



**Solution-oriented
Research for Development
Programme**

Solution-oriented research for development (SOR4D) programme

Call Document

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Schweizerische Eidgenossenschaft
Confédération suisse
Confederazione Svizzera
Confederaziun svizra

**Swiss Agency for Development
and Cooperation SDC**



**Swiss National
Science Foundation**

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Summary

The Solution-oriented Research for Development (SOR4D) programme is a joint funding instrument between the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC) and the Swiss National Science Foundation (SNSF) that builds on experiences and lessons learnt in previous joint programmes. The SOR4D programme is being implemented in the “Decade of Action” that is accelerating efforts towards achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (2030 Agenda). Transformations are urgent, new ways of thinking and innovative forms of social practice are necessary. While the rethinking of the role of science, finance and policy alike are fundamental to these efforts, the interaction between science and research, practice and policy is of particular importance.

The overarching goal of the SOR4D programme is to produce better knowledge, solutions and innovation by needs-driven, transdisciplinary research that opens up new ways for advancing sustainable development and reducing poverty in the least developed, low and lower middle-income countries. It will contribute to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda by fostering partnerships, co-creation of knowledge and innovation.

The SOR4D programme has three objectives:

- Researchers and development actors¹ will jointly generate in their respective geographical contexts needs-based, solution-oriented knowledge that contributes to sustainable development and poverty reduction in the Global South and East. This includes validation in those contexts.
- Project partnerships and networks will test and disseminate research results with potential for innovation (pilot testing, valorisation). This will include different forms of upscaling.
- Researchers and development actors will enhance their competences (skills and know-how) in conducting solution-oriented transdisciplinary research in partnership for addressing systemic and complex development challenges. This includes sharing their findings with other academics and practitioners.

The SOR4D programme will operate from 2022 to 2026 with an overall budget of 19.3 million Swiss Francs. It will fund transdisciplinary research work (3 years in duration) and application, dissemination and multiplication (1 year) for a period of four years in total. The transdisciplinary projects will be carried out in mixed consortia and with a strong focus on solutions, pilot testing and scaling up of what works for sustainable development at local, regional and global scales.

¹ Cf. Glossary in Section 8: Development actors are non-academic actors from policy and practice, interested and involved in societal, environmental and economic development of the countries in the Global South/East, being part of the public or private sector.

1 Introduction

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (2030 Agenda) with its 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) proposes a broad and ambitious plan for global action on sustainable development to address the threats resulting from adverse social, economic and environmental conditions.² In order to succeed in the transformation, the achievement of the SDGs asks for new ways of thinking and innovative forms of social practice. Innovations and new or improved technologies are needed. With less than 10 years to go until 2030, the UN system has declared a “Decade of Action”, with an urgent call for accelerating efforts towards achieving the SDGs. While the rethinking of the role of science, finance and policy alike are fundamental to these efforts, the interaction between science and research, practice and policy is of particular importance.

To participate in addressing this challenge, the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC) and the Swiss National Science Foundation (SNSF) are launching the new Solution-oriented Research for Development (SOR4D) programme. New insights and innovative approaches are needed to reduce poverty and to implement the 2030 Agenda in developing countries. Joint efforts by international transdisciplinary research partnerships can make a difference.

The SOR4D programme adheres to the Swiss International Cooperation Strategy 2021-24 (IC Strategy 2021-24)³ as well as to the Dispatch on the Promotion of Education, Research and Innovation 2021-24 (ERI Dispatch 2021-2024)⁴. The IC Strategy 2021-24 emphasises that scientific research on the impact of international cooperation should be strengthened and that findings based on scientific evidence should improve the steering of international cooperation. The strategy further notes that higher education institutions can play a key role in the development of technological, societal and political solutions. The ERI Dispatch 2021-2024 highlights a set of transversal themes, including equal opportunities, digitalisation and sustainable development.⁵ With its focus on generating solution-oriented knowledge in international, transdisciplinary research partnerships and fostering the application of science-based innovation, the SOR4D programme furthermore contributes to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and the Federal Council's Sustainable Development Strategy 2030. Along with other national and international initiatives, the SOR4D programme shares the aim to accelerate the science impact for the 2030 Agenda.⁶

² Cf. Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, <https://sdgs.un.org/2030agenda>.

³ Cf. Switzerland's International Cooperation Strategy 2021-24, <https://www.eda.admin.ch/eda/en/dfa/dfa/publikationen.html/content/publikationen/en/deza/diverse-publikationen/broschuere-iza-2021-24>.

⁴ Cf. 2021-2024 ERI Dispatch, <https://www.sbf.admin.ch/sbf/en/home/services/publications/data-base-publications/s-n-2020-2/s-n-2020-2b.html>; <https://www.fedlex.admin.ch/eli/fqa/2020/866/de>.

⁵ Cf. Cross-cutting themes relating to education, research and innovation <https://www.sbf.admin.ch/sbf/en/home/eri-policy/eri-21-24/cross-cutting-themes.html>.

⁶ Cf. Independent Group of Scientists appointed by the Secretary-General, Global Sustainable Development Report 2019: The Future is Now – Science for Achieving Sustainable Development; http://pure.iiasa.ac.at/id/eprint/16067/1/24797GSDR_report_2019.pdf; Funding Science for Global Sustainability <https://council.science/science-funding/>.

2 Objectives of the Solution-oriented Research for Development programme

The overarching goal of the SOR4D programme is to produce better knowledge, solutions and innovation through needs-driven, transdisciplinary research that opens up new ways to advance sustainable development and reduce poverty in the least developed, low and lower middle-income countries.⁷

The SOR4D programme has three objectives:

1. Researchers and development actors⁸ will jointly generate in their respective geographical contexts needs-based, solution-oriented knowledge that contributes to sustainable development and poverty reduction in the Global South and East. This includes validation in those contexts.
2. Project partnerships and networks will test and disseminate research results with potential for innovation (pilot testing, valorisation). This will include diverse forms of upscaling.
3. Researchers and development actors will enhance their competences (skills and know-how) in conducting solution-oriented transdisciplinary research in partnership for addressing systemic and complex development challenges. This includes sharing their findings with other academics and practitioners.

Its rationale is based on the impact hypothesis that evidence-based and solution-oriented knowledge, developed in partnerships between Swiss researchers and researchers from least developed, low and lower middle-income countries as well as development actors, can advance sustainable development and poverty reduction and support the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. Better knowledge, solutions and approaches for development cooperation and transformative action will be available for actors in international development, business and society.

Scientific quality and relevance for development are thus of equal importance for projects funded in the SOR4D programme.

3 Characteristics of the SOR4D programme

3.1 Solution-orientation and knowledge utilisation

The SOR4D programme will foster international collaborations between researchers and development actors from the least developed, low and lower middle-income countries in the Global South and East, and from Switzerland. Research projects will address questions rooted in local and regional development contexts while being relevant to several least developed, low and lower middle-income countries and thus have a high potential for scaling up.

Collaboration and cooperation with both research and development actors, including end-users, are expected to shape the research projects from the onset. A transdisciplinary set-up is thus a precondition, fostering co-design, co-creation, co-delivering and co-implementation. Interactions

⁷ Cf. OECD Development Assistance Committee (DAC) List of Official Development Assistance (ODA) Recipients countries, <https://www.oecd.org/dac/financing-sustainable-development/development-finance-standards/daclist.htm>.

