



FACTSHEET: OECD DAC Disability Policy Marker and its application in Switzerland's ODA reporting

UPDATED February 2025

Summary

Switzerland started applying the policy marker on inclusion and empowerment of persons with disabilities (hereafter 'disability marker') for data in 2018 and has since also marked data every year, with the newest data available for 2023. The data shows whether and to what extent Switzerland's development projects and programmes aim to be disability inclusive.

Data from 2019, 2020, 2021, 2022 and 2023 suggest that **the percentage of all Swiss development projects aiming to be disability inclusive has slightly risen from 3.1% (2019 to 2021) to 4.3% in 2023. At the same time, in 2023, the total amount of allocable ODA has decreased to 2.5 billion US dollars**, down from 2.6 (2021) and 2.9 billion (2022), respectively. Notably, **Switzerland has screened all projects (100%) against the disability marker since 2021**, up from only 57% in 2020. More needs to be done, however, to ensure quality marking of projects.

In March 2022, the Committee on the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities issued a recommendation in its Concluding Observations to the Government Switzerland, to

"Consistently apply the OECD DAC disability marker in all humanitarian and development projects and ensure training in its application."

CRPD Committee, March 2022

Background

The disability marker is a statistical tool of the OECD Creditor Reporting System (CRS), approved in 2018. OECD countries can assess disability inclusion of their projects and programmes. The tool also allows for more transparency on how

much funding is dedicated to disability inclusion. Importantly, it provides an additional tool and incentive for countries to ensure that all projects are looked at through a disability lens.

In December 2020, the OECD released an official Handbook for data reporters and users of the disability marker. The Handbook outlines the following criteria for the marking of projects:

- **2:** disability inclusion is the principal objective, meaning the project would not have been undertaken at all without the disability objective
- **1:** disability inclusion is a significant objective, meaning the project would not have been undertaken in that way without the disability objective
- **0:** the project has been screened for disability inclusion, but does not target disability inclusion in any significant way
- **“blanks”:** the development partner did not assess this spending for disability inclusion

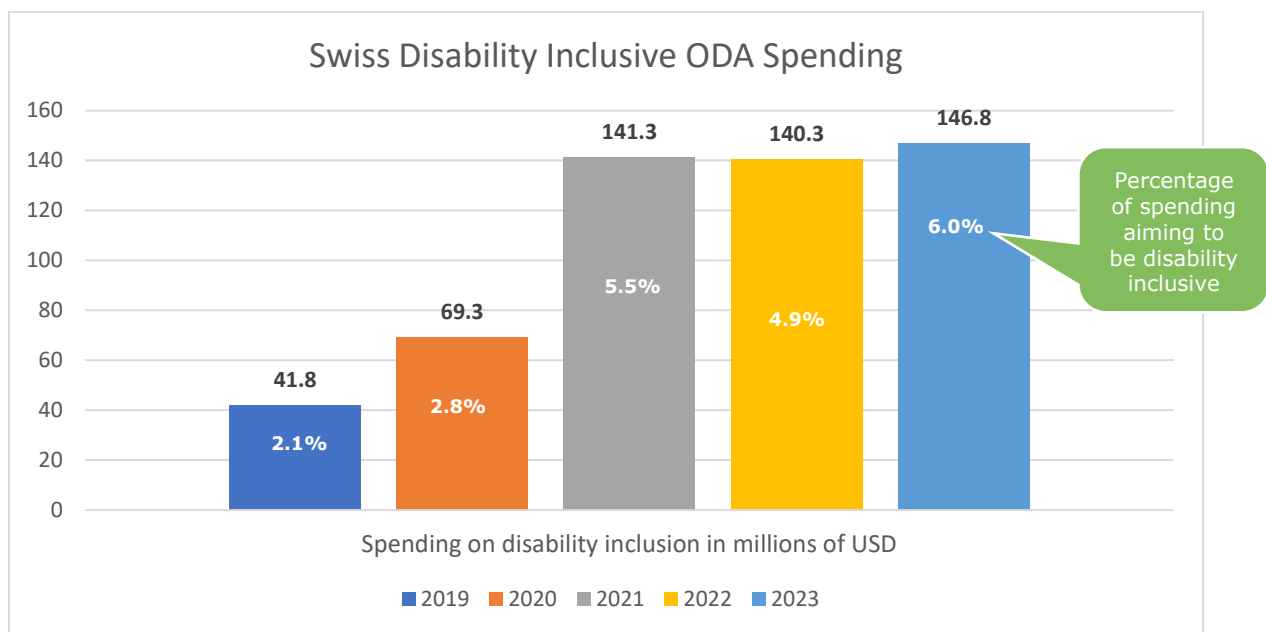
It must be noted that the disability marker does not measure the impact or outcome of a project. Data is collected on the “inputs” of development cooperation activities, based on project descriptions. It is not linked to results frameworks, impact indicators or evaluations. However, projects marked as targeting disability should also include indicators to track the outcomes and impact of disability inclusion (see recommendations). This is also recommended, for example, as a minimum criterion for the gender equality policy marker¹.

