



Schweizerische Eidgenossenschaft
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Swiss Agency for Development
and Cooperation SDC

**SWISS
COOPERATION
PROGRAMME IN
BOSNIA AND
HERZEGOVINA
2025–2028**



Background

Since 1996, Switzerland's cooperation programme has been central to its strong bilateral ties with Bosnia and Herzegovina. Switzerland promotes sustainable economic growth, democracy, good governance and equal access of citizens to public services, creating better prospects for the population. Since 2009, Switzerland has maintained a migration partnership with Bosnia and Herzegovina which is in both countries' interests to ensure a safe, orderly and regular migration management. The cooperation programme also addresses the diaspora in Switzerland and elsewhere by leveraging investment and knowledge sharing. Switzerland is geographically close and is home to approximately 65,000 people who originate from Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Three decades after the war, Bosnia and Herzegovina faces conflicting historical narratives and geopolitical influences. Domestic political actors have conflicting

visions on the country's future path. Divergent rhetoric and corruption are impeding development. Rising tensions in the region carry with them the risk of potential armed conflict.

The needs of the citizens and the country are shaped by growing economic and social disparities. The rapid narrowing of civic space hampers citizen-based action. Because of the challenging political and socio-economic context, around 60,000 citizens have emigrated annually over the last decade, mainly to Western Europe. At the same time, an ageing population poses challenges to education, health systems, social protection, and labour markets. Despite poor infrastructure, limited institutional capacities and a shortage of skilled labour, the economy has proven to be resilient. However, it requires further investment to become more competitive and meet European standards. A common regional market and the increasing integration into

the EU single market provide considerable trade and investment potential for the country and Switzerland.

The conditional opening of the EU accession negotiations in 2024 reaffirms a European path for Bosnia and Herzegovina. The EU-funded growth plan for the Western Balkans offers infrastructure funding conditional on democratisation and regional integration reforms. Switzerland, as one of the biggest bilateral donors, is contributing with its expertise and experience as a well-functioning federal state.

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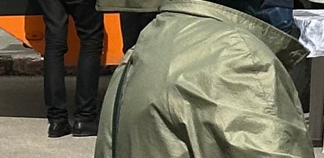
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URBANISTIČKI PLAN UGRANJE PODRUČJA BAKALUŠA



SREBRNICA
GENOCIDE



Results and lessons learned 2021–2024

Economic development and employment

Switzerland cooperated with national and international institutions and business support organisations to strengthen private sector development, the business environment, skills development and access to finance. This included trade promotion, debt resolution, start-up promotion and digitalisation. A total of 777 micro and small businesses were supported. Capacity building in export promotion, e-commerce and IT helped companies access new markets and create jobs. Seed capital, green credit lines and investor matching leveraged investments of CHF 11.4. The private sector's role in vocational education was enhanced through in-company mentorship and training. While structural unemployment declined, labour shortages and youth emigration pushed the private sector to raise wages, invest in skills, and employ more women and migrant workers. The green transition and the EU carbon tariff challenge high-emission producers.

Local governance and municipal services

With Swiss support, new laws are modernising water management in 25% of municipalities, ensuring safe drinking water for over 1.1 million people and subsidising services for about 2,400 poor citizens. New instruments for local governments improved municipal planning and performance of public utilities. In 27% of municipalities, citizen participation mechanisms enabled over 31,000 citizens to shape priorities. Switzerland supported around 220 civil society organisations and the Associations of Municipalities in voicing their concerns in public consultations. Civic engagement remains constrained by pressure on free speech and civil society. Local governance laws and municipal capacity to implement the EU *acquis* need improvement. Disaster risk management was introduced but must be reinforced to address growing climate-induced hazards.

Health

New legal frameworks on tobacco control, medicine lists, mental health and patient-centred nursing mark progress toward European standards and harmonised healthcare. Health promotion and campaigns on prevention of non-communicable diseases reached over 800,000 people. About 1.4 million citizens gained access to community nursing, with 88% being highly satisfied. Nearly 200,000 vulnerable people received nursing services. 74 community mental health centres provide high-standard services. Home-based care was expanded to 3,500 elderly people. The health sector still faces poor public financial management, debt, emigration, and poor service quality and access. Disease prevention, though cost-saving and beneficial, remains underprioritized.

Switzerland also supported migration management, demining and culture promotion. Justice support was phased out to focus on areas with higher Swiss added value.

Switzerland's commitment – focus areas for 2025–2028

Switzerland supports Bosnia and Herzegovina in building a peaceful and cohesive democratic society, in its progress towards European integration. Cooperation focuses on sectors where Swiss expertise aligns with the needs and the country's socio-economic reform and EU accession priorities. The programme focuses on political, economic and social reforms for effective institutions and public services, a thriving green economy, improved migration management, and a stronger health sector. Swiss values and expertise in promoting cohesion, federalism, decentralisation and cantonal coordination are of particular interest.

Switzerland's added value lies in bringing together stakeholders across ethnicities as a credible, principled and impartial actor. As a non-EU member, its contribution towards not predefined European integration opens doors and creates trust. Its

long-term, predictable commitment, flexibility and often bottom-up approaches are particular trademarks. In principle, all projects are implemented countrywide to ensure harmonised development and compatible systems and processes.

Sustainable economic and migration cooperation

Switzerland helps to create conditions for trade and investment, private sector development, job creation, innovation, digitalisation, and sustainability. This includes improving the economic framework across administrative boundaries, enhancing business services, and fostering competitive entrepreneurship and start-ups, particularly to empower young people and women and promote a green economy. To reduce youth unemployment, Switzerland supports technical and vocational training aligned with market needs and harmonised across the

country. Emphasis is placed on work-based learning and mentoring in close partnership between authorities, educational institutions and the private sector. Improving working conditions and increasing labour market participation for women and migrants, along with engagement between the diaspora and local communities, strengthens the economy.

