



# Leveraging migration for development

International migration is a phenomenon of an increasingly globalized world. The number of international migrants has doubled in the past quarter century to more than 272 million in 2019. This is around 3.5 percent of the world's population. Approximately 10 percent of all international migrants are refugees. Increased mobility, economic, political and financial instability as well as climate change and increased pressure on the environment mean that movements of people across the world will become ever more complex in the future and present new challenges for policy makers.

The inclusion of migration in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development confirms and reinforces the important relation between migration and development. By integrating migration, including forced displacement, into the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), the international community acknowledges that migration can make a positive contribution to development, both in countries of origin and destination, while not ignoring its potential challenges.

Against this backdrop, the Swiss Strategy for International Cooperation 2021-2024 has defined migration as a thematic priority. The Swiss International Cooperation, including SECO, is playing an important role in making migration a more beneficial element in the development context of partner countries. Furthermore it addresses root causes of irregular migration by systematically linking official development aid (ODA) and migration where it serves the interests of Switzerland. Respective linkages are carried out on three levels:

- **Political level:** through policy dialogue, e.g., within the framework of migration partnerships.
- **Geographical level:** through the integration of migration-related aspects in country strategies.
- **Thematic level:** through programs addressing directly specific dimensions of migration (e.g., reduction of the costs of remittances) or indirectly working on the root causes of forced migration (e.g., skills development, jobs creation).

## **SECO's focus regarding Migration**

SECO promotes economic growth and sustainable prosperity by creating reliable economic framework conditions and decent jobs in its partner countries, thereby providing alternatives to migration, which is often caused by the lack of economic opportunities.

SECO's approach in the area of migration is twofold: SECO mainly addresses the root causes of migration indirectly by creating jobs and providing better economic perspectives in its partner countries. SECO also directly contributes to migration issues by harnessing the benefits of migration towards sustainable development in its programs dealing with remittances and diaspora investments.

For instance, SECO implements specific projects in the following areas:

- **Improving the business environment** contributes to transparent and lean procedures that reduce the tendency of manufacturers and investors to leave their country and reinforces predictability in investment planning.
- **Promoting rules-based trade**, taking into account sustainability aspects, such as core labor standards, harnesses the benefits of international trade and sustainable growth.
- **Creating new trade relations** (e.g., with diasporas, see example below) strengthens the value chains and creates new, decent employment opportunities in partner countries.
- **Supporting access to financing and market-oriented skills** creates more and better jobs.
- Encouraging the development of new financial products that foster the investment of **remittances** rather than their mere consumption, e.g., in business development, sustainable energy solutions for private households (solar energy) and other infrastructure investments.

SECO works with implementing partners, such as Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs), the private sector (including the diaspora) and international organizations, for example the World Bank or the International Labor Organization (ILO).

### Interdepartmental coordination

SECO is part of the Interdepartmental Structure for International Cooperation on Migration (IMZ). Thereby it implements the mandate of the Strategy for International Cooperation 2021-24 of linking international cooperation and migration. And it ensures a coherent, efficient and coordinated approach of all actors and offices involved. The IMZ incorporates all relevant agencies and departments, including the Federal Department of Justice and Police (FDJP), the Federal Department of Foreign Affairs (FDFA), and the Federal Department of Economic Affairs, Education and Research (EAER). All departments are coordinated on a strategic level and develop their operations in their own field of competences, in regular consultation with the other departments.

### Project example: Swiss entrepreneur creates 600 jobs

**Countries:** Serbia and Bosnia-Herzegovina

**Project Partner:** SECO Start-up Fund

**Time period:** 2008 - 2021

**Budget:** CHF 1'500'000 credit from the SECO Start-up Fund, with total investments of CHF 13'145'000 mobilized

A Swiss entrepreneur born in Serbia seized the opportunity to start a business in the Balkans after completing his studies in Switzerland. With the support of the SECO Start-up Fund he has built two profitable furniture factories (STANDARD FURNITURE Serbia d.o.o. and STANDARD AD Prnjavor) in Serbia and Bosnia-Herzegovina, delivering to IKEA as their first customer. Thanks to his education in Switzerland and many years of work experience in Croatia, he knew the requirements of the international market and established the necessary network to promote the products of his company. Specialized in furniture production, the entrepreneur now employs almost 600 people – more than half of them are women – in a region where the unemployment rate is high and people are likely to migrate for a job. Experience shows that with decent local jobs people are less likely to look for job opportunities abroad.



### Further information:

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