

inter cooperation

Natural Resource Management
Rural Economy
Local Governance and Civil Society

Policy and Principles

(approved by the Foundation Council of IC on January 2005)

This policy paper guides the contribution of Intercooperation to the field of development co-operation. It serves as a reference for management and collaborators and presents Intercooperation to stakeholders in Switzerland and abroad¹.

Our Vision

Our vision is a fair and just world, in which all women and men, young and old, have the right and means to lead their lives in dignity and safety. Our vision is a time of peace when a free and respectful exchange of ideas, people and goods among communities and nations contributes to global prosperity; a time when all human beings are able and willing to care for other people and the environment and to consider the needs of coming generations.

Our Mission

We at Intercooperation are committed to make a relevant contribution towards the realisation of this vision. We are a professional, non-profit organisation rooted in Switzerland and engaged in development and international co-operation. We offer our competence in the priority domains of natural resource management, rural economy and local governance and civil society to partners in developing and transition countries. We empower our partners to help themselves. We receive funding for projects and mandates from government, international and corporate donors with whom we share concerns and commitments. While we are an implementing agency, we add value by contributing our convictions, our expertise and our creativity for the benefit of programme quality and effectiveness. We strive to be honest intermediaries between the demands of organisations mandating us and the expressed needs of our development partners. We aim at complementary programmes in the three priority domains, and at a balance between our activities in Africa, Latin America, Asia and Eastern Europe. In our fields of competence we participate in public debate at national and international level.

¹ For general information a leaflet presenting Intercooperation is available in various languages.

Our Commitments

Our work is based on principles. We are committed to adhere to them even though this may often be difficult in a real life situation.

Equitable Development

Poverty is the major problem of our time. We at Intercooperation make pro-poor choices at the strategic and the operational level; we particularly promote the cause of women who are often the poorest segment of the population. In this way we contribute to an equitable development.

Empowerment and participation

Individuals, groups and civil society organisations have the right and the potential to stand up for their concerns and to take their future in their own hands. We support them in their efforts and foster their participation in development.

Effective and accountable public sector

The state has an important role to play, safeguarding the rule of law and providing a framework for social justice and economic development. We are committed to strengthening the public sector in its statutory and service functions and to making it more accountable.

Responsible private sector

A thriving private sector, including rural and farm enterprises, is the motor of economic growth. We support the establishment of a broad-based, locally rooted private sector, which honours its social and environmental obligations.

Sustainable Development

Sustainable development has ecological, economic, social and institutional dimensions. We believe in a holistic approach, which includes all these dimensions and takes into account a long-term perspective as well as external costs and benefits.

Transparency

In all interactions in the private and the public sector there is a need for clear rules and the respect of these rules irrespective of power and position. We follow transparent procedures and abstain from all forms of corruption and patronage.

Respect and mutual learning

Our world is rich in cultures, each with their beliefs, traditions and knowledge. We at Intercooperation respect the values of others and foster processes of mutual learning. At the same time, we are aware of our own values and needs for development.

Our Expertise

We at Intercooperation combine social commitment with professional competence. Our strength lies in linking theoretical knowledge and applied research to practical field experience. When we do mistakes, we analyse them and incorporate lessons learnt into future activities. This makes us an effective and credible player in questions relating to development and international co-operation.

We already possess and strive to further improve a strong profile in the combination of thematic expertise and process competences. Expertise, competences and services are grouped around our three priority domains: **Natural Resource Management, Rural Economy and Local Governance and Civil Society** as shown in the chart (Annex 1).

The following are **prioritised thematic competences**, that are either already available in Intercooperation, or which have to be further strengthened:

- Financial services
- Micro and Small enterprise promotion
- Product and market development in agriculture and forestry
- Sustainable agricultural and livestock production
- Management of land, water and soil in marginal environments
- Sustainable forest management and agroforestry
- Environmental service functions: water, climate, biodiversity
- Collaborative management of natural resources
- Strengthening of interest groups and associations
- Communal development and decentralization

The following are the **principal process competences** available within Intercooperation:

- The holistic view of rural development
- Capacity to analyse complex systems such as eco-systems, rural livelihood systems, commodity chains, rural finance systems etc. and to define critical fields for intervention
- Linking local experiences to global issues: from the micro-level (households, enterprises) through the meso-level (institutions) to the macro-level (policies)
- Application of gender-balanced development methods
- Application of poverty reduction and monitoring tools
- Participatory methods in programme management and technology development
- Human resource and institutional development
- Knowledge management and innovation

Our Services

Management of Programme Cycles, Personnel and Trust Funds

We support partner organisations in the planning, implementation and monitoring of projects and programmes. For this we employ or contract the required international and national personnel and manage – on behalf of the mandator – trust funds used for partner organisations or project activities.

