

ROADMAP 2021-2023

The inclusion of persons with disabilities in Swiss international cooperation

Summary

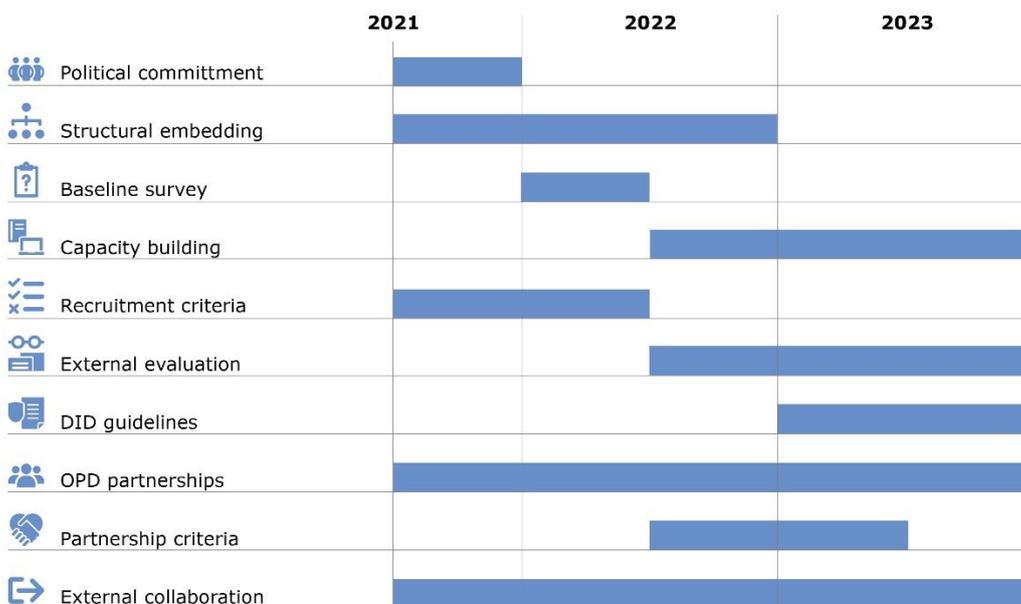
The Swiss Disability and Development Consortium (SDDC) has developed the following Roadmap for the period 2021 - 2023. The roadmap provides recommendations for a comprehensive pathway to render the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation's (SDC) efforts inclusive of persons with disabilities both at institutional and field level.¹

During the March 2022 session of the Committee on the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD), Switzerland will need to report on its progress on the implementation of the CRPD, both nationally and within its international cooperation and humanitarian action. Subsequently, the Committee will adopt Concluding Observations for which Switzerland has four years to implement. In view of the upcoming review, the SDDC strongly recommends the timely and holistic implementation of this roadmap. Furthermore, the SDDC recommends that this roadmap be integrated within the framework of the current changes at SDC, to make SDC more agile and fit for purpose.

To ensure a holistic approach, engagement and action is needed across SDC institutional and field operations levels, as well as through engagement in external networks. The SDDC stands ready to support the process as necessary.

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¹ It complements the policy recommendations of the SDDC submitted to the CRPD Committee as well as other documentation and activities prepared by the Consortium. Please see www.leave-no-one-behind.ch.



1. Political commitment

→ Release a political declaration or statement in support of a disability inclusive Swiss development cooperation and humanitarian action

Clear demonstration of senior commitment to disability inclusion in international cooperation and humanitarian action is an essential first step. Switzerland will thereby send a strong message not only to the disability community, the Swiss parliament and development community, but also towards other development cooperation agencies and partners. A political statement will also provide additional internal buy-in and prioritization. Leadership on the issue should come from the top, with a clear statement on its importance for Swiss foreign affairs. This can be presented within the framework of Switzerland's obligations under the CRPD and its commitment to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development with its key principle to 'leave no one behind'. Including persons with disabilities is essential for development and poverty reduction.²

The SDDC suggests the presentation of a political declaration or statement from Federal Councilor Ignazio Cassis, Head of the Federal Department of Foreign Affairs and Patricia Danzi, Director SDC.



2. Structural embedding within SDC

→ 2.1. Integrate DID within the SDC Secretariat structure

To ensure disability inclusion is mainstreamed across SDC, it is imperative that dedicated staff be in place. The identification of a focal point on disability inclusive development (DID) and an associated team is an essential first step, to ensure expertise and competency in the area, and to guarantee the necessary time and resources. It is important that persons with disabilities are recruited into the team and that the team sits centrally within the SDC Secretariat (similar to other thematic focal points). It should be tasked with the oversight of disability inclusion policies and activities, the development, consulting, and monitoring of programmes, networking, etc.