⁸ Cf. Glossary in Section 8.

between researchers and potential knowledge users – from the start of the problem formulation and during the research phase – will enable co-production and knowledge utilisation.⁹

3.2 International transdisciplinary research partnerships

Only international research partnerships will be eligible to apply. A consortium must be composed of researchers and development actors from least developed, low and lower middle-income countries and from Switzerland. The research partners must demonstrate significant expertise and interest in use-inspired research as well as readiness to put research into the service of practice. The development actors are non-academic partners from practitioner organisations who are interested and involved in the societal, environmental and economic development of the ODA recipient countries. They play a role in the public (government or civil society) and/or private sector.¹⁰ They contribute strongly to defining the research needs/questions, to research activities and to the dissemination and application of the research results. They must be well-connected and experienced with local, national and/or regional governmental, political, civil society or business contexts in order to ensure that the solution-oriented research addresses on-site needs and sensibilities. A project shall not directly serve private commercial interests during the first three years. Private sector engagement (PSE) and partnerships are possible, especially for follow-up interventions/activities (i.e. SOR4D Transformation Accelerating Grants). Such engagements and partnerships should follow PSE principles such as being based on well-established private sector actors that share their commitments to sustainable development, ensuring co-ownership and co-funding, developing new approaches and instruments, suitable for difficult contexts or engaging with local private sector and organisations.¹¹

The 11 Principles for Transboundary Research Partnerships¹² of the Swiss Commission for Research Partnerships with Developing Countries (KFPE) as well as the Code of Conduct for Scientific Integrity¹³ of the Swiss Academies of Arts and Sciences must be respected throughout the projects. Conflict sensitivity and approaches for conflict sensitive research are required at all times.¹⁴

3.3 Topical focus

The SOR4D programme is open to all disciplines from the humanities, social sciences, natural sciences, engineering, health and life sciences. It particularly encourages interdisciplinary collaboration between research domains where such collaboration is appropriate.

Proposals must explicitly aim for systemic and transformative solutions that simultaneously address several of the 17 SDGs. The SOR4D programme seeks proposals in all thematic fields of the 2030 Agenda on Sustainable Development, particularly where they relate to the four objectives of Switzerland's International Cooperation Strategy¹⁵:

- A. Contributing to sustainable economic growth, market development and the creation of decent jobs (economic development).

⁹ Cf. r4d Infographic Use of research knowledge by society, 2021, <https://www.k4d.ch/infographic-use-of-research-knowledge-by-society/>; r4d Policy Brief 2/2021, Utilization of research knowledge in transformation pathways towards sustainability, <https://www.k4d.ch/utilization-of-research-knowledge-in-transformation-pathways-towards-sustainability/>.

¹⁰ Cf. Transdisciplinary research partnerships with business and civil society in the North-South context, 2021, <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.5761532>.

¹¹ Cf. SDC Handbook on Public Sector Engagement, 2021, https://www.eda.admin.ch/dam/deza/en/documents/die-deza/strategie/Handbook_PSE_EN.pdf.

¹² Cf. https://kfpe.scnat.ch/en/11_principles_7_questions/uuid/i/13beb0f7-4780-5967-a257-bd6cc3d5e424-A_Guide_for_Transboundary_Research_Partnerships_%283rd_edition_-_2018%29

¹³ Cf. <https://akademien-schweiz.ch/en/themen/wissenschaftskultur/wissenschaftliche-integritat-1/>

¹⁴ Cf. Guidelines to Conflict Sensitive Research, 2020, <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.3601000>.

¹⁵ Cf. pp.17, 42-43 of Switzerland's International Cooperation Strategy 2021-24, <https://www.eda.admin.ch/eda/en/dfa/dfa/publikationen.html/content/publikationen/en/deza/diverse-publikationen/broschuere-iza-2021-24>.

- B. Addressing climate change and its effects and managing natural resources sustainably (environment).
- C. Saving lives, ensuring quality basic services, especially in relation to education and healthcare, and reducing the causes of forced displacement and irregular migration (human development).
- D. Promoting peace, the rule of law and gender equality (peacebuilding and governance).

3.4 SOR4D programme budget and timeline

The SOR4D programme has a duration of five years (2022-2026) and a total budget of 19.3 million Swiss Francs.

Selected research projects will be funded for a period of three years. Projects with high potential for scaling-up, application and transformation can be funded for additional 12 months with Transformation Accelerating Grants (TAG): in 2024 and in 2025 two TAG calls will be exclusively open for funded SOR4D projects.

The programme timeline is as follows:

Call 2023

Launch of SOR4D programme call 2023	2 November 2022
Online information events	November/Dec 2022
Submission of pre-proposals	13 February 2023, 17.00 CET
Evaluation of pre-proposals	March/April 2023
Invitation for full proposals	May 2023
Preparatory grants	May-July 2023
Submission of full proposals	28 August 2023, 17.00 CET
Evaluation of full proposals and recommendation for funding	October/November 2023
Funding decisions by National Research Council	December 2023
Start of projects	March-May 2024

3.5 A partnered research programme by SDC and SNSF

The Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC) and the Swiss National Science Foundation (SNSF) have been partners in funding international research collaborations for more than thirty years. They contribute complementary and synergistic competences and mobilise their networks to support the research.

Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC)

The SDC is the agency for international cooperation of the Federal Department of Foreign Affairs (FDFA). Switzerland's international cooperation strategy for the 2021–24 period has four strategic goals that address development challenges and build on Switzerland's unique expertise: 1) creating decent local jobs; 2) addressing climate change; 3) reducing the causes of forced and irregular migration; and 4) promoting the rule of law. The funds that the SDC invests in scientific research count towards official development aid.

For the SDC, research and innovation are not ends in themselves but rather the means to support global sustainable development without poverty and to assist low- and lower middle-income countries with implementing the 2030 Agenda. The SDC's ODA-funded research generates new findings and innovative solutions and helps to put them into practice. The SDC supports research programmes and international research networks with a partnership-based approach, and promotes

the production, dissemination and implementation of knowledge and innovation in fields with relevance for development. The SDC has a particular interest in supporting new types of partnership-based research models in which scientists, policymakers and non-academic stakeholders work together to develop joint solutions.

The SDC's centralised research portfolio, managed by the Analysis and Policy Division of SDC's Global Cooperation Department, focuses on research involving Swiss actors and partners in the Global South/East. It aims to increase Swiss researchers' interest and competence in development issues, to stimulate innovation, knowledge and new approaches that bring forth scalable and replicable solutions for systemic and lasting change. A direct link with SDC programmes or priority countries is thus not a precondition for the projects proposed and funded in the SOR4D programme. The SDC supports the SOR4D programme with a contribution of 18.8 million Swiss Francs.

Swiss National Science Foundation (SNSF)

The Swiss National Science Foundation (SNSF) is the leading Swiss institution for the promotion of scientific research with an annual budget of approximately 1 billion Swiss Francs. On behalf of the federal government, it promotes basic research in all scientific disciplines. Every year it supports around 3300 projects. It offers a range of research funding schemes and has policies in place to adhere to the basic principles and missions as stated in the Federal Act on the Promotion of Research and Innovation.¹⁶ Each funding scheme has its own budget. In so doing, the SNSF seeks to implement the principle of fair competition: applications must always be evaluated in a competitive procedure through comparisons with similar applications.

The National Research Council of the SNSF develops and implements its research funding policies, evaluates research projects and decides on the awarding of grants. The Administrative Office, based in Bern, supports the tasks of the Foundation Council and the Research Council and is responsible for administrative and financial matters. The SNSF Programmes Division and its Research Council members are responsible for the management and implementation of the SOR4D programme.

4 General conditions

4.1 Applicable law

Applications must be in line with the regulations outlined in this call document. In addition and if no specific provision is formulated in the present call, the regulations of the SNSF apply, in particular the [SNSF Funding Regulations](#) and their [General Implementation Regulations](#).

The call documents and the relevant provisions, regulations and guidelines for the submission of proposals via the mySNF online portal can be downloaded from the website of the SOR4D programme www.sor4d.ch and the SNSF www.snf.ch.

4.2 Two-stage selection procedure

Proposals are submitted and selected in a two-stage procedure: pre-proposals are submitted first, followed by an invitation to submit a full proposal if selected in the first evaluation round. Pre- and full proposals must be written in English.