Programme Planning, Support and Evaluation

In our fields of competence, we identify project opportunities and conduct pre-feasibility and feasibility studies. We are particularly interested in participating in the planning of programmes, which we will help to implement.

We offer our services for thematic or methodological support to ongoing programmes and other institutions. More effective and rewarding than one-time support or supervisory missions are long-term mandates.

Our specialists are available to participate – together with other experts – in independent evaluation or review missions.

Thematic and Methodological Backstopping Mandates

We offer our services for comprehensive and long-term backstopping mandates in our fields of competence to other institutions.

Training Courses, Workshops and Seminars

In our fields of competence we organise in Switzerland and in our working regions training courses or stand-alone events.

Studies, Documentation and Knowledge Management

We conduct studies and execute documentation and knowledge management mandates in specific thematic, methodological and geographic areas.

Other Services

Our country and regional offices can assume other service-functions and provide a logistical base for third parties, e.g. Swiss NGO's.

Our Resources

Human Resources

Our fields of competence are built on collaborators, placed in the head office in Berne, in the country and regional offices (delegations) and in more than 40 projects and programmes in twenty countries on four continents. Our personnel is composed of a wide range of professionals, including agronomists, foresters, economists, sociologists and other specialists beside experienced administrative employees. It is from these human resources that we draw our strength and credibility.

National staff shoulder the main executive responsibility in our programmes. International staff who are transferable between projects, programmes and countries have a particular role to play in the knowledge transfer within the organisation and the exchange between continents and cultures. Intercooperation puts to use the expertise and experience of its national and international employees for the entire organisation. At the core of Intercooperation's existence is the human resource policy, which responds to the long-term needs of personnel development and ensures at the same time flexibility of staff deployment necessary in an organisation working on mandates.

Internal Organisation

Intercooperation has a decentralization policy aiming at ownership, effectiveness and efficiency. Operational decisions are taken in the field - at project or programme-level - together with the partner organisations involved. Closeness to the specific local context ensures the appropriateness of proposed solutions and approaches.

Head Office's role is to professionally and administratively support and supervise the field units, in order to ensure high quality standards. Head Office promotes exchange of knowledge and know-how within the entire organisation. Additionally, Head Office has central management tasks and statutory obligations towards the Foundation Committee and Council.

The internal organisation at Head Office with the directorate, one internal resources team, two regional teams², four sector teams³ and an information and documentation unit, assigns clear responsibilities but also ensures regular exchange, as well as the flexible use of available competences and capacities for the benefit of programme support and quality.

Finances

Intercooperation's main revenues are generated by project work and mandates. We execute mandates with and without trust funds for public and private Swiss and international mandators and donors. While we are not engaged in public fund-raising, we can seek and receive complementary funding for specific development projects.

² Asia/Eastern Europe and Africa/Latin America

³ Forest-Environment, Agriculture, Finance/Enterprise/Market, Municipal and Local Development

Complementary financing is for the financing of small or part projects which are a significant supplement to mandated projects being carried out in a specific country or region, in a particular domain, or with partner institutions, and which can be developed with modest additional administrative means.

Additional financing, other than that from the Swiss Confederation, applied for from private or public authorities, shall not as a total amount to more than 5% of our project portfolio.

In the course of its annual report, Head Office informs the Board of the Foundation on its efforts to obtain complementary financing.