→ 2.2. Create an internal 'champions in DID' network for questions related to disability inclusion

Over time and following internal capacity building (see point 4 on capacity building on DID), staff members across SDC headquarter, countries and regions could be nominated or nominate themselves to be DID champions, thereby creating an internal network on disability to help strengthen capacity and implementation.

² United Nations. Disability and Development Report: Realizing the Sustainable Development Goals by, for and with persons with disabilities, 2018. URL: <https://www.un.org/development/desa/disabilities/publication-disability-sdgs.html>

They would become the 'go-to' persons on questions related to DID within the organization and coordinate closely with the DID focal point and team.



3. Internal baseline survey

→ Conduct an internal baseline survey on knowledge and capacities in DID

To understand where the current internal knowledge lies on disability inclusion, the SDDC recommends the dissemination of an internal survey, across SDC headquarter and country staff. This survey will help to identify the current understanding and gaps on issues related to DID, and how they link to the daily work of SDC colleagues. The development, dissemination, and analysis of this survey could be a first task for the new disability inclusion focal point.



4. Capacity building on DID

→ Develop capacity building programmes on DID for SDC staff

Based on the outcome of the survey, capacity building programmes can be developed. These can take shape in the form of dedicated workshops on DID as well as the adaptation of existing trainings to ensure the inclusion of a DID perspective. For example, the SDC training on Programme Cycle Management could be reviewed to include key concepts on disability inclusion. Trainings could also cover topics such as data disaggregation by disability, the appropriate marking of projects using the OECD DAC disability policy marker, reasonable accommodation, meaningful participation of persons with disabilities, CRPD compliant budgeting, etc.

Importantly, persons with disabilities must be directly engaged in these capacity building programmes. SDC should also ensure that its capacity building partners and those that provide external backstopping (e.g. in the realm of gender) improve their competencies around the rights of persons with disabilities.



5. FDFA and SDC recruitment criteria

→ Diversify staff to include more persons with disabilities

The recruitment criteria for Federal Department of Foreign Affairs (FDFA) staff positions, including SDC, at both headquarter and field level (including local staff) must be inclusive of and non-discriminatory against persons with disabilities. This must be reflected in the upcoming 'Politik Chancengleichheit 2020+' developed by the Swiss Ministry of Foreign Affairs and its application be guaranteed within SDC.

Applications from persons with disabilities should be encouraged and accessibility and reasonable accommodation ensured throughout the hiring process³. This should be stated clearly in all SDC job advertisements. SDC should reach out directly to organizations of persons with disabilities and make sure the application format is accessible for all (ex. via video or audio format available to all). SDC should also develop a specific professional development programme in the realm of international cooperation for persons with disabilities.



6. Externally mandated evaluation

→ Commission an external evaluation of SDC projects for disability inclusion

To gain a better understanding of how DID is embedded across SDC projects and programmes in countries, and to identify areas for improvement, the SDDC strongly recommends the commissioning of an evaluation. This externally mandated project evaluation could focus on one SDC country or region, bringing together criteria from CRPD Article 3 (General Principles), as well as key requirements such as those set out in Articles 11 and 32 of the Convention. The evaluation would assess to what extent the selected projects comply with these elements.

The evaluation could focus on one specific area (for example, all gender projects), or be broader in scope. Ideally, the country or region chosen would also allow for analysis of the humanitarian component, and specifically the application of the IASC Guidelines on the Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities in Humanitarian Action⁴. See Annex 1 for some suggested questions for the evaluation.

The results of the evaluation should not only inform SDC programming, but also the DID guidelines (see point 7).



7. DID Guidelines

→ Develop guidelines on DID in Swiss international cooperation

A set of publicly available guidelines to inform SDC's work on the inclusion of persons with disabilities in international cooperation would provide a vision and strategic direction for SDC around disability inclusion. The guidelines would also help establish accountability and buy-in from the organization and staff. At a

³ As stipulated in the Federal Act on the Elimination of Discrimination against People with Disabilities. See https://www.fedlex.admin.ch/eli/cc/2003/667/en#art_13

⁴ Please consult the IASC Guidelines, specifically Chapter 9 Stakeholder Roles and Responsibilities – Donors, pages 63-64. <https://interagencystandingcommittee.org/iasc-task-team-inclusion-persons-disabilities-humanitarian-action/documents/iasc-guidelines>

broader level, it ensures a holistic approach to disability inclusion at both institutional and field level.