¹⁶ Cf. <https://www.fedlex.admin.ch/eli/cc/2013/786/de>.

4.3 Eligibility of consortium

Pre-proposals and invited full proposals must be submitted by a consortium of researchers and development actors (see section 8 for descriptions of roles and concepts). For transdisciplinary research partnerships to be effective, they have to be inclusive and fair. All consortium members have to be actively involved in the formulation of the research questions, in the development of the pre-proposal and full proposal and in the execution of the transdisciplinary research project. The individual members within the consortia form the core of an applying consortium and will be evaluated during the selection of the research projects according to their CVs. The institutions of development actors can be included in the evaluation. The minimum requirements for an eligible consortium are:

- One responsible applicant holding a position at a Swiss higher education or research institution;
- At least one co-applicant holding a position at a higher education or research institution located in a least developed, low or lower middle income country;
- At least one co-applicant development actor of a practitioner organisation located in the country/countries where the transdisciplinary research is being conducted.

The responsible applicant is a faculty member or senior teaching and research staff employed for the entire duration of the project at a Swiss higher education or research institution, as defined in Articles 4 and 5 of the Federal Act on the Promotion of Research and Innovation (RIPA).¹⁷ Development actors and researchers based in least developed, low and lower middle income countries act as co-applicants. If well-justified, additional researchers based at a Swiss research institution can be part of the applying team as co-applicants. Development actors based in a practitioner organisations in the Global North cannot be part of the consortium but can only act as project partners.

Applicants are requested to follow the guidelines for research partnerships with developing countries, namely the 11 revised principles of the Commission for Research Partnerships with Developing Countries (KFPE), which is electronically available in various languages on the KFPE website: <http://www.kfpe.ch/11-Principles>

The collaboration in a consortium whose full proposal is selected for funding is further specified in a project agreement – signed by all members – which has to be submitted before the release of funds.

4.4 Eligible countries

Eligible countries for SOR4D research partnerships are those listed by the [Development Assistance Committee of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development \(OECD\)](#) as Official Development Assistance recipient countries. The regularly updated OECD-DAC list is the reference.¹⁸ The SOR4D programme promotes transdisciplinary research partnerships with least developed, low income and lower middle-income countries. South-South cooperation between the before mentioned country groups is explicitly encouraged. Research partnerships that include researchers or development actors based in upper middle income countries are eligible in well justified cases.

¹⁷ Swiss higher education or research institution: a Swiss university, a federal institute of technology, a university of applied sciences, a university of teacher education or any other research institution or non-commercial research centre outside the higher education sector. Cf. <https://www.fedlex.admin.ch/eli/cc/2013/786/de>.

¹⁸ OECD DAC List: <https://www.oecd.org/dac/financing-sustainable-development/development-finance-standards/DAC-List-of-ODA-Recipients-for-reporting-2022-23-flows.pdf>.

The existing Lead Agency Agreement between the SNSF, the Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft DFG and the Austrian Science Fund FWF is not applicable.

4.5 Gender awareness and equal opportunities

SOR4D projects must demonstrate gender and intersectionality awareness and contribute to equal opportunities and the principle “leave no one behind” of the 2030 Agenda.

Gender, intersectionality and equality are considered at various levels of the programme: gender balance in applying teams is taken into consideration for the selection of projects; gender and intersectionality with regard to the research subject in form of gender analysis, mainstreaming or research methods is an evaluation criterion for project selection; research projects in the field of gender equality are welcome, while not systematically preferred to other issues.

Applicants must show that they have taken all the possible and necessary steps to arrive at a gender-balanced team and to support women and gender non-binary persons in their academic work and careers. Project plans must employ gender-neutral language wherever possible. Unless the subject matter requires gender-specific text, gender-inclusive and non-discriminatory language must be the default.

4.6 Project management

The SOR4D programme is conscious of a historical North-South imbalance in research for development. It thus encourages fair shares in responsibility, careers opportunities and working conditions in consortia to act as a small contribution to redressing it.

International transdisciplinary research partnerships are usually complex and require skilful coordination. Coordination tasks of a project can be assumed by members of partner institutions or by the Swiss institution. Adequate funding for coordination has to be made available for these positions (cf. eligible personnel costs).

According to the SNSF Funding Regulations, the responsible applicant must be employed at a Swiss higher education or research institution and must be able to show that the project can be administered in service of the full consortium of co-applicants at a Swiss higher education or research institution during the entire project duration. The responsible applicant is responsible for submitting the pre-proposal and full proposal in the name of the full consortium of co-applicants.

4.7 Project length and budget frames

Transdisciplinary research projects within the framework of the SOR4D programme may not last longer than 36 months. The budget of a transdisciplinary 36-month SOR4D project must be between 500,000 and 1,000,000 Swiss Francs..

The SOR4D programme does not fund PhD students.¹⁹

In their third year, funded projects will be invited to submit proposals for Transformation Accelerating Grants (TAGs) of additional 12 months. Per project, an extra budget for TAGs of at least 100,000 Swiss Francs is earmarked. TAGs are granted on a competitive basis.

¹⁹ With its transdisciplinary approach and the project duration of three years, the SOR4D programme addresses mostly post-doc and senior researchers with a high interest in working towards practical solutions.

Unused funds of the first three years can be transferred into the TAG phase and justified with a specific budget.

4.8 Financial conditions

Three financial conditions apply for SOR4D project grants and TAGs:

1. At least 50% of the approved amount must be spent in the ODA recipient partner country/countries.
2. At least 20% of the approved amount must be allocated to development actors.
3. At least 10% of the approved amount must be spent for communication and dissemination activities to enable interaction and knowledge utilisation (i.e. website, workshops with stakeholders, production of flyers, policy briefs, training material for target groups etc.).

A project activity can fulfil more than one condition at the same time. The three financial conditions must be met. The budget template (cf. Annex D) enables an overview on the financial conditions and must be submitted in the full proposal.

Financial conditions must be carefully monitored by the team of grantees in the SNSF NIRA software on an annual basis. Applicants must budget sufficient staff resources for financial reporting and accounting at all partner institutions.

In case of deviations in the financial conditions, imbalances have to be corrected. The SNSF Administrative Office has the right to withhold financial tranches of the Swiss partner institution(s) to recuperate funds such that conditions (1) through (3) are met.

4.9 Eligible costs

The following costs are eligible in SOR4D projects:

- Personnel costs:
 - Researchers and development actors doing research in the project (employees with an academic degree from an institution of higher education or research or from a practitioner organisation)
 - Coordinators of the project or country team
 - Financial officers and accountants
 - Technicians
 - Assistants
 - MSc students (only partner countries)
- Knowledge Utilisation: Communication and dissemination activities (e.g. workshops, conferences, video, content); publication costs are covered extra (cf. section 4.11)
- Material costs: Equipment of enduring value (only partner countries), consumables, travel costs (compulsory emissions offsetting), room and board costs, field expenses
- Overhead costs for partner institutions in ODA recipient countries can be included in the project budget and must not exceed 10% of their total budget

Overhead costs for Swiss higher education or research institutions are not eligible. The salaries of Swiss applicants and Swiss co-applicants are not covered.

Salaries of staff members originating from high income countries and working for international organisations based in ODA recipient countries are not covered (e.g. expatriates, locals with international salaries).

The salaries of Swiss researchers comply with the currently valid SNSF rates. For researchers and development actors based in partner countries, the local prevailing salaries apply.

4.10 Reporting

Financial reports are due every 12 months in NIRA and in the mySNF online portal. They have to take into account the financial conditions.

Results- and solution-oriented progress reports are due twice during the three-year research project phase and a final report at the end of the project. A specific report will cover the Transformation Accelerating Grant phase, in case a TAG is granted.

