made by other federal offices, the SDC does not fund and steer scientific research via a specific research credit. ODA funding is used to support the strategic objectives of Swiss international cooperation in line with the respective international cooperation framework credits. Please refer to Section 2.4. for further information on the legal basis.

Annual research investment is calculated on the basis of the effective payments. Fluctuations from year to year are mainly caused by the payment schedules established within a given project cycle; for longer-term programmes and projects in particular, these payments may vary considerably.

SDC research investment (in CHF thousands)



* Actual expenditure for 2019 and 2020 is not yet known. These figures are intended as a guide only.

The biggest amount by far (CHF 14.6 million in 2018) was invested in international agriculture and food security research with CGIAR as part of the SDC's multilateral engagement.

The ARAMIS database contains information on research programmes, research projects and development projects with a significant research component.¹⁵ More detailed information can also be found in the SDC project database, which contains all development programmes and projects, including research programmes.¹⁶

¹² <https://www.climateledger.org/en/About.12.html>

¹³ <http://www.r4d.ch/modules/thematically-open-research/e-poct>

¹⁴ <https://www.eda.admin.ch/deza/en/home/news/dossiers/alle-dossiers/tech4good-wirksame-partnerschaften-privatsektor-wissenschaft.html>

¹⁵ www.aramis.admin.ch/

¹⁶ <https://www.eda.admin.ch/deza/en/home/activities-projects/projekte-fokus.html>

Box 4: ARAMIS database for federal government research

The ARAMIS database contains information on the Swiss Federal Administration's research projects. Interested parties can find information on research activities that are funded or executed by the Swiss Confederation.

ARAMIS is equipped with a search engine that can be used to search for all public projects in the ARAMIS database.

The research programmes supported by the SDC can be found in the ARAMIS database.

Further information: www.aramis.admin.ch

2.7. Challenges and opportunities

Current and future challenges on the global and local level make it difficult to achieve the objectives of Swiss international cooperation. Solutions that benefit society as a whole can only be developed if different sectors and stakeholders work together. The 2030 Agenda provides a framework for dealing with these challenges. The 2030 Agenda's development goals take all three dimensions of sustainable development into consideration: economic development, social development and ecological sustainability. The process of sustainable development should benefit everyone and leave no one behind – both today and going forward.

The following points are among the main challenges and opportunities for international cooperation according to Switzerland's strategy for 2021–24:

- economic and social inequality
- global interdependencies, protectionism on the rise
- dramatic environmental changes
- technological innovations, digitalisation, automation
- fragile circumstances in developing countries

The fight against poverty and inequality therefore remains central. Strong international and multinational organisations can advocate for international legal frameworks and multilateral approaches. Effective frameworks can boost the utility of technological innovations, digitalisation and automation while mitigating the downsides. Building stable, responsible institutions can foster stability in developing countries.

3. Research Priorities

In order to achieve Switzerland's strategic international cooperation objectives, the SDC is active in the following areas:

- agriculture and food security
- health
- climate change and the environment
- water
- basic education and vocational skills development
- private sector development and financial services
- gender equality
- migration
- disaster risk reduction, emergency relief, reconstruction and protection
- good governance
- reducing fragility; supporting human rights; fostering just, peaceful and inclusive societies.

The SDC funds research on the basis of demand and can fund projects in any of the above areas. At the moment the following global challenges are central research priorities: **climate change and the environment, agriculture and food security, water, health and migration.**

Additionally, during the 2021–24 period the SDC will support cross-cutting applied research initiatives that require cooperation between researchers, non-academic stakeholders and policymakers. In order to implement the 2030 Agenda, reach the SDGs and achieve the four strategic objectives of Swiss international cooperation, it is necessary to take new approaches and enter into new research partnerships that accelerate knowledge and technology transfer between the scientific community, political authorities and stakeholders on the ground. The conclusion of the r4d programme and the intention of the SDC to promote research that is more closely aligned with policymakers and practitioners coincides with the launch of promising new Swiss research initiatives. This has prompted the SDC to rethink its funding arrangements for research partnerships between Swiss researchers and the Global South. The SDC will therefore identify and support new initiatives during the 2021–24 period. More weight will be given to the types of research partnerships and the development of new solutions than to strict adherence to a particular area of focus. Impact evaluations and other scientific approaches for evaluating the impact of Swiss international cooperation can also be funded in this context.

The research priorities of climate change and the environment, agriculture and food security, water, health and migration are described in brief in the following section.



The r4d research project 'Managing telecoupled landscapes for the sustainable provision of ecosystem services and poverty alleviation' examined the impact of globalisation on agricultural planning decisions in Madagascar. Photo: Jacqueline Schmid, SDC.