Furthermore, the marking of a project does not represent an exact quantification of the financing to disability inclusion. Rather, the financing can be interpreted as a ‘range’ of volume from lower bound (total sum of all projects marked as 2) to upper bound (total sum of all projects marked 1 and 2). In other words, the total sum of all projects that aim to be disability inclusive, does not represent the total funding going toward disability inclusion.

¹ OECD DAC Network on Gender Equality (GENDERNET) 2016. [Definition and minimum recommended criteria for the DAC gender equality policy marker.](#)

Analysis of OECD Data Switzerland, Disability Inclusion

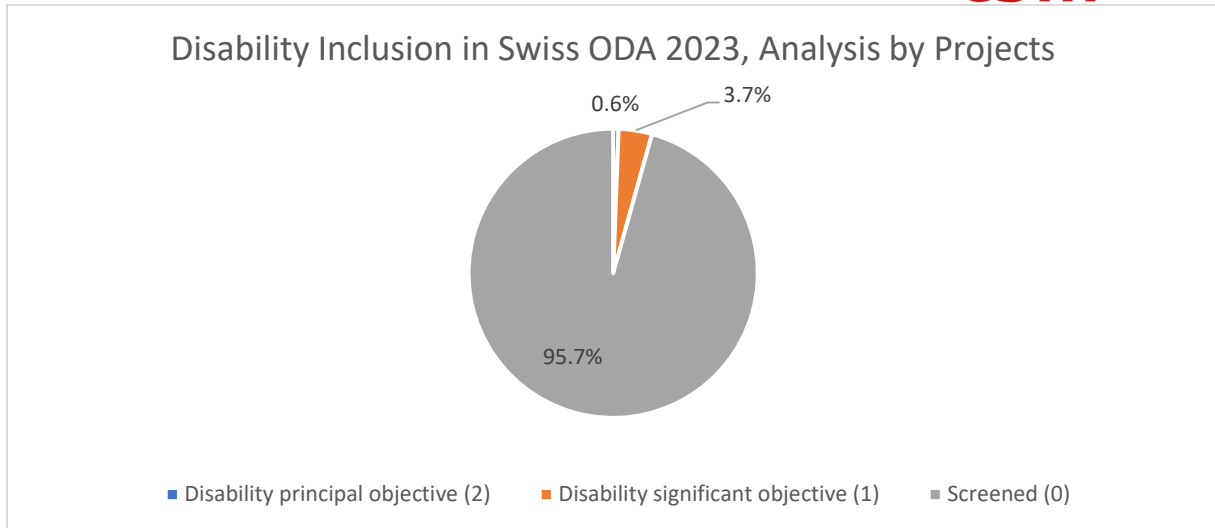
The 2023 data shows that 146.8 million dollars out of around 2.45 billion dollars total allocable ODA spending, or **6.0% of Switzerland’s allocable² ODA financial spending aims to be disability inclusive³**. This is an increase from 2.1% (41.8 million) in 2019, 2.8% (69.3 million) in 2020, 5.5% (141.3) in 2021 and 4.9% (140.3) in 2022. The data gives an upper estimate of how much spending is disability inclusive and does not represent the total funding going toward disability inclusion.