The factsheet of the project is published on the projects' sites on www.sor4d.ch and factsheet updates are due at the dates of the progress reports. Output data for each project has to be updated regularly for the SNSF Data Portal (<https://data.snf.ch/grants>) and up to two years after completion of the project.

4.11 Open access principle

Research results created by a SOR4D project shall be subject to the open access principle. Hence, third parties shall have a free, immediate and absolute right to use each product insofar as they do not have any commercial interests. The SNSF offers grants to cover these costs. There is a straightforward process to apply for these grants (cf. <https://oa100.snf.ch/en/home-en/>).

The SNSF undertakes to assert the above-mentioned open access principles by means of a corresponding statement in the ruling and to ensure that third parties do not obtain any intellectual property rights.

4.12 Open data policy and intellectual property rights

A solid empirical basis is essential for the successful execution of research projects. There are already numerous valuable data sets that could be used in the context of certain research projects or other resources that are suitable to investigate transformations towards sustainable development. The applying teams are requested to clarify the data situation for the implementation of their projects in the pre-proposal and the full proposal (data availability, data quality and potential gaps in the existing data).

Research data produced by a funded SOR4D project must be made accessible in an existing (FAIR) public repository in formats that anyone can find, access and reuse without restriction (cf. http://www.snf.ch/en/theSNSF/research-policies/open_research_data/Pages/default.aspx). Every full proposal must include a data management plan (DMP) which describes how the research team intends to manage, to store and to publish their data. The DMP is a living document and can be adapted throughout the project duration. The SNSF covers extra costs of data preparation and uploading to repositories. The repository must comply with the FAIR data principles, i.e. the data needs to be findable, accessible, interoperable and reusable.

The rights to the research results gained in the course of the funded research work are owned by the grantees or their employers. Grantees are obliged to define such rights together with their employer by no later than the time the funded research work is completed. They grant the project partners and employees authorship rights and a say that is appropriate to their scientific contribution. The research results must not create any financial tangible or non-tangible benefits for commercially oriented institutions involved in the research project. Upon filing an application for intellectual

property rights to a research result (through trademark, design, patent, etc.) SDC and SNSF shall be informed.

5 Submission and selection procedure

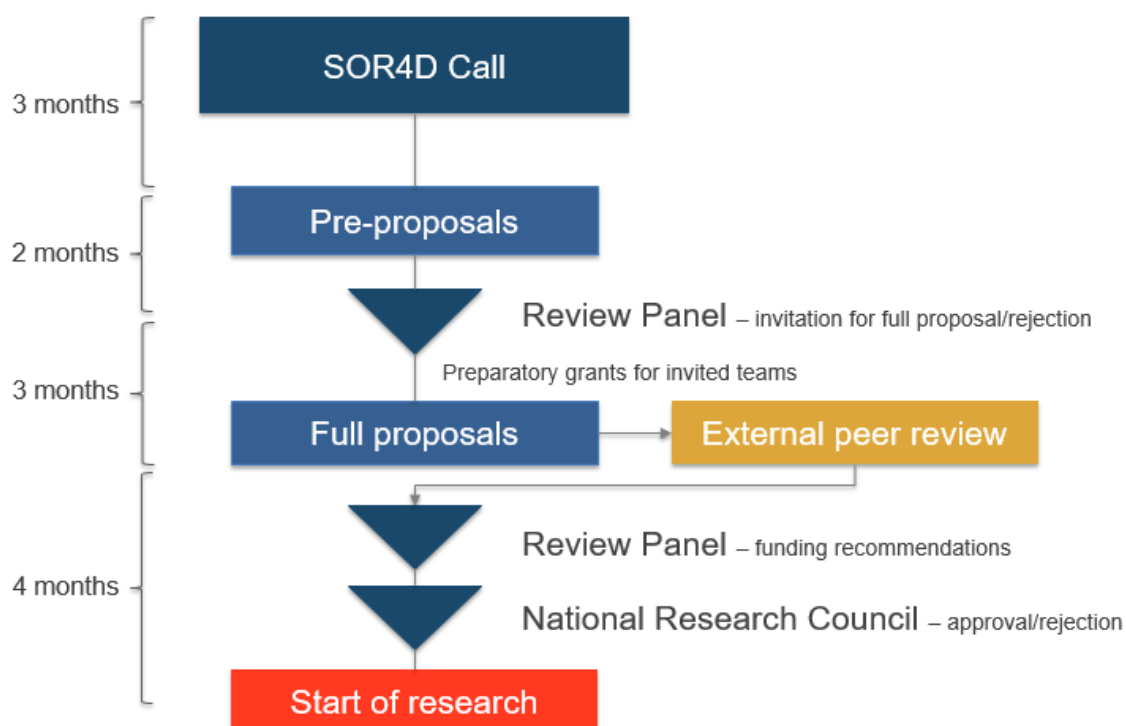
5.1 Online submission on mySNF online portal, mySNF user account

Pre-proposals and full proposals must be submitted to the SNSF electronically via the mySNF online portal (www.mysnf.ch) by the responsible applicant. Responsible applicants need to register as mySNF users before they can submit an application. Responsible applicants can provide editorial rights to work in the application on the mySNF online portal to co-applicants and collaborators. User accounts obtained in the past remain valid and provide access to all SNSF funding schemes. It is advisable to request new user accounts as early as possible via the mySNF online portal. Validating a new mySNF user account may take up to one week. For technical questions: mySNF support (German/French/English: +41 31 308 22 00; Mon - Fri, 8.30 to 11.30 / 13.30 to 16.30 Swiss time / support portal: <https://snsf-ch.atlassian.net/service desk/customer/portals>).

5.2 Selection

Both the pre-proposals and the full proposals must be submitted in English.

The selection process is structured according to the figure below. The indications of time between each step are approximates.



The Review Panel evaluates the pre-proposals based on the selection criteria outlined below (first stage). In the process, it may refer to assessments provided by national and international reviewers.

In the second stage of the submission procedure, the Review Panel will invite the authors of the selected pre-proposals to submit a full proposal. In the invitation, the Review Panel may include mandatory recommendations or set conditions for the full proposal. Authors who are not invited to submit a full proposal will be informed and their pre-proposals will be rejected accordingly by means of a ruling.

Full proposals are reviewed by international experts. In addition, the Review Panel might invite the applicants to present their project to the Review Panel at a colloquium where details of the full proposals can be discussed (applicants will be informed in the ruling if this is the case). Subsequently, the Review Panel will decide which full proposals are to be recommended to the National Research Council (Programmes Division; Presiding Board) for approval or rejection.

5.3 Submission of pre-proposals

Pre-proposals must be submitted via the mySNF online portal.

The deadline for the submission of pre-proposals is 13.02.2023, 17:00 Swiss local time.

In addition to the administrative data that needs to be entered directly in mySNF, the following documents must be uploaded in PDF format (cf. checklist in Annex A):

- **Cover letter** with a declaration of interest jointly prepared and signed by all consortia members (responsible applicant and co-applicants).
- **Research plan:** must use the template for pre-proposals provided on the mySNF online portal under "Information/documents" (cf. Annex B). The research plan includes details about the project team as well as a research plan. The research plan must not exceed 5 pages, excluding cover page and references.
- **CVs of responsible applicant and of each co-applicant and project partner.** The CV of a researcher has to include a list of the five most relevant publications in the field of the proposed research. The CV of a development actor has to include at least three references of implemented projects relevant for the proposed research activity. Each CV must not exceed 2 pages.

5.4 Submission of full proposals

Full proposals must be submitted via the mySNF online portal.

The deadline for the submission of full proposals is 28.08.2023, 17:00 Swiss local time.