We strive to maintain a sound financial base. Mandates and programmes have to cover their full costs, which includes a contribution to the institutional overheads. Eventual benefits help Intercooperation to build up financial reserves. These reserves are used for:

- Mitigating risks in connection with our programmes, country and regional offices
- Building up and maintaining competence
- Short-term investments with long-term returns (acquisitions, country and regional offices)
- Own development projects
- Public debate in Switzerland and in programme countries
- Hardship cases among Intercooperation's employees

Our Stakeholders

Members of the Foundation Council

The 21 members of Intercooperation's Foundation Council (Annex 2) represent the development community of Switzerland, the civil society and the private sector, as well as selected international organisations. We maintain strong links with our members, be it on the level of conceptual dialogue, through operational collaboration or by approaching potential sources of funding among them. This helps Intercooperation to reinforce its place as one of the leading Swiss development organisations and increases the stakes of the Foundation Council in our organisation.

We maintain rapports of partnership and respect with whomever we deal. For the sake of conceptual clarity however we distinguish between the categories of "Development Partners", "Funding Partners" and "Collaborative Partners":

Development Partners

Development partners are the people and organisations, for whom we work, the end-users of our services, rural households, farmer organisations, micro-enterprises, associations, communities, communes and others. Intercooperation sees itself as the honest intermediary between the organisations mandating us, and these development partners, between "finance and action".

Regarding development partners, we have a clear poverty focus. We want our services to directly or indirectly benefit in any given circumstances the poorer, marginal and disadvantaged groups and entities. This often puts rural areas before towns, women before men, and areas endowed with fewer resources before resource-rich areas.

Funding Partners

Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation, SDC, with its various departments and divisions is and shall remain our most important funding partner and contractual agent. We share with SDC all important values and commitments. We intend however to broaden our base of funding towards other government, corporate and international donors and mandators. Such a diversification not only reduces risks linked to exclusive relationships, it also contributes to Intercooperation's learning and quality management.

Collaborative Partners

In the countries where we are present with projects and programmes we work only through collaborative partnerships, be it with public partners (line agencies, municipalities), NGO's or locally rooted private sector organizations.

In Switzerland, internationally and in the various programme countries, Intercooperation links with others in networks, alliances and joint ventures. With a range of important partner organisations and qualified individual experts, Intercooperation enters into formal partnership agreements. By linking with others, the fields of competence and capacities are pooled for the benefit of programmes and the cooperating institutions.

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Intercooperation Priorities and Competencies

Our Services

- Programme planning, support and evaluation
- Thematic and methodological backstopping
- Programme management
- Training courses and events
- Studies and documentation



Sustainable agricultural and livestock production

Management of land, water and soil in marginal environments

Sustainable forest management and agroforestry

Product and market development in agriculture and forestry

Environmental service functions: water, climate, biodiversity

Collaborative management of natural resources

Micro and small enterprise promotion

Financial services

Strengthening of associations and interest groups

Municipal development and decentralization

Our Process Competencies

- Poverty targeting
- Gender balanced development
- Rural development
- Knowledge management and innovation
- System analysis
- Micro-macro linkages
- Human resource and institutional development
- Participatory methods

Intercooperation

Foundation members

CARITAS Switzerland, Lucerne

Charles Léopold Mayer Foundation for the Progress of Humankind, Lausanne

Ethnological Association Zurich, Zurich

HELVETAS, Association for International Cooperation, Zurich

IRED Development Innovations and Networks, Geneva

IUCN International Union for the Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources, Gland

IUED Graduate Institute of Development Studies, Geneva

LBL Swiss Association for consulting in agriculture, Thayngen

MDF Management for Development Foundation, NL-Ede

NADEL Postgraduate Course on Developing Countries at the Federal Institute of Technology, Zurich

Pro Natura - Friends of the Earth Switzerland, Basel

SEREC Swiss Association for Regional and Communal Services, Vissoie

SHL Swiss College of Agriculture, Zollikofen

Swiss Forestry Association, Zurich

Swiss Peace Foundation, Institute for Conflict Resolution, Berne

Swiss Red Cross, Berne

SYNGENTA Foundation for Sustainable Agriculture, Basel

SWISSAID, Swiss Foundation for Development and Cooperation, Berne

Union of Swiss Raiffeisen Bancs, St. Gall

VKMB, Swiss Association for the Protection of Small and Medium Sized Farmers, Berne

VMI Research Institute for Association and Cooperative Management of the University of Fribourg, Fribourg