3.1. Climate change and the environment

Challenges and need for action

The consequences of climate change and environmental destruction – droughts, floods, rising sea levels, heat waves and biodiversity loss – are manifesting themselves in more and more parts of the globe, including Switzerland. While we have the technical and financial possibilities to largely mitigate these consequences, the poorest countries and populations will be the ones to suffer most. In order to cap global warming at a 1.5 °C increase (as recommended in the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change's latest special report), it will be necessary to swiftly reduce greenhouse gas emissions and pursue highly ambitious climate protection policies that involve all sections of society. This requires political will and a solid scientific foundation on which to base high-priority climate protection measures. The 2030 Agenda calls on all countries to contribute to international climate change policy and to formulate and implement global and local solutions for mitigating and adapting to climate change.

Focus of research

With regard to mitigation, the important research issues are clean air, access to energy, energy efficiency, renewable energies and adapting technologies to use resources efficiently.

With regard to adaptation, work is being done in particular to understand the impact on habitats and ecosystems with the aim of developing adequate strategies and measures for responding to the effects of climate change. Here particular attention is paid to forest and land use and mountain ecosystems (natural hazards, glaciers and water management).

Climate change research is being carried out in various regions throughout the world and supports the dialogue on how to sustainably use ecosystems in a way that benefits society as a whole. This dialogue takes place not only in the affected regions but also in Switzerland and globally.



Lentil cultivation at the Terbol station of ICARDA (International Center for Agricultural Research in the Dry Areas) in Lebanon. Photo: Michael Major, Crop Trust.

3.2. Agriculture and food security

Challenges and need for action

Despite progress in the fight against hunger and malnutrition, the number of people who do not have enough to eat has been on the rise since 2015. In 2018, the figure was more than 820 million people. Climate change, overexploited land and water shortages are causing great problems for agriculture, food supply and sustainable development in numerous countries.

International efforts to strengthen global agriculture have intensified since the global food crisis of 2007–08. As pointed out at three international summits in 2015¹⁷, however, there is a need to complement these efforts with increased attention to sustainable, collaborative development. Switzerland took part in the dialogue on the SDGs and is committed to taking effective action, particularly with regard to water issues.

As part of an increasingly interconnected world, Switzerland is also directly impacted by the threats facing agricultural systems. We import 50% of our food from abroad, of which almost 20% comes from outside of Europe. Food from the Southern Hemisphere such as bananas, coffee, cocoa, sweet potatoes, quinoa and basmati rice are now part of the Swiss diet.

Focus of research

Continuous strategic support for research on agriculture and food systems is required to find solutions for these challenges and to promote sustainable development on a regional, national and international level.

Agroecology and nutrition are the overarching main topics that the SDC will focus on. These topics include issues such as ecological footprints, food systems, value chains and food security while not neglecting traditional areas of focus such as productivity increases and integrated pest management. Going forward, the SDC will invest the bulk of its resources for this area in research topics that are closely linked to agroecology and nutrition.

Nearly 75% of the SDC's core funding for agricultural research goes to CGIAR to support the mission of achieving zero hunger by 2030. The aim is to use science to help transform the food, land and water systems that are currently facing a climate crisis. Five impact areas have been defined based on the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development: 1) nutrition and food security, 2) reducing poverty, 3) gender equality, 4) climate adaptation and greenhouse gas reduction, and 5) the environment and biodiversity. The main axes are reducing poverty, improving access to a balanced diet and food security, and improving the use of natural resources and ecosystems.

¹⁷ Paris climate conference; Addis Ababa conference on financing for development; adoption of the 2030 Agenda in New York

To achieve its objectives of overcoming humanity's greatest challenges, CGIAR concentrates on eight priority fields where it has a comparative advantage:

- 1) Climate-smart agriculture: focusing on urgently needed adaptation and mitigation strategies for farmers and other users of resources.
- 2) Genetically improving crops, livestock, fish and trees in order to improve productivity, adaptation to climate change, resilience, nutritional value and efficiency in terms of resource use.
- 3) Nurturing diversity, ensuring that CGIAR's collection of plant genetic resources is safely maintained in order to guarantee food security, productivity, nutrient-rich crops and resilient farming systems.
- 4) Agricultural systems: choosing a systematic approach to optimise economic, social and environmental co-benefits in areas with high concentration of poor people.
- 5) Inclusive, gender-balanced growth that provides opportunities for women, young people and marginalised groups.
- 6) Nutrition and health with an emphasis on dietary variety, nutritional value and safety of foods and development of value chains for nutrition of poor consumers.
- 7) Natural resources and ecosystem services, focusing on ecosystems and landscapes that offer significant opportunities to reverse environmental degradation and enhance the sustainable intensification of production.
- 8) Enabling policies and institutions: improving the performance of markets, enhance delivery of critical public goods and services, and increase the agency and resilience of poor people.



