



Swiss Cooperation Programme Middle East 2019 - 2022



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Overview

Conflicts in the ME today cannot be seen as 'individual conflicts' or in isolation from one another. Common issues continue to challenge countries across the region such as concerns around protection, provision of basic services including education, water and sanitation, poverty and livelihood, social cohesion, and decent work conditions. Switzerland therefore decided to continue working with a regional programme.

After having had several separate programmes in the Middle East between 2005 and 2009, Switzerland introduced its first comprehensive regional programme in the Middle East in 2010. Since then, Switzerland stepped up its cooperation efforts and the programme developed a strong focus around the various conflicts in the region. As in the previous four years, the Swiss Cooperation Programme Middle East 2019-22 covers the five countries Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon, Syria and Turkey. It is historically Switzerland's largest programme. Several actors within the Swiss government contribute to the programme in a Whole of Government approach:

► Federal Department of Foreign Affairs:

Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation:

- Swiss Humanitarian Aid
- South Cooperation (Development Cooperation)
- Global Program Migration and Development
- Global Programme Water

Political Directorate:

- Geographic Divisions
- Human Security Division

► Federal Department of Police and Justice:

State Secretariat for Migration (SEM):

- International Cooperation

Compared to the last programme, the Swiss Cooperation Programme Middle East 2019-22 has a stronger focus on the nexus, namely interlinking the humanitarian engagement with inclusive development-oriented and peace-building interventions. The nexus is becoming more important because of the protracted nature of crises which require both quick humanitarian responses and longer-term approaches.



Switzerland's objectives in the Middle East

Switzerland's overall objective is the following:

Switzerland contributes to protect and empower conflict-affected and vulnerable persons, to save and reconstruct lives, to reduce fragility, to prevent and transform violent conflicts and to generate development perspectives, to promote good governance and protect and promote human rights, refugee laws as well as the respect of international humanitarian law.

In order to advance on the overall objective, the following domains were chosen:

- ▶ Protection & Migration
- ▶ Education & Income
- ▶ Conflict Prevention & Peace Promotion
- ▶ Water & Sanitation

The overall budget for four years amounts to 276 million CHF.



Protection & Migration

Objective:

“Conflict-affected and vulnerable persons (inclusive of internally displaced persons, refugees, migrants and host communities) live in safety and dignity and enjoy their fundamental rights in line with international human rights law, international refugee law, international humanitarian law, and other international bodies of law.”

On one hand, Switzerland will promote policies and legal frameworks that improve protection and migration governance, and on the other hand equitable access to specialised services for persons with protection needs. Swiss efforts will prioritise assistance to the most vulnerable with a strong focus on fostering gender equality and women’s rights. Switzerland’s efforts will contribute to the realisation of durable solutions for IDPs and refugees who are at risk of protracted displacement. To this effect, and by joining forces between all Swiss actors in a

WoGA, longer-term, development-oriented approaches to protracted displacement will be reinforced where appropriate. Swiss engagement on migration includes the strengthening of national and regional migration governance capacities and span in countries of origin and destination with a new focus on the Africa-Middle East migration corridor.

Under the Protection and Migration Domain, Switzerland will work through a number of different modalities including the cooperation with multilateral and bilateral partners, deployment of secondments, the support of regional programmes as well as the engagement with relevant line ministries. Advocacy efforts and policy dialogue with duty bearers will accompany the operational support across the domain.



Education & Income

Objective:

“Conflict-affected and vulnerable children and youth access and complete compulsory quality education and young people and vulnerable families have opportunities to earn a decent living.”

Switzerland’s objective for the new Education and Income domain contributes to a strengthened education system that ensures equitable access to protective quality basic compulsory education for crisis-affected, displaced, and host community children and youth as well as income generation measures for young people and families. Enabling conflict-affected and vulnerable populations to complete compulsory schooling and access better opportunities to earn a decent living will, in turn, lower the economic pressure on women and men equally and build a foundation for social cohesion and violence prevention.

Switzerland will contribute to the strengthening of the capacity of national education systems at a national and decentralised level. Quality and equity of the education systems will improve learning, ensure all children are able to reach their educational potential, and positively impact social integration and social cohesion.

Through supporting income earning opportunities and promoting policies and legal frameworks enabling access to a decent income, Switzerland will contribute to the improved prospects for livelihood and income for vulnerable youth and families. Income earning opportunities will include support for business start-ups, vocational and life skills training responding to market needs, and engagement with private sector actors.

In emergency contexts, Swiss efforts will prioritise assistance for education in emergencies to refugees, IDPs, returnees and host community children and youth. A strong emphasis will be placed on reducing the number of crisis-affected out of school children, school retention, remedial education, safe and protective provision of education through formal and alternative basic education programmes.