In addition to the administrative data that needs to be entered directly in mySNF, the following documents must be uploaded in PDF format (cf. checklist in Annex A):

- **Research plan:** must use the template for full proposals provided on the mySNF online portal under "Information/documents" (cf. Annex C). The research plan must not exceed 20 pages, including the title page, tables, illustrations and the list of references.
- **Confirmation from each co-applicant's host institution** to support the application and its implementation.
- **Cover Letter:** describing how panel recommendations (if applicable) were addressed in the full proposal.
- **CVs of responsible applicant and of each co-applicant and project partner.** The CV of a researcher has to include a list of the five most relevant publications in the field of the proposed

research. The CV of a development actor has to include at least three references of implemented projects relevant for the proposed research activity. Each CV must not exceed 2 pages.

- **Detailed budget** reflecting the financial conditions supported by the budget template provided on the mySNF online portal under “Information/documents” (cf. Annex D). The SNSF offers additional grants to cover Open Access publications²⁰ hence OA publication costs do not feature in an SOR4D project budget. The SNSF covers extra costs for data preparation and uploading to repositories with up to a maximum of 10,000 Swiss Francs.

5.5 Evaluation criteria

The SNSF checks whether the formal requirements are met before forwarding the proposal for review and evaluation (cf. chapter 2 of the Funding Regulations of the SNSF). Pre- and full proposals that do not meet the formal requirements will not be considered.

Scientific quality and relevance for development are of equal importance for projects funded in the SOR4D programme. Pre- and full proposals will be reviewed and evaluated based on the following criteria:

- 1) Significance, originality and topicality of the project;
- 2) Adequate participation of professional practitioners and publics (including end-users) in all project stages;
- 3) Suitability and feasibility of the systemic approach and methods chosen;
- 4) Applicants’ track records in the fields of the proposed transdisciplinary research, complementary expertise and shared responsibilities within a mixed consortium;
- 5) Proposal addresses important sustainable development and poverty alleviation needs in one or several ODA recipient country/countries;
- 6) Proposal has an explicit theory of change and a clear logical framework reflecting the actual body of knowledge;
- 7) Proposal suggests adequate measures to effectively promote the use of research knowledge and potential for research finding uptake;
- 8) Proposal demonstrates awareness for gender, intersectionality and social inclusion and how it will be ensured throughout the research process.

At full proposal stage, a pathway towards a validation process of intended systemic solutions shall be described. The potential of application and how solutions could be scaled up will be evaluated only at a later stage of selected projects during the internal Calls for Transformation Accelerating Grants of the SOR4D programme.

The plausibility and structure of the budget will be checked separately.

5.6 Evaluation and selection

Pre-proposals are evaluated by the Review Panel. Full proposals are reviewed by international peer experts. Based on these reviews and their own evaluation, the Review Panel will award two marks.

The range of awardable marks according to the Unified Evaluation Procedure of the SNSF ranges from 1 (low quality) to 9 (high quality).

²⁰ See <https://oa100.snf.ch/en/funding/>.

If proposals are rated as equivalent, proposals submitted by female applicants or proposals that show a better gender balance in the applying team (responsible applicants and co-applicants) will be given priority. If proposals are still rated as equivalent, proposals with more responsibility in the ODA recipient countries will be given priority.

5.7 Support mechanisms

The SOR4D programme provides support mechanisms for applying and funded teams.

In the period between announcement of the call and submission of pre-proposals it offers online information events for interested parties. Dates are announced on <https://www.sor4d.ch>.

Interested parties from ODA recipient countries searching for Swiss counterparts may consult the Grant Search on the SNSF Data Portal <https://data.snf.ch/grants> or the list of Swiss Institutions with long experience in partnership projects on https://kfpe.scnat.ch/en/swiss_projects and https://kfpe.scnat.ch/en/about_kfpe/associated_institutions. Further search options provides Research Earth, a live e-map of Swiss research partnerships, accessible on <https://research-earth.ch/>.

For teams invited to submit full proposals the SOR4D programme provides preparatory grants prior to full proposal submission which allow transdisciplinary research partnership members to meet and to establish their collaborations.

Monitoring and scientific exchange activities will be provided for funded projects. The Review Panel reviews the progress reports and can make recommendations. It reports to the SOR4D Supervisory Body.

Public relations will be managed and supported through programme events and the SOR4D website <https://www.sor4d.ch>. Communication training and support will be provided to produce content and outputs from the SOR4D programme to feed into the Knowledge for Development platform <https://www.k4d.ch>.

6 Organisation

6.1 Review Panel

An independent Review Panel, composed of experts from science and practice, is responsible for the evaluation of the pre-proposals and full proposals. The Review Panel forwards funding recommendations to the Programmes Division of the SNSF's National Research Council. The Presiding Board of the National Research Council makes the final funding decisions.

International experts

- Prof. Dr. Valeria Esquivel, International Labour Organisation (ILO), Switzerland
- Dr. Marjolein Dieleman, Royal Tropical Institute, Amsterdam, and VU Amsterdam, Netherlands
-
- Dr. Karen Holm Olsen, Department of Technology, Management and Economics, Technical University of Denmark (DTU), UN City, Copenhagen, Denmark
- Dr. Kristina Lanz, Alliance Sud, Switzerland
- Prof. Dr. Cheikh Mbow, Future Africa, University of Pretoria, South Africa, and Michigan State University-Forestry, Lansing, USA
- Dr. Smita Premchander, Sampark, India
- Prof. Dr. Bernadette Resurrección, Queens University, Canada

- Prof. Dr. Leon Tikly, University of Bristol, Great Britain
- Prof. Dr. Dzodzi Tsikata, University of Ghana, Ghana

SDC delegate

Mirjam Macchi Howell., Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation, Switzerland

SNSF delegate and deputy, members of the National Research Council

Prof. Dr. Stuart Lane, University of Lausanne, Switzerland (Panel chair)

Prof. Dr. Martin Lengwiler, University of Basel, Switzerland (deputy)

6.2 Contact persons and technical support

For questions concerning the submission and evaluation procedure for pre-proposals and full proposals, please contact Dr. David Svarin and/or Dr. Anne Jores, sor4d@snf.ch, 031 308 2490/031 308 2311.

SOR4D programme website: <https://www.sor4d.ch>.

For questions on financial matters (salaries and eligible costs), please contact the Head of Finances Thematic Research, Roman Sollberger, roman.sollberger@snf.ch, 031 308 2105 or 031 308 22 22.

Hotline for technical help with mySNF and electronic submissions:

Tel. + 41 31 308 22 99 (Français)

Tel. + 41 31 308 22 00 (Deutsch)

Tel. + 41 31 308 22 88 (English)

E-mail: mysnf.support@snf.ch

mySNF website: www.mysnf.ch

SNSF website: www.snf.ch

7 List of abbreviations

DMP	Data Management Plan
ERI	Education, Research, Innovation
FDFA	Federal Department of Foreign Affairs
KFPE	Commission for Research Partnerships with Developing Countries of the Swiss Academies of Science
NIRA	SNSF Accounting Tool for National Competence Centres of Research and International Research Partnership projects in the SNSF Programmes Division
ODA	Official Development Assistance
SDC	Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation
SNSF	Swiss National Science Foundation
SOR4D	Solution-oriented Research for Development programme
TAG	Transformation Accelerating Grant