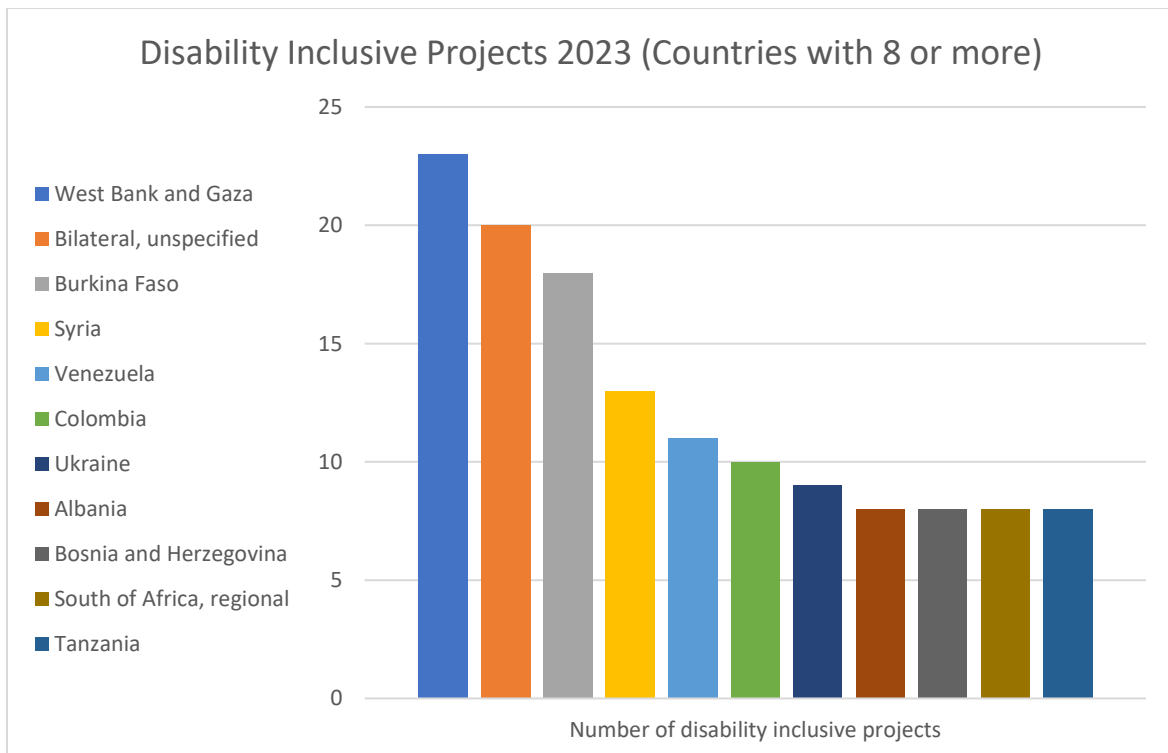
In 2023, out of a total number of 6’338 projects, only 275 aimed to be disability inclusive (marked as 1 or 2), while in 2022 it was 398 out of a total of 8’865 projects. This corresponds to 4.3 and 4.5 per cent of all projects, respectively, which indicates a slight rise compared to the years before (3.1% on average). However, a very limited number of projects had disability inclusion as a main objective: in 2023, 38 projects – a very slight increase compared to 2021 (34).

² Communication by the OECD on policy markers generally only takes into consideration allocable funds. Allocable aid excludes any activities for which the final allocation of funds cannot be determined. In the CRS system, allocable aid can be filtered through the data field ‘modality’. For the specifics on which data is filtered, see the OECD Handbook.

³ We analysed the OECD Creditor Reporting System database. We used the data from 2019 to 2023, on a commitments basis, in current prices. We excluded negative commitments and non-allocable spending. Where development partners classified spending as ‘2’ or ‘1’ using the disability marker, we treated that spending as aiming to be disability inclusive.