The programme portfolio of the Education and Income domain is aligned with national and regional strategies and response plans. It is implemented through multilateral and bilateral partners as well as civil society organisations. Policy dialogue is an integrated component in Switzerland’s involvement in the region for scaling-up, coordination, systems-strengthening and impact.



Conflict Prevention & Peace Promotion

Objective:

“Switzerland’s objective within the Peace Promotion and Conflict Prevention Domain is to support conditions for sustainable peace and reconciliation at regional, national and societal levels in the ME by addressing drivers of conflict.”

Switzerland will provide political, diplomatic and technical support to track-1 dialogue platforms and peace processes to take place in a neutral and calm environment. Swiss support will prioritise the creation of the necessary conditions for governments and other key state and non-state actors to be willing, prepared, and trained to participate in peace initiatives. Switzerland will also contribute to establishing and maintaining the necessary space for local actors’ participation in track-2 and track-3 dialogue platforms including civil society and other non-state actors.

Initiatives that include opportunities for linking dialogue with humanitarian, water, or migration-related issues will be promoted. The linkages

between these local initiatives and established peace processes will be strengthened. Switzerland will also promote the development and adoption of policies and legal frameworks such as constitutions, laws, and strategies that consolidate post-conflict agreements and present guarantees of non-recurrence, prevent the perpetration or resurgence of atrocities, and ensure accountability for grave violations of human rights or IHL such as torture, arbitrary detention, and forced disappearances.

Under this domain, Switzerland will work through a number of different modalities including dialogue and mediation tools, shuttle diplomacy, and cooperation with multilateral, bilateral and civil society partners. Advocacy efforts and policy dialogue for peace and human rights by local partner organisations, human rights defenders, think tanks, and academic institutions will be promoted.



Water & Sanitation

Objective:

“Targeted populations across the region are less vulnerable to water scarcity, water borne diseases, water-related conflict and water-related mismanagement.”

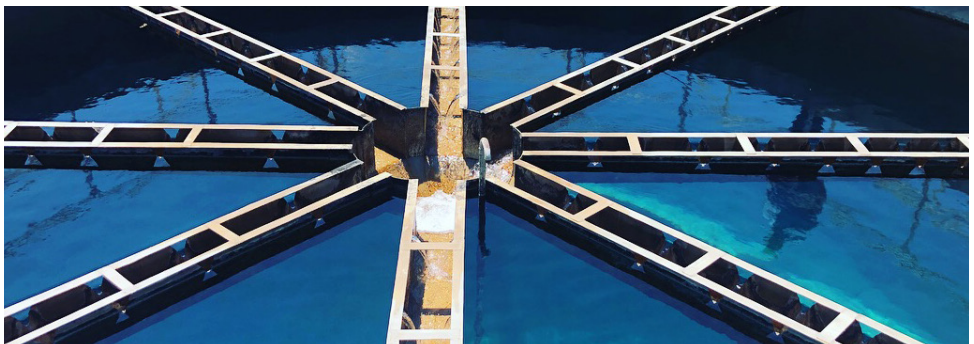
Switzerland’s main objective within the Water and Sanitation domain is to reduce vulnerability to water scarcity, water-borne diseases, water-related conflict, and water-related mismanagement. This will be achieved through supporting capacities for integrated water management so that countries and communities in the region are able to utilise water resources more sustainably and equitably. In this way they will reduce the likelihood of water becoming a major aggravating conflict factor that leads to increased violent confrontations and will improve the ability of conflict-affected and vulnerable populations in the region to achieve viable living conditions.

Switzerland will work towards achieving this objective by supporting innovative solutions, promoting good practices, promoting dialogue for improved management of shared water resources, building capacity, sharing knowledge, and supporting relevant direct and indirect project implementation on the ground.

Switzerland’s efforts will also support the establishment of regional initiatives, such as the Blue Peace Initiative with its regional mechanism for water management, media training and start-up networks, the SDC ‘MENA Sub-Réseau knowledge-sharing hub, and donor and partner technical working groups.

In order to achieve the above-mentioned objectives, Switzerland will work through a number of different modalities, including the cooperation with multilateral and bilateral partners, the support of regional programmes (e.g. Blue Peace Initiative), as well as strengthening its engagement with relevant line ministries and established governmental and non-governmental institutions, and civil society.

Switzerland’s advocacy efforts in the region will focus on mitigating water scarcity through increasing the use of treated wastewater for irrigation and reducing other adverse effects of climate change, such as flash floods.



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