8 Glossary of roles and concepts

Academic partner	Academic partners are working at a higher education or research institution.
Applicants	The applicants bear the main responsibility for the proposed research project.
Co-applicant	Research and development actor in ODA recipient least developed, low and lower middle income countries essential to form an eligible transdisciplinary research partnership consortium.
Co-creation ²¹	Co-creation is the process of the joint production of knowledge by researchers and other stakeholders. Co-creation is essential where collaboration between multiple stakeholders matters and can help prepare for societal transitions to more sustainable, inclusive and resilient futures.
Consortium	A consortium in the SOR4D programme is minimally made out of 1) a responsible applicant from a research institution in Switzerland, 2) a co-applicant from a research institution in a least developed, low- or lower middle income country; 3) a co-applicant development actor of a practitioner organisation located in the country/countries where transdisciplinary research is being conducted.
Development actors	Non-academic actors from policy and practice, interested and involved in societal, environmental and economic development of the countries in the Global South/East, being part of the public or private sector. The co-applicant development actor is a full member of the consortium and expected to contribute to defining the research needs/questions, to the research activities and to the dissemination and application of the research results. They must be well connected and experienced with local, national and/or regional governmental, political, civil society or business contexts in order to ensure that the solution-oriented research addresses on-site needs and sensitivities. If well justified, development actors from the Global North can be part of the applying team as project partners.
Gender and intersectionality	Awareness for gender and intersectionality in the research project organisation and process include sensitivity to additional axes of inequality that intersect with gender, such as race, class, age, ethnicity, sexuality.
Grantees	Once the proposal is selected for funding applicants are called grantees.
Practitioner organisation	Practitioner organisations include any type of organisation, other than higher education or research institutions, that represent a group of people actively engaged in policies and/or practices, including public organisations (governmental departments of line ministries, local or international governments, extension services etc.), as well as private non-profit organisations such as NGOs, cooperatives, social movements, unions and civil society organisations etc. They can operate at micro, meso and/or macro scale.
Project partners	Project partners are researchers and/or development actors who make a partial contribution to the research project without being responsible for the project. They must be designated as such in the application. They may not refer to the support received from the SNSF as a grant they have themselves acquired.
Research partnership	A transboundary partnership arrangement for collaborative and transdisciplinary research between Switzerland and ODA recipient partner countries.
Responsible applicant	Swiss applicant (academic partner only) responsible for submitting the pre-proposal and full proposal in the name of the consortium of co-applicants.
Solution-orientation	Solution-orientation means looking past current problems. Solution-orientation is an effective approach to problem solving. Solution-oriented research addresses questions like: Why is this a problem? Why should we solve this problem? Why is a solution needed, and how can we best offer it? Questions like these allow solution-oriented research consortia to see more clearly, to understand their role in the process, and to take action.
Transdisciplinary research ²²	There is a plurality of definitions of transdisciplinary research (TDR), as each is dependent on the context, field and purpose of research. (...) Generally, the process of TDR brings together

²¹ Adapted from knowledge co-creation definition as outlined in OECD Science, Technology and Industry Policy Papers, June 2021, No. 115: Knowledge co-creation in the 21st century - An international experience-based policy report. <https://www.oecd.org/innovation/knowledge-co-creation-in-the-21st-century-c067606f-en.htm>

²² Transdisciplinary research goals and principles, as defined by td-net, <https://transdisciplinarity.ch/en/transdisziplinaritat/was-ist-td/ziele-und-prinzipien/>.

	<p>scientists across disciplines and stakeholders across sectors to jointly analyse the problems, discuss desirable futures, and explore strategies and actions towards these more desirable futures. In the context of societal challenges, TDR aims at transgressing boundaries between scientific disciplines as well as between science and practice. The objective is to develop new knowledge that can help to solve, mitigate, or prevent societal challenges. This means, that not only knowledge to understand the problem is produced but the problem itself is addressed. In a nutshell, TDR links societal problem solving with scientific knowledge production in a process of co-producing knowledge.</p>
Use-inspired research	<p>Research whose impetus comes from outside science and whose aim is the direct implementation of research results in a non-scientific context.</p>

9 Annexes

Annex A: Checklist of information to be provided for complete submission of pre-proposals and full proposals

Annex B: Template pre-proposal

Annex C: Template full proposal

Annex D: Template budget reflecting financial conditions (full proposal only)

Annex E: Guidelines Theory of Change (full proposal only)

Annex F: Guidelines for Designing a Results Framework (full proposal only)

Annex A: Checklist of information to be provided for complete submission of pre-proposals and full proposals

Pre-proposal

Data to be entered directly in the mySNF online portal:

- Responsible applicant (Swiss research partner) and information on employment
- Co-applicants (research partner and development actor from OECD DAC listed countries; if well justified, additional Swiss research partner) and information on employments
- Project partner (if well justified, this can include a development actor from a practitioner organisation in Switzerland or the Global North)
- Basic data and abstract
- Requested funding for the project broken down into Swiss part(s) and Partner parts (budget)

Documents to be uploaded in PDF format on the mySNF online portal:

- Cover letter with a declaration of interest jointly prepared and signed by all applicants
- Research plan (max. 5 pages, excluding cover page and references, according to template in Annex B)
- CVs of responsible applicant and of each co-applicant and project partner (max. 2 pages each)²³

Full proposal

Data to be entered directly in the mySNF online portal:

- Responsible applicant (Swiss research partner) and information on employment
- Co-applicants (research partner and development actor from OECD DAC listed countries; if well justified, additional Swiss research partner) and information on employments
- Project partner (if well justified, this can include a development actor from a practitioner organisation in Switzerland or the Global North)
- Basic data and abstract
- Data Management Plan
- Requested funding for the project broken down into Swiss part(s) and Partner parts (budget); figures must be entered into the excel spreadsheet (Annex D) to check financial conditions

Documents to be uploaded in PDF format on the mySNF online portal:

- Research plan (max. 20 pages, including cover pages, tables, illustrations and references, according to template in Annex C)
- Confirmation from each co-applicant's host institution to support the application and its implementation
- CVs of responsible applicant and of each co-applicant and project partner (max. 2 pages each)¹
- Detailed budget reflecting the financial conditions in provided excel sheet (Annex D)
- Cover Letter, describing how panel recommendations (if applicable) were addressed in the full proposal. (if applicable)

²³ SOR4D does not use the new SNF CV format

Annex B: Template for pre-proposal research plan

SOR4D programme

The pre-proposal must fulfil the following criteria for a successful submission:

- *The research plan is to be submitted in English,*
- *The research plan must **not exceed 5 (five) pages**, including sections 1-5 (excluding cover page and bibliography),*
- *A minimum of point 10 font size and 1.5 line spacing must be used,*
- *The research plan must **not contain any annexed documents**,*
- *The research plan must be submitted using this form through mySNF until the respective deadline of the call.*



Pre-proposal: Cover page

Responsible applicant

Name, First name

Co-applicant(s)

Name, First name

Project title

Please list five research outputs from third parties (not yours) considered relevant as stepping stones for the transdisciplinary research envisaged:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

Please list the most important contributions of your team relevant for the transdisciplinary research envisaged (not more than ten):

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.
- 6.
- 7.
- 8.
- 9.
- 10.

Research plan

1. Context analysis in relation to sustainable development, state of knowledge in the field and novelty of the project

- Set out the contextual background and problem that your project will address.
- Explain the need to perform transdisciplinary research on the topic you propose, related to the current national and international development debates and policies.
- Highlight the research gap your research will bridge and the novelty of the topic, approach or method you propose.
- Make explicit to which of the 17 SDGs your project would make contributions.

2. Objectives and main research questions

- Specify the objectives that you aim to achieve during the lifetime of the project.
- Formulate the main research questions.

3. Systemic approach and methodology

- Outline the systemic approach and methods by which the research process will be structured.
- Specify the data situation (e.g. availability) / collection of data.
- Explain the rationale for the country and/or context selection.
- Sketch your approach to conflict sensitive research (cf. Guidelines to Conflict Sensitive Research).

4. Theory of change and relevance for development (cf. Annex E)

- Explain how results emerging from your project could contribute to solving problems or could provide concrete solutions in ODA recipient country contexts.
- Share your assumptions how results could be validated and valorised in policy or practice and/or upscaled to other contexts.