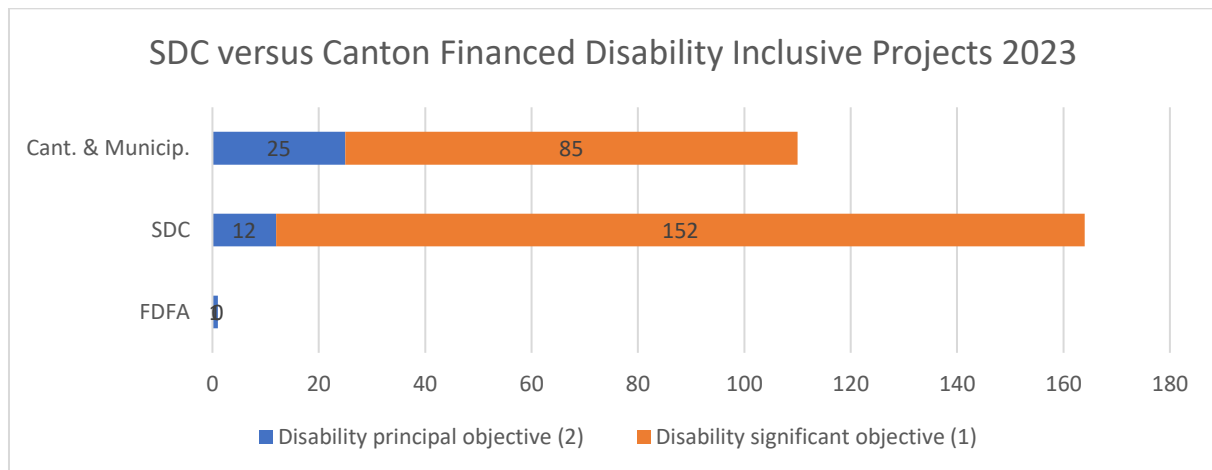


In terms of the countries in which most disability inclusive projects aimed to be implemented, it can be noted that in 2023 West Bank/Gaza and Burkina Faso became the main focus - a shift from 2021, when Syria and Somalia accounted for most disability inclusive projects. A large share of disability inclusive projects was also implemented via bilateral/global contributions, not specific to a country (ex. global campaigns).



There was also a notable difference in the number of projects that were marked for SDC funded projects versus projects funded by Swiss cantons and

municipalities. The SDC had more disability inclusive projects overall, but comparably, the cantons and municipalities marked more projects as '2', with disability inclusion being a principal objective. This was true in previous years as well. The Federal Department of Foreign Affairs (FDFA) is a newcomer in this statistic with its support for one project that has disability inclusion as a main objective.

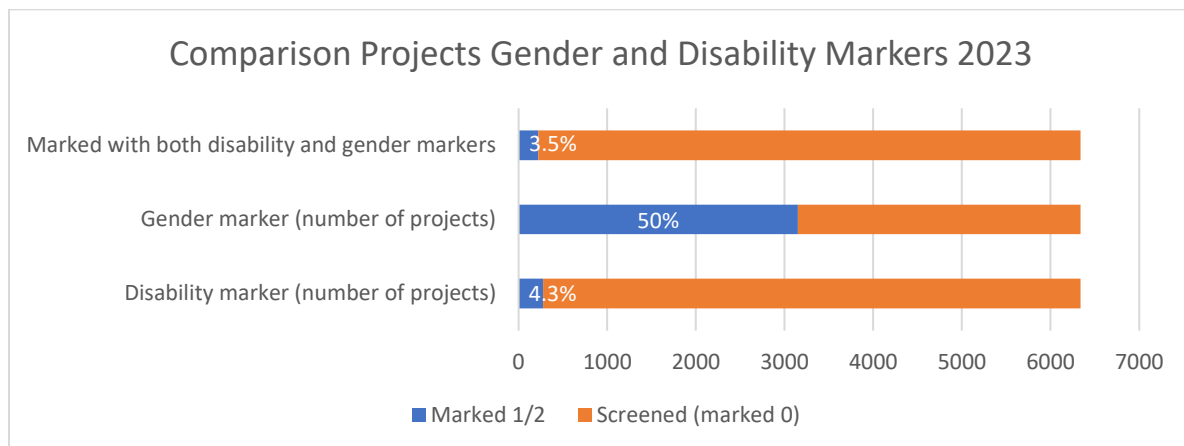


Analysis of Disability and Gender Inclusion

The disability marker can also be analysed and compared with other policy markers. For example, the gender equality marker allows OECD countries to indicate whether development activities target gender equality as a policy objective. Switzerland has consistently been marking its projects against the gender marker over recent years.

In 2023, 3'151 projects aimed to be gender inclusive, amounting to 50% of all projects. In terms of spending, this corresponds to 1.6 billion US dollars, or 64% of all of Switzerland's allocable ODA financial spending in support of gender equality and women's rights. However, only 222 projects, the equivalent of 3.5% of all projects, were marked with both the gender and disability markers, meaning they aimed both to be gender and disability inclusive.