Within the framework of the migration partnership, Switzerland supports the state authorities in assuming greater ownership of migration management for more self-reliance. This includes building local capacities, fostering regional cooperation and empowering Bosnia and Herzegovina to take full responsibility for border management, protect the rights of migrants and provide essential services - ensuring a sustainable and locally-driven approach.

Local governance and municipal services

Switzerland promotes democracy and good governance by strengthening accountable and transparent institutions which provide high-quality public services to all citizens. Emphasis is placed on the active, systematic participation of particularly socially excluded citizens in decision-making processes. Institutional partnership allows Swiss and local institutions to share experiences in implementing the Sustainable Development Goals and voluntary reporting to the UN. Furthermore, civil society organisations are supported in their dialogue with authorities. These efforts contribute to cohesion and foster trust in democratic processes and institutions.

Supporting the development of laws and policies in line with European standards is essential for providing high-quality public services across all municipalities. Citizens benefit directly from safe drinking water through modernised utilities. Switzerland supports authorities with measures for energy efficiency and the transition to renewable energy, as well as the

preparation for new climate realities and disaster protection.

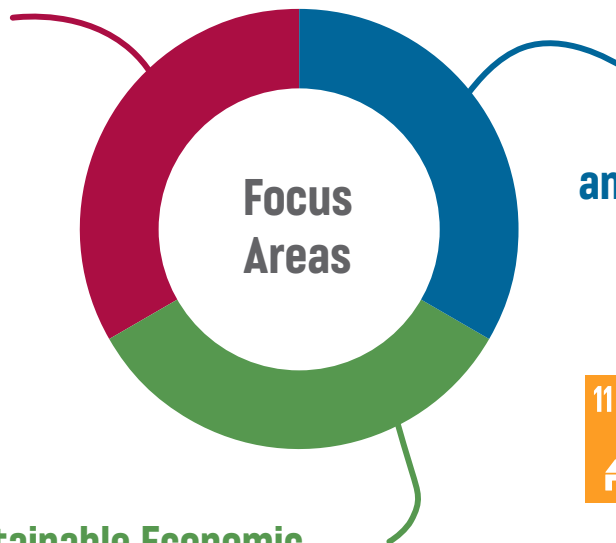
Health

In close collaboration with the health authorities, Switzerland improves access to high-quality primary healthcare throughout the country and promotes healthier lifestyles. Efforts in primary healthcare focus on the prevention of non-communicable diseases, enhancing nursing services, and the development of care services for the elderly. This improves the health system's efficiency and reduces costs. Policies, laws, regulations, strategies and professional standards are developed jointly between both entity ministries and developed in a countrywide harmonised manner. Personal and institutional relations across entities contribute to cohesion. Swiss-supported projects focus on vulnerable groups, such as people with chronic illnesses, mental health conditions, or limited mobility, or people living in remote areas.

Cross-cutting issues

All projects, contributions and partnerships focus on including socially discriminated groups and ensuring equal treatment of men and women, particularly in accessing services and participating in democratic processes. Switzerland promotes good governance through transparency, accountability, participation, the rule of law, and effectiveness – applying a zero-tolerance policy for corruption.

Health



Local Governance and Municipal Services



Sustainable Economic and Migration Cooperation





Approach and partners

As a “Willensnation” (a nation forged out of will), Switzerland has expertise in promoting cohesion among people of different origins, religions and languages. It engages with a wide range of actors across Bosnia and Herzegovina, including authorities at all levels, companies, business associations, civil society, and development partners. Identifying shared interests and values it contributes to sustaining peace and supporting sustainable development. It connects people from different backgrounds and promotes the exchange of ideas, experiences and policies between institutions for harmonised systems and equal access to services.

The programme’s results depend on the political will at all government levels to implement reforms and to interact with civil society and the private sector. Switzerland will focus its policy dialogue on socio-economic conditions, local governance, migration management and the water, energy, and health sectors.

Switzerland’s needs-based approach ensures that cooperation aligns with Bosnia and Herzegovina’s priorities, draws on Swiss expertise, and complements EU efforts. Performance-based approaches and locally-led development increase effectiveness and

empower institutions. Where possible, Switzerland prioritises contributions to local partners over mandates to external actors. Partnerships and core contributions are preferred modalities. Switzerland promotes coordination between development actors and regional cooperation.

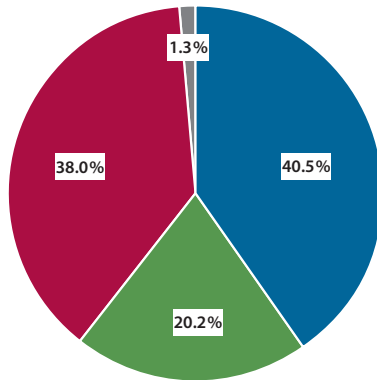
Switzerland intends to provide grant funding of up to CHF 15 million per year (BAM 30 million) during the period 2025–28. This will also leverage contributions from multilateral banks and the private sector.

Map of Bosnia and Herzegovina

Cooperation Programme 2025–2028

Indicative total budget: CHF 60,400,000*

Breakdown per focus area



- Sustainable Economic and Migration Cooperation
- Health
- Local Governance and Municipal Services
- Other

* The information on the financial envelope is indicative. This information serves merely as a basis for the forward spending plans that are reviewed each year by the Federal council and the Swiss Parliament.



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