5. Process of setting up the project

- Describe how and when project partners and relevant practitioners and the public (including end-users) will be involved in the setting up of the project.
- Specify responsibilities within the transdisciplinary research team (cf. KFPE Guide for Transboundary Research Partnerships).

Bibliography – The references must be part of the document, but are not to be counted in the 5 page limit (cover page not counted).

Annex C: Template for full proposal research plan

SOR4D programme

The submission of full proposals is upon invitation by the Review Panel only.

The research plan must fulfil the following criteria for a successful submission:

- *The research plan is to be submitted in English,*
- *The research plan must **not exceed 20 (twenty) pages**, including bibliography,*
- *A minimum of point 10 font size and 1.5 line spacing must be used,*
- *In general, the research plan **must not contain any annexed documents**,*
- *The research plan must be submitted using this form through mySNF until the respective deadline of the call*



Research Plan: Cover page

Responsible applicant
Name, First name

...

Co-applicant(s)
Name, First name

...

Project title

...

Research plan full proposal

1. Context analysis in relation to sustainable development, state of knowledge in the field and novelty of the project

- Set out the contextual background and problem that your project will address.
- Explain the need to perform transdisciplinary research on the topic you propose, related to the current national and international development debates and policies.
- Highlight the research gap your research will bridge and the novelty of the topic, approach or method you propose.
- Make explicit to which of the 17 Sustainable Development Goals your project would make contributions.

2. Objectives and research questions

- Specify the objectives that you aim to achieve during the lifetime of the project.
- Formulate the research questions.

3. Systemic approach and methodology

- Outline the systemic approach and methods by which the research process will be structured.
- Specify the data situation (e.g. availability) / collection of data.
- Explain the rationale for the country and/or context selection.
- Sketch your approach to conflict sensitive research (cf. [Guidelines to Conflict Sensitive Research](#)).

4. Timeframe and milestones

- Indicate a schedule for the work to be carried out within the project.
- Highlight the most important milestones in the 3-year project duration.

5. Responsibilities within research partnership, gender awareness and equal opportunity strategy

- Specify responsibilities within the transdisciplinary research partnership (cf. [KFPE Guide for Transboundary Research Partnerships](#)).
- Describe the management scheme for the project and point out the collaboration between the consortium members, the research teams in the partner countries and their contribution to and function in the project. Comment on the role of the coordinator(s).
- Demonstrate the awareness for gender and diversity in the team.

6. Theory of change and relevance for development (cf. Annex E)

- Explain how results emerging from your project could contribute to solving problems or could provide concrete solutions in ODA recipient country contexts.
- Share your assumptions how results could be validated and valorised in policy or practice and/or upscaled to other contexts.

7. Results Framework (cf. Annex F)

- Provide in an overview table the results framework of your project (template below).

8. Knowledge utilisation and communication strategy

- Outline the role of communication and dissemination and the interactions with target groups in your knowledge utilisation approach.
- Specify for which activities the min. 10% of the global project budget dedicated for communication and dissemination will be used.

Bibliography

The references must be part of the document and included in the maximal length of 20 pages (cover page not counted).

Results Framework

Impact (goal)	Impact Indicators	Sources and Means of Verification	
...
...
Outcomes (Project objectives)	Outcome Indicators	Outcome Means of Verification	Outcome Assumptions & Risks
...
...
...
Outputs: project deliveries per outcome and costs	Output Indicators	Output Means of Verification	Output Assumptions & Risks
...
...
...

Annex D: Budget template reflecting three financial conditions

SOR4D proposal - Template for requested funding of 3 years, with check for three financial conditions										
1. At least 50% of the approved amount must be spent in the ODA recipient partner country/countries.										
2. At least 20% of the approved amount must be allocated to development actors, i.e. co-applicants and project partners from practitioner organisations.										
3. At least 10% of the approved amount must be spent for communication and dissemination activities to enable interaction and knowledge utilisation.										
Swiss partners & partners from high-income and upper middle-income countries										
Salaries	Occupation [%]			in CHF			Sum [CHF]			Total
	researchers	development actors	communication	year 1	year 2	year 3	researchers	development actors	communication	
Academic staff							0	0	0	0
Other staff							0	0	0	0
Social security contribution							0	0	0	0
Total [%]	0%	0%	0%							0%
Total [CHF]	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Research funds	Usage for [%]			in CHF			Total			
	researchers	communication		year 1	year 2	year 3				
Research funds							0			
Communications and development activities							0			
Total [CHF]	0	0		0	0	0	0			
Partners from ODA recipient countries (LDC, LLMIC)										
Salaries	Occupation for [%]			in CHF			Sum [in CHF]			Total
	researchers	development actors	communication	year 1	year 2	year 3	researchers	development actors	communication	
Academic staff							0	0	0	0
Other staff							0	0	0	0
Total [%]	0%	0%	0%							
Total [CHF]	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Research funds & equipment	Usage for			in CHF			Total			
	researchers	communication		year 1	year 2	year 3				
Research funds							0			
Equipment of enduring values							0			
Communications and development activities							0			
Total [CHF]	0	0		0	0	0	0			
Overview and check of financial conditions										
Total requested funding										0
Requested funding for partners from Switzerland & partners from high-income and upper middle-income countries [%] (max. 50%)										n.v.
Requested funding for partners from ODA recipient countries (LDC, LLMIC) [%] (mind. 50%)										n.v.
Academic personnel at higher education and research institutions [%] (max. 80%)										#DIV/0!
Development actors personnel from practitioners organisations [%] (mind. 20%)										#DIV/0!
Requested funding for communication & implementation [%] (min. 10% of total budget)										n.v.

Annex E: Guidelines Theory of Change

Theory of change, results framework and knowledge utilisation are closely interconnected. The research plan of a SOR4D full proposal should describe each of them separately.

What is a 'theory of change' or 'pathways to impact' about?

Development impact is measured in real changes of people's knowledge, behaviours, and decisions, livelihoods and institutions. The pathway to impact describes how the research seeks to contribute to a process that supports solving development challenges and improving the lives of the poor by strengthening a sustainable (social, economic, *and* environmental) development. It should detail the activities which will help develop potential economic, societal, and environmental impacts.

Pathways to impact are not expected to predict impact. The purpose is to develop a theory of change which is grounded in a sound logic model, thus encouraging researchers and development actors of a project consortium to explore the potential contribution that their transdisciplinary research can make to society by increasing the effectiveness of institutions, services, policy making and practice at the national, regional and global level, and the resources required to carry out appropriate and project specific activities.

Conceptualising impact

A project's theory of change needs to be explicit in describing the logic model on how the impact might be achieved to build long-term sustainable benefits for people living in poverty as well as for those who risk to be left behind. The design of the *pathways to impact* should address three inter-linked components:

- *Scenarios of change:*

State in simple terms what changes the research seeks to capture, explore and explain, and then hypothesize what those changes might mean for sustainable development and for poverty alleviation.

- ⇒ What is the underlying model for understanding changes within and between different components of human and natural systems?
- ⇒ What changes does research seek to capture, explore and explain?
- ⇒ What might these changes mean for the issue at stake and for the reduction of poverty and global risks in developing countries in the context of sustainable development?
- ⇒ In what assumptions is the theory of change grounded?

- *Actors in those change scenarios:*

In any complex system and in society there will be winners and losers as a result of changes, either as a direct or indirect result of human interventions or as a result of natural changes.

- ⇒ Who are the different actors that may benefit within these established change scenarios?
- ⇒ Who is directly or indirectly affected by the proposed project; or even potentially unintendedly affected, and how?
- ⇒ What will be done to ensure that potential beneficiaries have the opportunity to engage with this research?

- *Enablers, or spoilers, of change:*

- ⇒ Which are potential enablers/drivers or 'spoilers' of change which cause, facilitate or prevent change? (e.g. policies, practices, technologies, cultural norms etc.)

Online resources about theory of change:

<https://impact.nwo.nl/en>;

<https://zewo.ch/en/theory-of-change/>

<https://unsdg.un.org/sites/default/files/UNDG-UNDAF-Companion-Pieces-7-Theory-of-Change.pdf>

Annex F: Guidelines for designing a results framework

What is a results framework?

The results framework approach is a systematic approach to present the logic of a strategy and to guide its subsequent management, monitoring and evaluation to ensure that intended results / objectives have the greatest opportunity of being achieved.

A results framework²⁴ is an explicit articulation (matrix, or summary) of results / objectives expected from a particular intervention – project (e.g. research project), programme, or development strategy. The results framework captures the essential elements of the logical and expected cause-effect relationships among inputs, outputs, immediate and intermediate outcomes, and impact.

Defining cause-effect linkages for an intervention (e.g. research project) lays the groundwork for a results framework. Thus, the development of a good results framework requires clarity with respect to the theory of change – the reasons why a project will lead to the outputs; why those outputs are likely to lead to the immediate or intermediate outcomes; and how those outcomes are (at least hypothetically) linked with longer-term outcomes or impact. The theory of change also requires knowing or estimating how long it will take to achieve each stage of the programme and how much of the outcome is likely to be achieved.

What is a results framework used for?

A results framework is both a planning and management/monitoring tool, with additional benefits in terms of communication and reporting.

Planning. Using the results framework approach can help you identify appropriate objectives by ensuring that important questions are asked and answered at an early stage (e.g. “can objectives be measured? If not, are they appropriate? What will be sufficient to achieve the goal/objectives? What assumptions is the strategy relying on?”). It also provides a framework for collaborative work between different types of partners (e.g. academics, development actors) for building shared ownership of objectives and approaches.

Management/Monitoring/Review. A results framework can fill the role of a performance framework for a project strategy. It provides a project-level framework to monitor progress towards the achievement of results and, if necessary, to adjust activities accordingly. Reviews and other more comprehensive project-level assessments should be more straightforward and effective as the results framework provides a rigorous structure through which a strategy’s performance can be tested.

Communication and reporting. In defining a project’s or programme’s causal relationships, a results framework acts as a vehicle for communicating about the resources, activities, and outcomes to project staff (e.g. research team) and target groups. These frameworks can be an important tool in illustrating to the beneficiaries or community what a project is meant to achieve.

Learning from experience. Over time, the systematic use of results frameworks allows researchers and practitioners to assess what approaches or interventions contribute most effectively to achieving specific solution-oriented research and development objectives, a process that helps identify good practices for replication. A body of knowledge also forms regarding which indicators, measures, and data sources are best suited to monitoring progress in similar contexts.

References:

- World Bank. Independent Evaluation Group 2012. Designing a results framework for achieving results: a how-to guide.
- OECD DAC Definitions; United Nations Development Programme, Handbook on Planning, Monitoring and Evaluating for Development Results <http://web.undp.org/evaluation/handbook/ch2-4.html>
- SDC logframe structure

²⁴ Similar term: logical framework matrix (logframe)

The Results Framework in a Nutshell

Hierarchy of objectives Strategy of Intervention:	Key Indicators (including target values and baseline)	Sources & Means of Verification	Assumptions & Risks (External Factors)
<p><u>Definition:</u> The strategy of intervention defines the hierarchy of objectives and follows the logic of the results chain.</p>	<p><u>Definition:</u> Features which can be measured or at least described precisely in terms of quantity and quality respectively and which show a change in situation.</p> <p><u>Hints:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Indicators measure whether the results on each level (impact, outcome, output) are achieved. ✓ Indicators include targets and require baselines to assess progress. ✓ Indicators are time-bound ✓ The need to disaggregate indicators and baselines by other criteria (such as age, social and economic status etc.) depends on objectives and targeting. <p><i>Good indicators are:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Relevant: The indicator covers a relevant aspect of the outcome. There is a plausible and valid link between the indicator and the objective. • Reliable: The indicator is precise and can be measured with minimal bias. If two persons use the same indicator independently from each other they will get the same results. • Realistic: The target values of the indicator are achievable in the defined time frame. 	<p><u>Definition:</u> Sources refer to relevant data/ information on results and to the documents where this information is to be found. Means of verification refer to methods to collect these data/information.</p> <p><u>Hints:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ The timely availability and quality of information on the achievement of results are important criteria when defining indicators. ✓ When having several indicators for the same result level, sources and means of verification should be clearly attributed to the specific indicators. 	<p><u>Definition:</u> Assumptions and risks are conditions which could affect the progress of the project, but which are not under direct control of project management.</p> <p>An <i>assumption</i> is a positive statement of a condition that must be met for the project's objectives to be achieved.</p> <p>A <i>risk</i> is a negative statement of a condition that might prevent the project's objectives from being achieved.</p> <p><u>Hint:</u> <i>Information on risks as well as their management are part of the project document.</i></p>

Impact (goal)	Impact Indicators	Sources and Means of Verification	
<p><u>Definition:</u> The highest-level change that can be reasonably attributed to a research project, an organisation, policy or programme in a causal manner, and are the consequences of intermediate outcomes. The ultimate outcomes take the form of a sustainable change of state among beneficiaries.</p> <p><u>Scope of project management:</u> The achievement of the development objective lies outside the direct reach of the project and depends on the assumptions formulated at outcome level. However, outcomes of the project/programme should represent a relevant contribution to it.</p>	<p><u>Hint:</u> <i>Impact indicators are essentially used during evaluations and for project monitoring.</i></p>	<p><u>Hints:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ <i>On impact level, sources and means of verification are usually beyond the scope of project management.</i> ✓ <i>Information depends on documents of others, are based on national or international data bases or may result from joint evaluations.</i> 	<p>No assumptions and risks are defined at this level</p>
Outcomes (Project objectives)	Outcome Indicators	Outcome Means of Verification	Outcome Assumptions & Risks
<p><u>Definition:</u> The short or medium term effects (=changes in quality and quantity) expected from the outputs of the project</p> <p><u>Scope of project management:</u> The attainment of outcomes is primarily dependent on the project outputs, but depends also on factors beyond the project's control. Monitoring of outcomes is part of project management.</p> <p><u>Hints:</u> <i>It is useful to distinguish between immediate and intermediate outcomes. The number of outcomes has to be limited to 2-3 outcomes.</i></p>	<p><u>Definition:</u> Variable that allows the verification of changes at the outcome level or shows results relative to what was planned.</p> <p><u>Hints:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ <i>Keep the number of outcome indicators limited: as few as possible, as many as necessary to assess intended changes.</i> ✓ <i>Outcome indicators are used for monitoring and evaluations.</i> 		<p><u>Hint:</u> <i>To ensure a proper vertical logic, it is essential to attribute assumptions to the corresponding level of intervention. In this box the assumptions at outcome level which are relevant for achieving the intended impact need to be stated.</i></p>

Outputs: project deliveries per outcome and costs	Output Indicators	Output Means of Verification	Output Assumptions & Risks
<p><u>Definition:</u> Products, methods and services produced or competences and capacities established directly as a result of activities of the research project.</p> <p><u>Scope of project management:</u> Outputs are under the control / responsibility of project management.</p>	<p><u>Definition:</u> Quantitative or qualitative variable that allows the verification of changes at the output level or shows results relative to what was planned.</p> <p><u>Hint:</u> <i>Output indicators are used during monitoring and evaluation.</i></p>		<p><u>Hint:</u> <i>Formulate assumptions at output level which are relevant for achieving the project's objective(s).</i></p>

Complementary information in research plan and budget (not to be included in the Results Framework):

- Activities: Research, communication and application actions carried out by the research project to product specific outputs.
- Inputs: The financial, human and material resources for research, communication and application activities.