Of the 3'151 projects aiming to be gender inclusive, 222 are also marked as disability inclusive (7.1%). Focusing on spending, this amounts to 140 million out of 1.6 billion US dollars (9.0%) that aim to be both disability and gender inclusive.



Conclusion and Recommendations

In the last four years, Switzerland has continually marked 100% of all projects using the disability marker, which is a very welcome development since 2020. However, since 2021, the percentage of projects that are disability inclusive has only slightly risen from 3.3% to 4.3%. Spending for disability inclusion has increased since 2021 from 5.5 % to 6.0% in 2023, while dipping to 4.9% in 2022. This percentage is still significantly below other transversal topics such as gender equality, with 64% of spending marked with a gender equality objective in 2023.

Persons with disabilities represent 16% of the world population, or 1.3 billion people, as confirmed by the most recent data from the World Health Organization⁴. There is a cycle of disability and poverty, with people with a disability being among the poorest and people in poverty being at greatest risk of acquiring a disability. **Given that one of the aims of Swiss international cooperation is poverty reduction, the proportion of funding and number of projects for disability inclusion must go beyond current levels.**

Moving forward, the focus needs to remain on the quality of the marking of these projects. While the 100% marking of all projects by Switzerland is a positive development, it is important that a '0' marking should indeed mean that the projects, its aims and objectives have been screened for disability inclusion. **A '0' marking should not be a default marking.**

⁴ World Health Organization (2022) [Global report on health equity for persons with disabilities](#).

In fact, proper screening is essential to ensure that at minimum projects that are screened (marked as 0) do not perpetuate or exacerbate the discrimination and exclusion of persons with disabilities. Switzerland should use the marker as an opportunity to screen out any activities that do harm, discriminate or further segregate persons with disabilities.

Applying the marker should serve as a quality control for Switzerland's development and humanitarian projects, to ensure that no project contravenes the basic principles of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, especially Article 3, as outlined here:

A '0' marking should ensure:

- (a) Respect for inherent dignity, individual autonomy including the freedom to make one's own choices, and independence of persons;
- (b) Non-discrimination;
- (c) Full and effective participation and inclusion in society;
- (d) Respect for difference and acceptance of persons with disabilities as part of human diversity and humanity;
- (e) Equality of opportunity;
- (f) Accessibility;
- (g) Equality between men and women;
- (h) Respect for the evolving capacities of children with disabilities and respect for the right of children with disabilities to preserve their identities.

By applying this method for quality control, Switzerland will be able to see which projects (if any) further discrimination or segregation of persons with disabilities. These projects would not be marked at all with the disability marker and changes to the projects would in turn need to be made.

There is also inconsistency in marking between the federal and the cantonal level. More projects were marked with disability as a principal objective in the cantons, **suggesting a review needs to take place on whether the criteria for project marking are interpreted equally across the SDC and cantons.**

The SDC should ensure the training of its staff responsible for the proper and quality marking of projects for disability inclusion. It should also ensure coordination with cantons and municipalities, to ensure consistency in the marking of projects across all of Switzerland’s development aid. Clear and consistent guidance should be provided on how to mark projects. Lastly, to allow for the measuring of the impact of projects marked as targeting disability (marked 1 or 2), **Switzerland should include in their project monitoring frameworks appropriate indicators to monitor the results of disability inclusion.** These indicators are essential to monitor the impact of the activities on persons with disabilities. The use of the human rights indicators of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) on the CRPD is recommended.⁵

Links and Information

OECD (2020). The OECD DAC policy marker on the inclusion and empowerment of persons with disabilities: [Handbook for data reporters and users](#)

Polly Meeks (2020). [Getting the data](#): How much does aid money support inclusion of persons with disabilities?

OECD DAC [Creditor Reporting System](#)

SDC [Project Database](#).

OHCHR (2020). [Human Rights indicators on the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities](#)

Polly Meeks (2021). [Factsheet on CRPD implementation in SWITZERLAND, with a focus on disability inclusiveness of development and humanitarian aid](#)

World Health Organization (2022) [Global report on health equity for persons with disabilities](#)

⁵ OHCHR (2020). Human Rights indicators on the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities