

SDC and the Accra Agenda for Action: implementation guidelines

Preamble

The Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC) focuses its action on three strategic priorities:

1. Reducing Poverty.
2. Promoting human security and reducing security risks.
3. Contributing to pro-development globalization.

These priorities are paramount; they dictate SDC's understanding and implementation of the Paris Declaration (PD) as well as the Accra Agenda for Action (AAA).

The Federal Council Bill expresses Switzerland's adherence to the PD and AAA as a means to pursue the stated objectives in an effective way.

For 2009, SDC has set the following objective:

“SDC implements the Paris Declaration and the Accra Agenda for Action in a way that is consistent with its values, principles and a need for visibility. SDC's contribution will be based on its experiences and core competencies.”

Basic principles

SDC's approach of the PD and the AAA is contextual, country-based and inclusive. PD and AAA are seen as a means to an end, which are poverty reduction and sustainable development.

SDC considers both the PD and the AAA as the expression of the political will of donors and partner countries rather than a set of administrative rules and regulations.

SDC acknowledges the critical role that multilateral organisations must play in fostering good governance and capacity building in partner countries.

SDC considers that the PD and the AAA can contribute to achieving aid effectiveness only if the key principles of a broad-based, inclusive and democratic ownership, mutual accountability and the measure of development results are respected.

SDC practices and promotes multistakeholder approaches in the design, the implementation and the management of development endeavours. Particular attention is given to providing marginalised stakeholders: poor citizens, women and discriminated social groups with the necessary voice, and to fostering their participation in all socially relevant decision making processes.

SDC acknowledges Civil Society as a development actor and stakeholder in its own right and strives to interact with its organisations in ways that are conducive to aid and development effectiveness. It equally recognises the specific importance of the private commercial sector, a crucial actor as regards economic development and poverty reduction.

SDC considers capacity development of all actors and stakeholders as a key component of an empowerment process that ensures entire and meaningful participation. SDC defines capacity development as one key precondition to democratic country ownership.

Implementation

The SDC Board of Directors endorses the PD and AAA principles and calls for their contextual implementation.

It reaffirms the mandate to SDC Country Directors, which is to follow the five main principles of the Paris Declaration after assessing implied political risks and after validating the relevance and implementability of the principles in each specific context. SDC Country directors will in particular take into account the actual capacity and accountability of stakeholders and administrative systems.

Should SDC consider that the context does not allow following the PD and AAA principles, in particular in the presence of an illegitimate or dysfunctional State, it will openly communicate the reasons of its decision.

SDC will periodically assess ("SWOT") – preferably together with like minded agencies – trends as regards harmonisation and alignment.

SDC stands ready to assume coordination responsibilities in harmonised contexts, as well as to join initiatives led by other donors wherever deemed appropriate.

SDC shall consistently integrate aid effectiveness in the design of its strategies and the programmes it supports. It will integrate the PD and AAA commitments into its planning, monitoring & evaluation processes and cycles. It will seek in each priority country to establish an appropriate and contextually adapted balance of programmatic instruments and approaches (from specific field-based endeavours to financial aid and sector wide approaches).

SDC will ensure that experiences and learning from the field and the countries are fed into the Working Party on Aid Effectiveness in particular, into the global process towards enhanced aid and development effectiveness in general, and vice-versa.

SDC will actively pursue its dialogue with Swiss Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) on matters related to aid effectiveness and the PD-AAA principles, including CSOs' own effectiveness. Where promising avenues for collaboration have been jointly identified, SDC will enter pilot joint ventures together with Swiss CSOs (e.g. with a view to promote democratic ownership and mutual accountability).

Organisational mode

SDC will make sure that personal and organisational learning regarding the aid effectiveness agenda are optimised and capitalised, through iterative processes involving Cooperation Offices and Head Office.

Under the supervision of the Head, regional cooperation and with the guidance and support of the SDC Board of Directors, the SDC Focal Point, Aid Effectiveness (PD-AAA) – together with a core group representative of all SDC Departments – has the mandate to promote, accompany and monitor implementation.

Normative and decisional powers lie with the SDC Board of Directors and the management in SDC Departments and Divisions.