The guidelines should promote a twin-track approach to ensure that Switzerland's international cooperation efforts reach persons with disabilities by mainstreaming their concerns across all SDC activities as well as by targeting them specifically. Persons with disabilities and their organizations must actively participate in the development of such guidelines.

For examples from other development agencies, please see the strategies developed by Australia⁵ and the United Kingdom⁶.



8. Partnership and collaboration with OPDs

→ 8.1 Set up participation forums for persons with disabilities at both headquarter and country level

To facilitate organizations of persons with disabilities (OPDs) to actively take part in project design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation as well as in the development of strategic plans, the SDDC recommends for participation forums to be set up both at headquarter and country level. Accessibility and reasonable accommodation need to be ensured for all consultations, including public consultations. The forums would allow for the participation of a wide range of representative organizations of persons with disabilities (national, regional and global) especially those that are most marginalized, including but not limited to women and girls with disabilities, indigenous persons with disabilities, as well as different types of impairments (ex. intellectual, visual, hearing, physical, psychosocial).

→ 8.2 Strengthen Swiss OPD's capacity

It is crucial that SDC continues the mandate to strengthen the capacities of Swiss OPDs. The mandate aims to improve the knowledge and confidence of Swiss OPDs to effectively engage in the monitoring of the implementation of the CRPD as a cross disability initiative and across all articles of the CRPD. It also supports stronger cooperation and solidarity between Swiss OPDs and OPDs in the Global South and Europe for mutual learning and exchange, through networking activities led by the disability movement.

As an example, Denmark, Finland, Norway and Sweden partly channel their funding for disability-related international cooperation through national OPDs, who then sub-grant to OPDs in the Global South. With the continuation of the capacity

⁵ See <https://www.dfat.gov.au/about-us/publications/development-for-all-2015-2020>

⁶ See <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/dfids-disability-inclusion-strategy-2018-to-2023>

strengthening mandate, it might eventually be possible for Switzerland to channel development funds directly through Swiss OPDs.



9. Institutional partnership criteria

→ Adapt criteria for partnership to ensure disability inclusion

In selecting institutional partners, it is important that SDC adapts the current partnership guidance and criteria to include persons with disabilities, including by partnering with organizations of persons with disabilities at national, regional, and global level. All partners should be committed to a rights-based approach that seeks to work alongside persons with disabilities and in line with the CRPD. Partners should be screened and report on how they ensure the adherence to the general principles of the CRPD (Article 3) including but not limited to non-discrimination, participation and inclusion, equality of opportunity and accessibility for all.



10. External collaboration and sharing of experiences

→ Actively engage in global networks related to disability inclusive development

SDC is encouraged to share and exchange experiences and best practices with other development agencies and partners. Importantly, this should include:

1. A more active role by Switzerland in the Global Action on Disability (GLAD) network, thereby also demonstrating political leadership in this area.
2. Active participation at the annual Conference of States Parties to the CRPD (COSP), e.g. by organizing side events and exchanges.
3. Active engagement in, making commitments and potentially hosting the next Global Disability Summit (following Norway who will host in 2022), to demonstrate Switzerland's commitment to the issue.

Annex 1

Some considerations for the externally mandated evaluation (see point 6) could include⁷:

- Are all programmes compliant with CRPD principles and standards?
- Have positive programme outcomes on the inclusion of persons with disabilities been achieved through the current approach? What are some best practices?
- Do the selection criteria for SDC implementing partners stipulate the inclusion of persons with disabilities?
- Does every programme budget reserve at least 2% for reasonable accommodation and accessibility?
- Is project data being disaggregated by sex, age and disability?
- Have OPDs been actively consulted and involved in the project design and are the implementation, monitoring and evaluation in line with General Comment Number 7 of the CRPD?
- Have disability-targeted funds been channeled directly to OPDs in the Global South?
- Are controls in place to mitigate the risk of Switzerland funding projects contravening the CRPD?
- Are safeguarding policies in place to prevent and mitigate adverse impacts of activities on persons with disabilities, especially underrepresented groups (e.g. women and girls with disabilities)?
- Are complaint mechanisms accessible for persons with disabilities?
- In the case of humanitarian projects, have persons with disabilities been included and have they participated in humanitarian needs assessments, implementation and monitoring of programmes?

⁷ Please consult the OHCHR Human Rights Indicators on the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, 2020, particularly the illustrative indicators on Articles 11 and 32. See <https://www.ohchr.org/EN/Issues/Disability/Pages/SDG-CRPD-Resource.aspx>