Photo: Peter Bocklandt, dreamstime.com

3.3. Water

Challenges and need for action

Growing pressure on increasingly scarce water resources is leading to more and more social tension and conflicts over water distribution. This has made it more difficult to ensure access to water, particularly for poor people. Integrated management of water resources on the local, regional and national level should lead to achieving a lasting balance between different usage demands.

Focus of research

Growing water stress in many areas of the world is being exacerbated by the increasingly evident harmful effects of climate change. This situation requires new models of cooperation when it comes to managing water sources that span national borders. The newly developed Blue Peace vision of water management requires developing new skills and generating context-specific scientific findings, for instance in the field of water diplomacy. Complementary research should be conducted along two lines: 1) implementing funding mechanisms for the compensation of ecosystem services, and 2) developing innovative methods for gathering and analysing hydrometeorological data.

Research on drinking water supply and sanitation is focusing on technical issues. This mainly involves finding innovative solutions for treating and bringing water to rural and urban households. The management and treatment of raw sewage, sludge and organic waste are equally important, and emphasis is also placed on developing sustainable business

models. In addition to technical solutions, research into social entrepreneurship, behavioural changes and knowledge networks are a firm fixture of sustainable drinking water and sanitation programmes.

Reliable representative data are needed in order to track progress on achieving Sustainable Development Goal 6 on water access and sanitation. SDC-supported research therefore aims to develop and support cost-effective methods for data collection and efficient monitoring systems for the necessary indicators. Another research priority involves analysing and reducing the water footprint of businesses and production processes.

The aforementioned research priorities aim at providing a solid scientific foundation for making the desired systematic changes in the water sector and monitoring the impact thereof. The findings will be shared, discussed and applied both within the SDC and with strategic and operational partners.



The r4d research project 'Improving the HIV care cascade' examined how to improve HIV diagnosis and treatment in Lesotho. Photo: Christian Heuss, Swiss TPH.

3.4. Health

Challenges and need for action

Environmental, economic and social factors influence physical and mental health to a considerable degree and lead to large disparities in health and life expectancy between the poor and the rich. Basic medical care is a human right and a key factor in economic and social development. It plays a central role in achieving greater social justice, minimising inequality and fostering sustainable development. However, even today hundreds of millions of people worldwide have only limited or no access to basic healthcare services. Internationally coordinated responses are needed to address central challenges such as healthcare funding, the quality of health services, and the research and development of medical products for pandemics and diseases of poverty.

Focus of research

Generally speaking, questions regarding efficiency, governance, funding and determinants of health are considered relevant to research in the field of health. One research priority concerns equal, non-discriminatory access to healthcare systems in Africa, Eastern Europe and Central Asia – but also globally. Access to medical care is connected to a general right to health, but this is a challenge in the face of often limited resources. The cost-effective provision of adequate healthcare services, especially for poor and disadvantaged groups, is thus a key research priority. This area includes research and development for medical products to treat neglected diseases,

the provision of high-quality healthcare services for everyone, and possible ways of financing healthcare systems (e.g. insurance systems).

In a sustainable development context, special attention must be paid to determinants of health that go beyond a medical approach: for instance, access to clean water, food security, gender equality, occupational health and safety, access to land rights and safe housing. Here it is essential to promote science-based research that encompasses multiple sectors and transdisciplinary approaches.

Reducing socioeconomic inequality and health risks when it comes to water, nutrition and the environment will help to improve health and lower the cost of healthcare considerably. Furthermore, research findings can help bring about sustainable funding and coordination mechanisms and non-discriminatory access to adequate healthcare services.



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3.5. Migration

Challenges and need for action

Although migration has always been part of human development, it has emerged as a dominant theme of the 21st century against a backdrop of an increasingly globalised world. Economic development and numerous structural changes within a country are often closely linked to migration trends. Social stakeholders are therefore always looking for improved ways to tackle push factors for migration (climate change, natural disasters, military conflicts, human rights violations, poverty, insufficient employment and income generation opportunities), cope with the impacts of displaced populations, and reduce irregular, unsafe migration. These solutions would impact 272 million international migrants and more than 750 million internal migrants as well as their countries of origin, transit and destination. The aim is to enhance the positive effects of migration (poverty reduction, stimulation of trade, knowledge transfer, investments and remittances) while minimising its negative effects (costs of integration and social coexistence, brain drain from countries of origin, exploitation of low-skilled migrants).

Focus of research

The SDC is focusing on the following research priorities in order to meet the challenges posed by migration:

- governance on all levels in the migration sector (local, national, regional, global)
- protecting and integrating migrants, including refugees, in transit and destination countries (e.g. in local job markets or in basic education and vocational skills development)

- the role of the private sector in employing migrants and ensuring fair working and living conditions
- impact of climate change on migration and displacement
- impact of remittances, investments and trade by migrants/members of diasporas on the development of their countries of origin (with a focus on digitalisation solutions)
- the role of migration in a country's sectoral policies.

Access to research results in this area makes it easier for policymakers to find better solutions for steering migration in the Global South. This in turn has a positive impact on Switzerland and the economic and social development of migrants' regions of origin.

Research findings will be shared and discussed with regional and topic-specific task forces within the Interdepartmental Structure for International Cooperation on Migration (IMZ) as well as with the SDC's Migration and Development network and other interested employees of the SDC. The goal is to strengthen the strategic link between Swiss international cooperation activities and Swiss migration policies. Research findings also improve the monitoring, relevance, impact and efficiency of ongoing projects and provide a basis for establishing new ones.

4. Funding for 2021–2024

The SDC funds scientific research on the basis of its mandate. The funds that the SDC invests in research (excluding the Swiss contribution to EU enlargement) are counted entirely as official development assistance (ODA).

The SDC does not have a centrally managed research budget and expects to invest approximately CHF 50 million on average in development-relevant research each year. Since payments can vary considerably from year to year due to the payment schedules established within a given project cycle, especially for longer-term programmes and projects, the figure of CHF 50 million is to be understood as a rough guide only.

ODA will be underpinned by a new strategy in 2021–24 and is set to consist of a framework credit of CHF 11.37 billion over this four-year period. This is equivalent to 0.45% of Switzerland's gross national income.¹⁸

Information on individual programmes and projects can be found in the ARAMIS database and more specifically in the SDC project database.¹⁹

¹⁸ <https://www.eda.admin.ch/deza/en/home/news/dossiers/alle-dossiers/iza-2021-2024.html>

¹⁹ www.aramis.admin.ch/; <https://www.eda.admin.ch/deza/en/home/activities-projects/projekte-fokus/Project-database.html>

5. Key Stakeholders and Interfaces in Research

Switzerland's position as a leading research hub plays an important role in solving global problems and achieving its international cooperation objectives. Swiss research, with its capacity for innovation and worldwide network, can help reduce poverty and need, support the transformation towards global sustainable development, and assist developing countries with implementing the 2030 Agenda. In conducting nationally and internationally focused research programmes and projects on vital global issues, Switzerland aims to make a visible and useful contribution to sustainable development.

5.1. Key stakeholders

The SDC works mainly with the following research partners in Switzerland:

- universities
- the federal institutes of technology (ETH Zurich and EPFL)
- universities of applied sciences
- the Graduate Institute of International and Development Studies (IHEID)
- the Swiss Tropical and Public Health Institute (Swiss TPH)
- the Commission for Research Partnerships with Developing Countries (KFPE)
- newer stakeholders such as the Wyss Academy for Nature in Bern.

Cooperation between Swiss centres of excellence (federal institutes of technology, universities, etc.) and their partners in developing countries – for instance in the context of networks, exchange platforms and programmes – also plays an important role.

Cooperation with international research partners such as CGIAR remains key for the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

Additionally, new research initiatives funded in 2021–24 will strive towards closer cooperation with stakeholders from civil society, the public sector and the private sector.

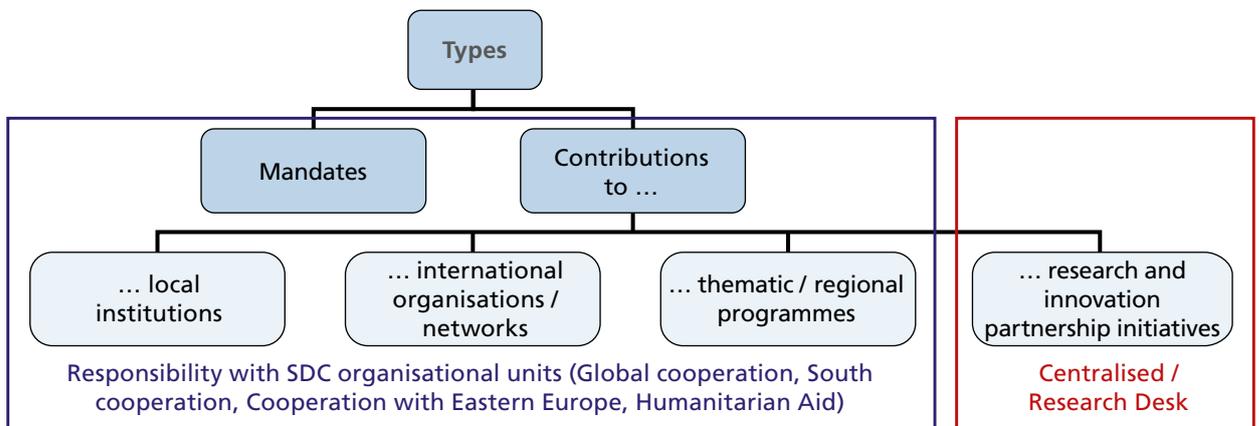
5.2. Interfaces to research funding institutions

The SDC fosters a partnership with the Swiss National Science Foundation (SNSF). The SDC's and SNSF's joint r4d programme supports research partnerships for sustainable development. The programme began in 2012 and will conclude in 2022. In 2019 the SNSF launched SPIRIT, its own programme for promoting research partnerships with developing countries. As part of the SDC's shift towards applied research and innovation, the agency will continue to maintain its dialogue and cooperation with research funding institutions such as the SNSF and Innosuisse.

5.3. Interfaces to other federal offices

Regular dialogue and interaction between federal offices take place at various levels. Besides the Federal Administration's research committees, the Interdepartmental Working Groups are also relevant for the SDC for the exchange of information and exploitation of synergies between departments and federal offices. Three bodies in particular deserve a mention here: the Interdepartmental Committee for International Development and Cooperation, the Interdepartmental Sustainable Development Committee and the Interdepartmental Working Group on International ERI Policy. Only the ERI Interdepartmental Working Group and the Federal Administration's research bodies focus on research and education.

6. Organisational Aspects and Quality Assurance



6.1. Internal structure

The research desk, which is part of the Analysis and Policy Division of the Global Cooperation Department, is responsible for all of the SDC's activities related to research policy, strategy and coordination.

Approximately 20 to 25% of the SDC's research portfolio is centrally managed by the research desk (see chart). This mostly concerns competition-based funding for international research partnerships. The SDC's reorientation towards promoting applied research and innovation (see Section 3) primarily concerns the centralised research portfolio of the Analysis and Policy Division.

Most of this portfolio consists of projects involving different organisational units at head office and at the cooperation offices. These units are responsible for managing and administering research funding contributions to international organisations and networks, programme contributions relating to the SDC's strategic priorities, and commissioned research/mandates with a research component. Line managers in organisational units are responsible for the management and quality assurance of re-

search-related activities (calls for research proposals/awarding of contracts; monitoring; reporting, disseminating and using research findings). They are also responsible for working with research institutions and conducting regular assessments of this cooperation.

The SDC's thematic networks also play an important role. Their main purpose is to develop and share good practices relating to a specific thematic area.²⁰ SDC networks link employees at head office and cooperation offices with partner organisations and researchers. Each network is coordinated and directed by one person, who is referred to as the focal point. Network members meet annually or every two years. Electronic platforms are used to exchange information and make it available on the internet.

²⁰ The SDC's thematic networks are presented on the SDC website.

6.2. Scientific monitoring

The Advisory Committee on International Cooperation advises the Federal Council as well as various offices of the Federal Administration, especially the SDC and SECO, on international cooperation issues. Non-governmental organisations, the private sector, the media and academia are all represented on this committee.

Since programmes and projects that include research can vary considerably in their design and cover a broad spectrum of thematic areas, it makes little sense to create a single body to monitor and guide all research activities.

As a rule, research projects tendered and carried out under the banner of larger programmes are assessed by international experts. The SDC can be represented on the respective selection bodies. For instance, the agency had full member status on the r4d review panels.

Content-related quality assurance hinges on membership in international and national bodies specialised in a given field (such as CGIAR and AGUASAN) as well as strategic cooperation with various centres of excellence.

6.3. Quality assurance

ODA-funded research is subject to the same imperatives as other Swiss international cooperation activities, namely results orientation, effectiveness and efficient use of resources. The characteristics of each research project are also taken into consideration.

The SDC has no specific internal instruments and procedures for research activities. Research credit requests serve as the basis of the operational, administrative and financial authorisation of the SDC's contributions and mandates. In combination with the project document and corresponding tools (theory of change, logical framework and results framework), these requests are also used to monitor and evaluate research programmes, research projects and development projects with a research component. Quality is assured by means of project cycle management – or, for structural investments, core contribution management. Project cycle management is a fully integrated management system designed to assess results. It is based on an understanding that programmes and projects are cyclical.

Project cycle management impact assessments enable results to be observed, reflected on and verified. They also make it possible to determine whether research findings are actually being applied. In consultation with the partners, monitoring and evaluation tools can be developed and processes can be set up to suit specific needs. This is done based on the SDC's requirements and instruments and the research partner's experience and resources.

The SDC and SECO publish reports on the effectiveness of Swiss development cooperation. The reports contain details not only on successes but also on difficulties and challenges. In addition, around 100 evaluations are conducted each year at various levels within the organisations. Evaluations foster institutional learning, support decision-making by management and ensure accountability to political authorities and the public.



Exchange between r4d programme researchers and members of the SDC's Employment & Income thematic network, 2019.

6.4. Knowledge and technology transfer and dissemination of knowledge

Research findings from contribution programmes are generally published by the research institutions and researchers through the usual research channels.

With regard to intellectual property relating to ODA-funded research, all research findings are made available for use in accordance with the open access principle as long as there is no commercial intent behind the research. Intellectual property arising from SDC-commissioned research may only be protected (by means of brand names, design registration, patents, etc.) with the SDC's prior consent. This does not apply to research findings from contribution programmes. Should said intellectual property yield a profit, the parties involved need to reach an agreement on how this income is to be used.

Experiences and research findings are shared, discussed and assessed at conferences and symposiums and as part of strategic dialogue with the scientific community.

Research approaches and findings (e.g. from the r4d programme) are presented and discussed at SDC thematic network meetings and informal events such as brown bag lunches. Additionally, findings from the r4d programme are published in formats that are more accessible to the general public (e.g. short films on how researchers are helping to achieve the SDGs).

Exchange between r4d programme researchers and members of the SDC's Employment & Income thematic network, 2019.

As a rule, research partners have formal meetings with the relevant departments at the SDC's head office or cooperation offices at least once a year. Both sides have a chance to explain their expectations, and innovative and relevant research findings are presented, discussed, jointly assessed, documented and published.

Organisational units can publish research findings that are relevant to SDC activities on the thematic networks' sharewebs. They may also be published through other suitable channels or presented and discussed at network meetings as well as at internal and public events organised by the network.

7. List of Abbreviations

ARAMIS	Administration Research Action Management Information System (research database of the Federal Administration)
CGIAR	Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research
CHF	Swiss francs
DDPS	Federal Department of Defence, Civil Protection and Sport
DP	Directorate of Political Affairs
EPFL	Federal Institute of Technology in Lausanne
ERI	Education, research and innovation
ETH	Federal institute of technology
ETH4D	ETH for Development
EU	European Union
FDFA	Federal Department of Foreign Affairs
IHEID	Graduate Institute of International and Development Studies
KFPE	Commission for Research Partnerships with Developing Countries
KoorA-RF	Interdepartmental coordination committee for federal government research
NCCR	National Centre of Competence in Research
NRP	National Research Programme
ODA	Official development assistance
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
r4d programme	Swiss Programme for Research on Global Issues for Development
RIPA	Federal Act on the Promotion of Research and Innovation
SDC	Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
SECO	State Secretariat for Economic Affairs
SERI	State Secretariat for Education, Research and Innovation
SNSF	Swiss National Science Foundation
Swiss TPH	Swiss Tropical and Public Health Institute

8. Appendix: Information on Federal Government Research¹

A1. Definition of federal government research

Federal government research can include any type of scientific research that yields findings needed for the fulfilment of the Federal Administration's remit and that the Federal Administration commissions because it is in the public interest to do so. This could mean, for instance, making a scientific foundation available for policymaking purposes (see Section A3). The research of the Federal Administration therefore lies at the interface between scientific research and policy/real-world applications. It involves research that adds a scientific and technical dimension to the political debate as well as the foundation for formulating policy objectives. It is legitimised by the Research and Innovation Promotion Act (RIPA; SR 420.1), which serves as the statutory framework for federal government research,² and by special legislative provisions (see Section A2). It is consistent with the strategy of the federal offices and may comprise the following measures:

- › awarding research contracts (contract research)
- › operating federal research institutes (intra-mural research)
- › carrying out the government's own research programmes in cooperation with university research facilities or research funding institutions such as the Swiss National Science Foundation (SNSF), Innosuisse, etc.
- › making contributions to university research facilities to carry out research projects and programmes
- › making contributions via federal offices to international institutions and organisations for research projects and programmes.

The research of the Federal Administration does not include federal contributions made to the research bodies enumerated in Article 4 of RIPA – namely, research-funding institutions (the Swiss National Science Foundation and the association of the Swiss academies), Innosuisse and higher education research centres (institutes within the ETH Domain, higher education institutions and other institutions within the higher education sector). It also does not include federal contributions made to the research facilities, research institutions and centres of technological excellence set out in Article 15 of RIPA. Likewise excluded from this designation are contributions to international scientific institutions and structural funding organisations.

In practice, federal government research is based on the five main principles of legality, being fit for purpose, effectiveness, cost-effectiveness and compliance with scientific quality standards. The primary responsibility for government research lies with the individual federal offices that carry out, commission or fund the research.

A2. Official mandate

Statutory framework

The Swiss Confederation's commitment to research and research funding is legitimised by Article 64 of the Federal Constitution (SR 101), under which the federal government promotes scientific research and innovation or can set up, take over or operate research facilities.

RIPA underwent a complete revision on 14 December 2012 and since then has served as a statutory framework for federal government research. The Federal Administration is considered a research body insofar as it conducts government-funded research for the fulfilment of its remit or carries out activities to promote research and innovation (Art. 4 let. d). The federal government promotes research and innovation in line with RIPA and other specific

¹ Common document for all research concepts. Authored by SERI.

² Total revision of the Research and Innovation Promotion Act of 14 December 2012.

legislation through its own research, including setting up and operating federal research facilities (Art. 7 para. 1 let. e). Article 16 sets out the purpose of federal government research and the forms it can take (see above) as well as guidelines on acquiring third-party funding and on overhead contributions. The establishment of federal research institutes is regulated by Article 17. An important aspect of federal government research is its coordination. For this purpose, the Federal Council has set up an interdepartmental coordination committee (KoorA-RF) whose tasks include coordinating the process for developing multi-year research programmes and issuing guidelines on quality assurance (Art. 42). Multi-year programmes for federal government research are a coordination and planning instrument that take the form of cross-organisational research concepts. These concepts take into account existing research priorities for higher education institutions, the funding programmes conducted by the SNSF on behalf of the government, and the activities of Innosuisse (Art. 45).

Specific legislative basis

Besides being anchored in RIPA, federal government research is based on more than 55 specific legislative provisions. These provisions define direct evaluation, survey or review mandates that require certain research to have been conducted. Other special legislative provisions empower the federal government to subsidise research in specific areas. These provisions contain details on funding policy in line with the Subsidies Act. Moreover, even where there is no explicit statutory mandate for research, applying and implementing existing law (e.g. adopting guidelines and ordinances) often requires expert knowledge, which should be up-to-date and must therefore be developed through research. This is why research commitments are often part of service level agreements based on the Federal Administration's new management model or are laid down in departmental organisation ordinances for the different offices.

Commitments under international agreements and parliamentary mandates

In addition to specific legislative provisions, more than 90 international agreements, conventions or memberships contain or imply commitments in terms of research or national research efforts in certain fields. But even in cases where there are no explicit research obligations arising from agreements, commissioned research is vital to some offices in order to maintain necessary international contacts. In this way federal government research enables an exchange on the basis of specialist knowledge which is founded on the current scientific findings of the field.

Parliament itself may issue mandates for drafting decrees, test reports and information through parliamentary initiatives, motions, postulates, interpellations or requests. Processing such mandates may entail engaging in federal research activities.

A3. Coordination of federal government research

Division of federal government research into policy sectors

In the interests of effective coordination and co-operation between participating federal offices, federal government research is divided into different policy sectors. The policy sectors that require a strategic research plan (Art. 45 para. 3 of RIPA) are defined by the relevant Federal Council Dispatch on the Promotion of Education, Research and Innovation (ERI) (Art. 46 para. 1 let. d of RIPA). To this end, participating federal offices draw up four-year research concepts under the direction of a lead office and with the strategic involvement of external experts (usually a scientific monitoring committee or group). The research concepts are developed in line with KoorA-RF principles and serve as concise, comprehensive strategy documents. They serve to inform interested members of the research community inside and outside the federal government as well as the public authorities in general. They also support the coordination of research and provide a tool for planning and legitimising the federal government's research activities. Since the 2004–07 ERI period, research concepts have been developed for the following 11 policy sectors: 1. health, 2. social security, 3. the environment, 4. agriculture, 5. energy, 6. sustainable spatial development and mobility, 7. development and cooperation, 8. security and peace policy, 9. vocational skills development, 10. sport and exercise, 11. sustainable transport.

Interdepartmental coordination committee for federal government research (KoorA-RF)

KoorA-RF consists of members of the directorates/executive boards of the federal offices with their own research and the Federal Financial Administration as well as representatives from the SNSF, Innosuisse, and the Board of the Swiss Federal Institutes of Technology (ETH Board). It is chaired by a member of the Executive Board of the State Secretariat for Education, Research and Innovation (SERI).

Based on RIPA, the committee's remit includes coordinating the creation of research concepts³ and

³ Principles for creating research concepts for the federal government's 11 policy sectors (2021–24 period), KoorA-RF, October 2018 (de).

drafting quality assurance guidelines.⁴ In addition, KoorA-RF ensures the strategic coordination of government research, acts as an active platform for sharing best practice in quality assurance, and records the research expenditure and budgetary framework of federal government research activities for the annual reporting to the Federal Council (memo). It also performs tasks associated with the selection of National Research Programmes (NRPs) and National Centres of Competence in Research (NCCRs), coordinates between federal government research and other programme-based research activities, and may initiate evaluations on overarching topics relating to federal government research.

However, managing the financial resources of federal government research across offices and departments does not lie within the remit of KoorA-RF. In 2006, the Federal Council rejected a recommendation to that effect from the National Council Control Committee CC-N regarding the management of federal government research resources.⁵ This control must ultimately be exercised by Parliament, which approves the relevant credits granted to the federal offices, and is effectively ensured by current parliamentary procedure on annual budgetary decisions.

Working group and secretariat of the coordination committee

A working group composed of research managers from the federal offices is responsible for drafting basic principles, guidelines and reports on federal government research and preparing meetings and resolutions for KoorA-RF. The working group is headed by the secretariat of KoorA-RF, which is part of SERI. The secretariat in turn ensures the flow of information between the federal offices represented on the KoorA-RF committee and oversees its operations. It is responsible for the website www.ressortforschung.admin.ch (de, fr), which provides brief information on research priorities in the policy sectors, current research concepts, links to the research pages of the federal offices, and documentation on the legal basis for governmental research activities. This website also contains standardised fact sheets that are updated annually by the lead offices in each policy area. These fact sheets inform the public about successful research activities and financial resources.

ARAMIS database

The ARAMIS information system (www.aramis.admin.ch) contains information on research projects and assessments conducted or funded by the federal government. The aims and remit of the system are set out in the ARAMIS Ordinance (SR 420.171):

⁴ Quality assurance for federal government research, KoorA-RF guidelines, 26 March 2014 (de).

⁵ Federal Gazette 2007 847 (<http://www.admin.ch/ch/d/ff/2007/847.pdf>) (de).

(1) creating transparency regarding funding flows for research and innovation, (2) coordinating projects funded or conducted by the federal government, (3) collecting data for the Federal Statistical Office (FSO) on federal research and development activities, (4) planning and control for research and innovation funding, (5) project management support.

ARAMIS serves as a simple database application in which all research projects and impact studies or assessments conducted by the Federal Administration are listed as individual or cross-referenced projects. ARAMIS therefore serves as a pillar of quality assurance for federal government research and is anchored accordingly in KoorA-RF's quality assurance guidelines. To support research coordination and planning and the efficient use of resources, information is compiled from ARAMIS and submitted annually to the Federal Council and KoorA-RF. This information includes details on types of research (intramural research, contract research, research grants), the organisations executing the research, and the expenditure of the federal offices. This ensures that the Federal Council and KoorA-RF have the information they need for financial planning purposes regarding the development and use of funds by the individual federal offices.

A4. KoorA-RF goals for 2021–24

KoorA-RF has the following overarching goals for 2021–24:

(1) Research concepts for the 11 policy sectors are to be developed in line with KoorA-RF principles. These principles are based on the guidelines set out by RIPA (Section 3: Research and Innovation Policy Planning) and on quality control guidelines for federal government research. If feasible or necessary, federal government research is linked to general research and innovation funding. The research topics addressed by the policy sectors are often cross-disciplinary in nature and concern various specialist offices and departments. KoorA-RF is therefore reviewing options for adjusting the current scheme of dividing federal government research into 11 policy sectors.

(2) During the 2017–20 period, work was done to identify cross-organisational research topics to be addressed in research concepts for 2021–24. The federal offices were surveyed with regard to possible cross-policy research topics based on the nine action areas in the Federal Council's Sustainable Development Strategy for the 2016–19 period. The results revealed five central topics that are of great interest to the federal offices and for which the federal government needs research: (1) sustainable behaviour, (2) sharing society, (3) data protection, (4) smart regions, and (5) health and the environ-

ment. As part of a pilot project, participating federal offices identified research questions about sharing societies, particularly with regard to policymaking, opportunities and risks, rebound effects, data handling, behavioural change, impacts on resource use, sustainability and business models. The pilot project took existing research into account and reviewed options for conducting a research project on the topic (e.g. in the form of a joint inter-office research programme). Based on the experience with the pilot project, the other four cross-organisational topics will be reviewed in phases by the relevant federal offices over the 2021–24 ERI period. In this context a federal office is considered relevant if it has an explicit need for research in order to fulfil its mandate.

(3) RIPA was reconceived in 2012 as a statutory framework for federal government research. The expected result was that this framework would allow for all current specific legislation on federal government research to be systematically reviewed and for any newly planned specific legislation containing research provisions to be drafted using RIPA as a basis (to simplify and improve the consistency of legislation). Experts have reviewed whether this actually took place and found that in strictly quantitative terms, no major changes were made to the legislation.⁶ A report has recommended that KoorA-RF develop a common understanding of Article 16 and Article 17 of RIPA and that the departments concerned should draft guidelines for creating simplified legislation. KoorA-RF therefore needs to work on developing a common basis for interpreting the legal provisions set out in RIPA and to offer support for amending specific legislation with articles concerning federal government research in the event that the laws are revised.

(4) In order to better represent the federal government's interests in National Research Programmes (NRPs) and improve how the federal government uses these programmes, revisions have been made to the specifications governing the tasks and functions of federal representatives in NRP steering committees. If necessary, several federal representatives from different federal offices may serve on NRP steering committees. SERI and the SNSF aim to achieve a balance between supporting applied and basic research – tailored to the topic at hand – when preparing and carrying out NRPs. Expertise provided by the federal offices will be used systematically once the NRP commences.

Further information:

www.ressortforschung.admin.ch (de)

⁶ Report: Adaptation of the specific legislative basis for federal government research after the reconception of RIPA as a statutory framework, Prof. F. Uhlmann, 4 December 2017 (de).

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