



SUPPORTING LOCALLY-LED COOPERATION ACROSS THE HUMANITARIAN- DEVELOPMENT- PEACE NEXUS

SDC's pathway for action

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Locally-led cooperation as an implementation approach of the IC Strategy 2025-28

Supporting locally-led cooperation across the humanitarian-development-peace nexus (LLC) is an approachⁱ at the heart of the new Swiss International Cooperation Strategy 2025-28 (IC Strategy). LLC is an important part of effective aid - particularly relevant now as means to achieving greater and more durable impact at a time in which resources are becoming scarcer and staying engaged amidst geopolitical volatility is becoming harder. Being locally-led is deeply engrained in Swiss values, and the principle of subsidiarity, and that communities should have a direct role in shaping and making the decisions that affect them, is core to Switzerland's public and political life.

This extends to the Swiss approach to international co-operation, and Switzerland has long applied its experience and expertise to champion locally-led cooperation. Indeed, external stakeholders particularly value Swiss leadership, citing Switzerland's role as an active signatory to international commitments and initiatives, including the Paris and Accra agreements, the Grand Bargain on humanitarian action, and the OECD DAC recommendation on enabling civil society.

However, progress towards these commitments has been limited and it is clear that a step-change in action is needed if goals are to be achieved. Momentum is growing to deliver results on LLC. Switzerland is among a group of international cooperation donors which are taking active steps to ensure that its internal and external commitments are implemented, and to find practical solutions to the challenges this entails. Switzerland has a demonstrable track record on LLC but, as the OECD-DAC noted, this is limited to "pockets of good practice" (OECD, 2024d) and the percentage of Swiss funding going to local actors has been diminishing. The way forward primarily involves broader application, adaptation, and explanation of existing ways of working. It clearly has most of the foundations for action already in place. Switzerland is an active signatory to global LLC commitments and SDC has flexibility in its range of instruments, latitude in its ways of working, and a track record of good practices in multiple countries.

The pathway presented in this paper is the result of a process to enable SDC to make progress on LLC. It is an action-oriented response to the inclusion of LLC as an approach in the IC Strategy, and prompted by the OECD-DAC finding that Switzerland lacked clear internal goals and operational frameworks for LLC at global and national levels. The SDC directorate therefore gave the mandate to initiate this process to develop a) definitions of LLC and local actors b) objectives and indicators and c) proposals on how to concretely advance LLC.

The process was light but consultative, facilitated by ALNAP together with the leadership of a core SDC team. It draws on inputs from SDC staff across functions and locations, as well as from partners and other external stakeholders. This process informed a proposed SDC definition of local actors and LLC - drawing on existing definitions - against which a set of goals and indicators were developed. In order to achieve these goals, SDC convened internal workshops to identify five cross-cutting priority areas for action, and organised Working Groups of internal experts - from the HQ and Country Offices - to develop detailed plans for each of these. Once approved by the directorate, this pathway for action will be taken up by relevant units within SDC for active implementation.

An SDC definition of and goalsetting for LLC

Given that there is no internationally agreed definition of LLC, an SDC definition of local actors and LLC is particularly important to provide a shared foundation for internal efforts, external partnerships, and global positioning. The proposed definition is 'transversal' - uniting LLC understanding across the humanitarian, development and peace (HDP) nexus - application across the HDP is intrinsic to its delivery. It is grounded in Switzerland's IC Strategy, aligns with global frameworks, and was developed in consultation with SDC staff working in a range of countries and functions.

**For SDC, Locally Led Action means
actively ensuring that local actors can shape and lead effective responses
to humanitarian, development and peace challenges.**

SDC applies an LLC approach to:

- ensure that action is by default determined by local actors themselves - and appropriately supported by international partners only where necessary.
- enable effective and sustainable outcomes, that are responsive to local needs and experience, in an accountable way.

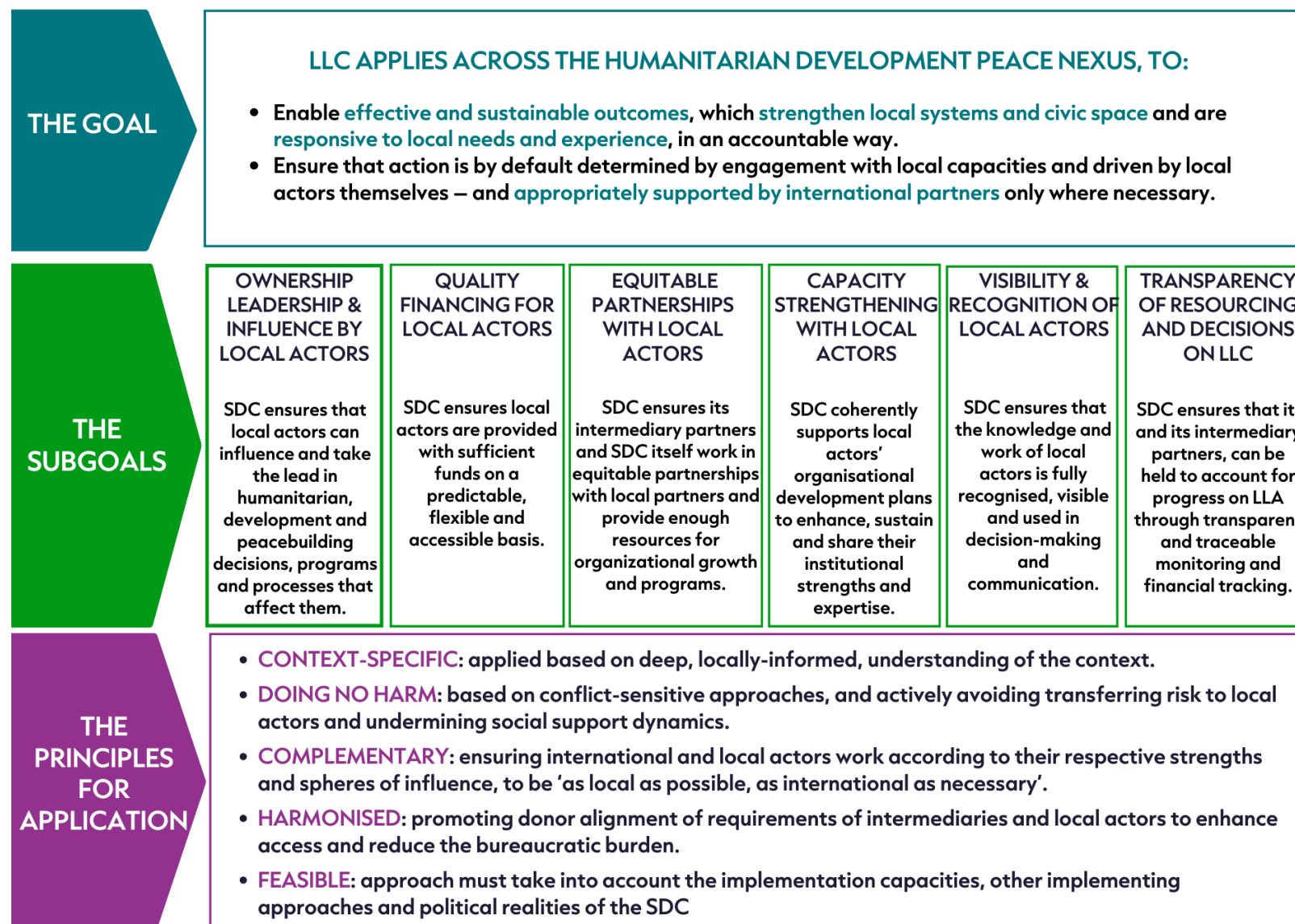
Local actors are defined as organisations and institutions originating from and working in a given country. They include those working at regional, national and sub-national levels and encompass public institutions (a.o. national and local authorities); private sector; civil society organisations and formal and informal community-led groups - as determined by the specific goal and context of the action.

As figure 1 below shows, making this definition of LLC a reality, requires actions by SDC as a donor, as an advocate and within its institution to advance:

1. Ownership, leadership and influence of local actors
2. Quality financing for local actors
3. Equitable partnerships with local actors
4. Capacity strengthening of local actors
5. Visibility and recognition of local actors
6. Transparency of the resourcing and decisions on LLC.

Working in a context specific and conflict sensitive, complementary and harmonized way cuts across all of SDC's work on LLC.

Figure 1: SDC's defining goal of locally-led cooperation



A pathway for action

To achieve its LLC goal and subgoals, SDC must take action in three inter-related spheres of engagement:

- **As an actor:** optimising its internal ways of working and incentivising a working culture to most effectively support LLC.
- **As a donor:** working both with local and with international ‘intermediary’ partners to their best comparative advantage to advance LLC.
- **As an advocate:** using its position and leverage at global and country levels to lead, negotiate, and champion local leadership.

The priority actions and key indicators of progress under each of these spheres of engagement are summarised in figure 2 below.

Strong leadership underpins action in each of the three areas. A clear statement of high-level management intent on LLC as one of SDC’s implementation approaches will reinforce the commitment made under the IC Strategy. This management statement can then be reflected across SDC’s strategic, management and operational documents - at global, country and programme levels. Leadership support will also reinforce the ‘licence to operate’ for staff. It provides institutional steer and incentives for capacitation of staff at all levels as they navigate the context-specific decisions involved in making LLC an operational reality.

Measuring progress

Three inter-connected high-level indicators will be used as an institutional top-line measure of progress towards SDC’s overarching vision of LLCⁱⁱ:

- **Indicator 1. Quantity of funding: Percentage of direct bilateral SDC funding to local actors.** Baseline 2024: 12%.
- **Indicator 2: Quality of funding (proxy): percentage of SDC bilateral funding through core-contributions to local actors.** Baseline 2024: 0.7%.
- **Indicator 3: Quality of partnerships of SDC’s international priority organisations and Swiss NGOs with their local partners: Number of SDC core contribution contracts with international and Swiss priority organisations include a formal commitment of them adhering to equitable partnerships with local actors.** Baseline 2024: 0.

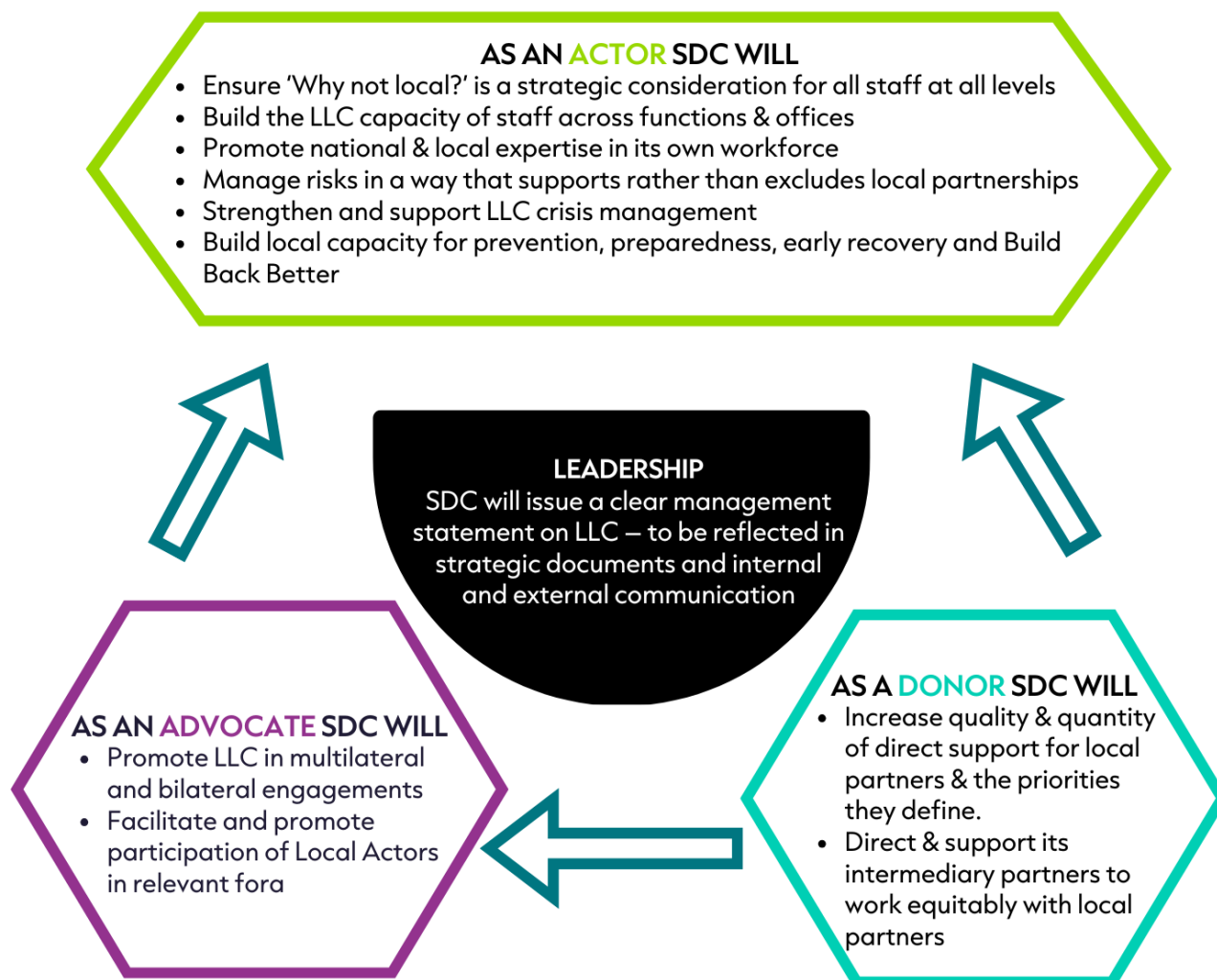
Given the contextually-driven differences in performance between countries to date, and their different potential pathways for change, next to the three high-level institutional indicators, country and program teams will be in a position to set more detailed LLC indicators in specific areas - for example on capacity strengthening. Critically, SDC will need to ensure that these country level metrics also reflect local priorities for success, and to involve partners in their development.

A range of approaches and measurement tools will be needed to capture SDC’s LLC progress, given that this involves both quantitative indicators (for example broadening financial resources of partners), and qualitative cultural change across SDC and its partners (for example on equitable partnerships). SDC already has many of the monitoring mechanisms required for tracking progress which can be harnessed and consolidated to track action on LLC. SDC is also actively engaging with the OECD DAC’s ongoing work to develop a framework for measuring LLC and will ensure alignment with this.

While metrics and reporting processes are vital for incentivising and being accountable for action, SDC will also capture and foster progress on LLC in other ways. This includes maintaining investments in programme impact evaluation to demonstrate how LLC improves effective and sustainable outcomes. It also includes maintaining learning-oriented dialogue with international

and local partners - and importantly integrating all measurements, findings and lessons into an ongoing cycle of learning, culture change and improvement within SDC.

Figure 2: Summary of SDC's pathway to action to advance effective LLC



1. Introduction

1.1 Purpose and structure of this paper

Supporting locally-led cooperation (LLC) is an approach set out in Switzerland's International Cooperation (IC) Strategy. In order to translate this into an actionable plan, SDC undertook a seven-month process to agree its goals for LLC, the actions required to achieve this, and how it will measure progress. The process was timed to build on the OECD DAC peer learning process on locally-led development, in which Switzerland was one of the three OECD Country case studies and an active participant in thematic deep dives and the overall process. This provided a strong learning foundation and guidance to which Switzerland could align.

This pathway paper summarises the results of that process, providing a clear and common reference point for SDC staff - across all functions and locations - to work together to realise the goals set of advancing LLC. After approval by the directorate this pathway for action is designed to be the start of active implementation, undertaken in continued dialogue with its staff, international and local partners. This paper also provides a common resource for articulating Switzerland's approach to others - including the international, national and local organisations whose partnership is crucial in advancing this agenda. Building on Switzerland's well regarded track record as a global LLC advocate (see 1.2 below), it is hoped that the results of this process will also be valuable to other humanitarian, development and peace actors in the articulation and alignment of their own approaches.

The paper is in three parts to respond to the mandate by the directorate to develop a) definitions of LLC and local actors b) objectives and indicators and c) proposals on how to concretely advance LLC. First it sets out the background to arriving at this action pathway; second, it articulates SDC's definition and goals for LLC as a general approach; third, it sets out the agreed practical actions to achieve these - grouped under its roles as an actor, as a donor, and as an advocate; and finally, it summarises the next steps. Annexes provide supporting detail on consultation feedback and action plans.

1.2 Rationale: why SDC has committed to do more, better on LLC

Local and national actors are the bedrock of any thriving society and the vital first responders in situations of crisis and primary agents for development and peace. This is as true in Switzerland as it is elsewhere in the world. Even in places where international solidarity and support is required, it is local actors who remain at the frontline for the long-term, reach the most hard-to-reach communities, and have the expertise and experience to navigate the context (HAG/Start 2024). Being locally-led is also about working to the complementary strengths of international, regional, national and local actors as the situation demands to ensure support is best targeted, most effective and more sustainable - it is at the heart of what international *co-operation* means.

Being locally-led is also deeply engrained in Swiss values. As one of the most democratic societies in the worldⁱⁱⁱ, the principle that communities should have a direct role in shaping and making the decisions that affect them, is core to Switzerland's public and political life.

This naturally extends to the Swiss approach to international co-operation, and Switzerland has long applied its experience and expertise to champion locally-led approaches across the nexus. The fact that Switzerland has concertedly integrated a joined up 'nexus' approach in its international cooperation, positions it uniquely well to engage with local actors who also don't choose to define or divide their work by humanitarian, development and peace silos. Being

locally-led is also strategically smart for ‘future-proofing’ at a time of considerable uncertainty. Working with local actors enables Switzerland to navigate unfolding geopolitical shifts and to stay engaged in priority countries during volatile times. Being locally led is also a responsible use of resources at a time of growing pressure on limited aid budgets - as the cost effectiveness of locally-led cooperation continues to be proven.^{iv}

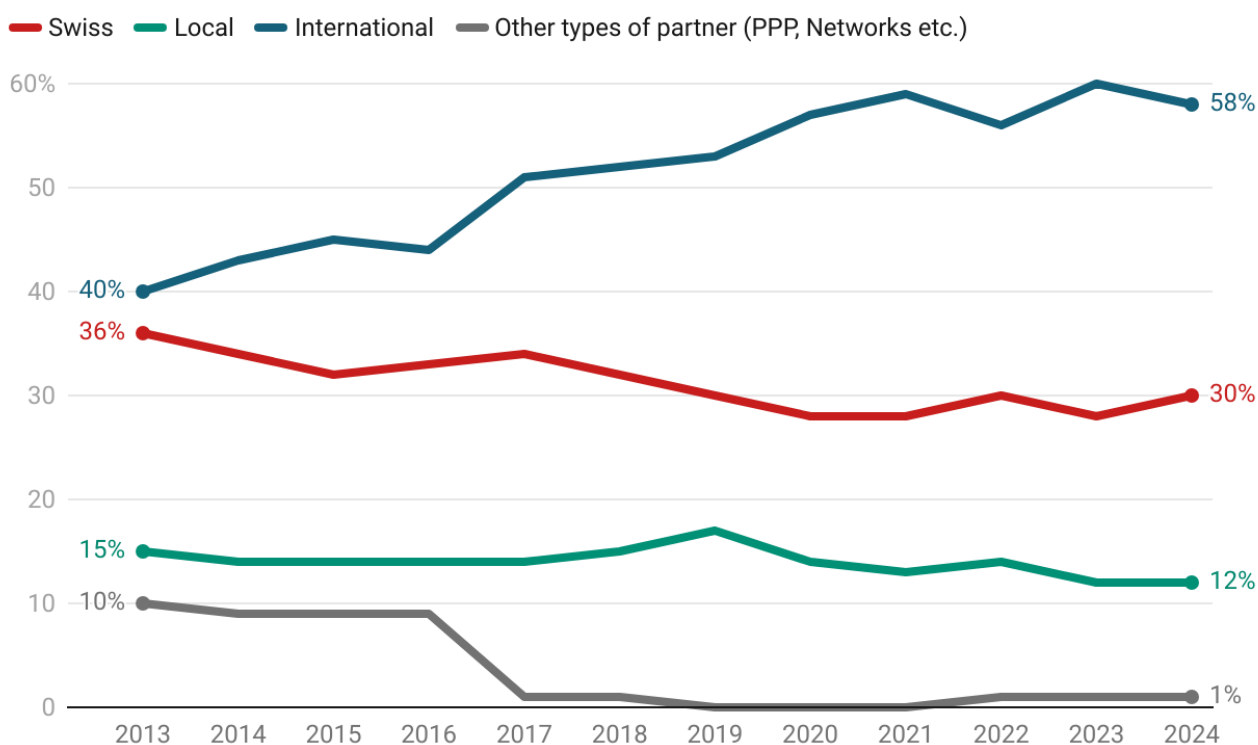
Switzerland’s impact as a donor extends far past its aid budget and it leverages its considerable engagement and global influence to promote LLC. Indeed, external stakeholders particularly valued Swiss leadership, with nearly half of all survey respondents rating SDC highly as an advocate for locally led action (see 1.3, Annex 1)^v.

This leadership is evident in Switzerland’s role as an active signatory to international commitments and initiatives on locally-led cooperation (see box 1 below). This long-standing body of commitments is reflected in Switzerland’s decision to recognise LLC as a general approach in its forthcoming International Cooperation Strategy (2025-2028).

Box 1: Key Swiss commitments to international agreements on locally-led cooperation.

- **The Paris and Accra Agreements and Effective Development Cooperation Principles** (2005, 2008, 2011, 2022) which situate country-ownership at the core of development cooperation. Switzerland was co-chair of the Global Partnership for effective Development Cooperation from 2019-2022.
- **The Grand Bargain** (2016) on humanitarian aid, which committed to greater support for leadership, capacity and delivery by national and local responders, including a target of at least 25% of aid to be channelled as directly as possible through them. Switzerland has co-led the localisation workstream and played a leading role in the caucus to advance the role of intermediaries in meeting these commitments.
- **The OECD recommendation on Enabling Civil Society in Development Cooperation and Humanitarian Assistance** (2021). Switzerland is Co-Chair of the OECD DAC Community of Practice on Civil Society.
- **2022 Effective Development Cooperation Summit and Joint donor statement on supporting locally-led Development** (2022) which brings together the above commitments, in a pledge to shift and share power, channel high quality funding, and advocate for locally-led development.
- **Development Co-operation Principles for Relevant and Effective Support to Media and the Information Environment** (2024). Switzerland is Chair of the GovNet of the OECD DAC in 2025.

However, data indicates that more needs to be done to action these commitments. Multilateral reviews evidence the imperative for all donors to increase their speed and depth of action. The OECD DAC peer learning review for which Switzerland was one of three donor case studies^{vi}, notes that ‘DAC members continue to meet significant obstacles in their ambitions to advance development co-operation that is genuinely locally-led’ (OECD, 2024a:15). Independent Grand Bargain annual reporting showed very limited progress towards the target of providing 25% of funding to local actors directly or via one intermediary (Metcalf-Hough et al, 2024). Exact figures are elusive due to reporting practices, but latest figures for 2023, suggest that only 4.5% of humanitarian aid went directly to local actors, rising to somewhere between 6.7% and 8.4% if data on indirect funding is counted (Development Initiatives, 2024).

Figure 3: SDC bilateral expenditures by partner category 2013-2024 (in%)^{vii}

Not included in order to represent overall trends without extraordinary COVID-19 related contributions: 1. ICRC (loan 200 Mio CHF in 2020), 2. Global Alliance for Vaccines and Immunization (20 Mio CHF in 2020, 125 Mio CHF in 2021, 20 Mio CHF in 2022), 3. Delivery of Covid-Material and Covid Vaccines (45.5 Mio CHF in 2021, 60.1 Mio CHF in 2022, 112.1 Mio CHF in 2023). Data does also not include the credit for Cooperation with Eastern Europe.

Source: SDC Development Finance Statistics (status as at 23.04.2025) • Created with Datawrapper

Comparing Switzerland's progress against that of other donors is not straightforward, given differences in baselines, operating models and reporting practices - but external reports indicate that it is at least perceived as having a long way to go. According to some OECD measures, Switzerland appears to rank in the bottom third of donors in its percentage of 'locally-led' Official Development Assistance (ODA) (OECD, 2024b). According to initial self-reports to the Grand Bargain, Switzerland appears to rank third lowest among donors for the proportion of funding provided 'as directly as possible' to local and national actors (IASC, 2024), despite Switzerland being one of the rare donors that does not have to contend with legal restrictions that limit them to only directly funding domestically registered entities. Even if these figures reveal more about the state of financial reporting than implementation^{viii}, they also reveal there is no room for complacency for Switzerland in proving progress on LLC. This is reflected in an OECD-DAC peer review on locally-led development which notes the distinct progress and advantages that Switzerland holds compared to other donors, but also observes a "diminishing alignment with locally led development principles" noting "obstacles demand not only political resolve but also sustained, comprehensive efforts aimed at revising administrative constraints"^{ix} (OECD 2024d).

As momentum grows for all donors and international agencies to deliver results on LLC, Switzerland is among a group of international cooperation donors which are taking active steps to implement commitments, and to find practical solutions to the challenges that implementation can present. For instance, the EU's directorate on humanitarian assistance, ECHO, has developed new guidance to ensure that it, and its international partners, have the policy and practical tools

to translate their Grand Bargain commitments into concrete action.^x While the starting point and circumstances of every donor is different, these efforts set both examples and expectations for others to follow.

For Switzerland, with its strong policy and practice foundations for LLC, the way forward primarily involves application, adaptation, and explanation of existing ways of working. It is clear that SDC has most of the foundations for action already in place. As well as the policy commitments (see box 1), it has flexibility in its range of instruments, latitude in its ways of working, and a track record of good practices in multiple countries. For example, there is significant scope for promoting LLC within SDC's contributions, contracts and within its partner risk assessment process, and country-specific initiatives which can be replicated including from Ukraine, Myanmar and Latin America^{xi}. A recurrent finding in both this process and the OECD DAC review, is that SDC largely has the tools and approaches required - clarity, concertedness and coherence is now needed to best use these to achieve its vision of LLC.

1.3 Process: how SDC has arrived at this definition, goal and workplan

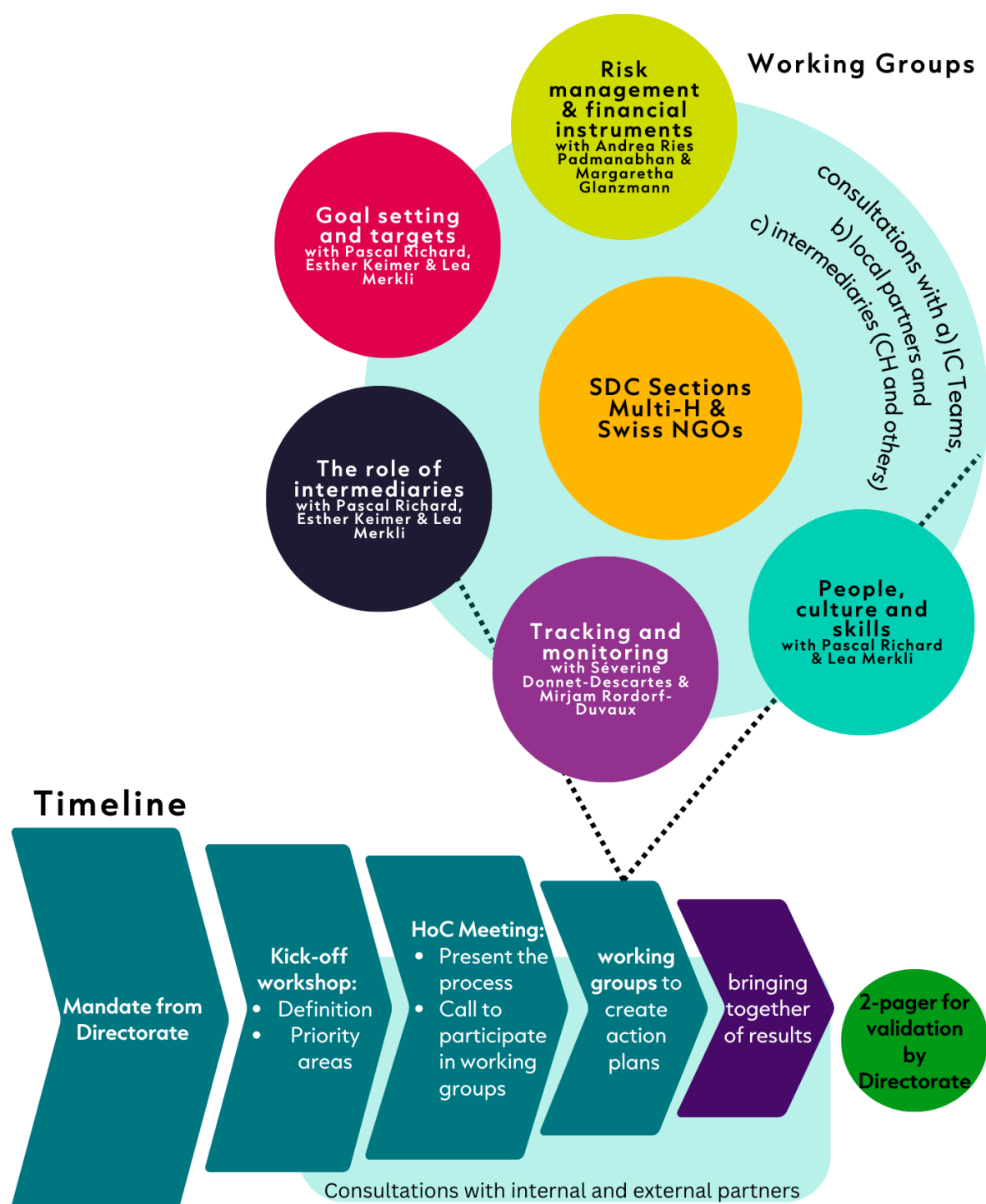
The pathway to action for SDC set out in this paper is the result of a consultative process, facilitated by ALNAP as a global learning and evaluation network with cross-sector expertise on localisation, working together with the leadership of a core group of SDC staff. It draws on inputs from SDC staff across functions and locations, as well as from partners, independent experts, and other donors. The process included: a mapping of donors and others' approaches to, and definitions of, LLC; SDC workshops held in Bern and online; consultation of international, and local partners and experts through a survey and online workshop; and the outputs of five SDC expert practitioner Working Groups each focussed on a 'priority action area' (see figure 3 below). The process was also designed to connect to and complement the OECD DAC peer learning process on LLC.

This work informed the articulation of a definitional vision of LLC, set out in section 2 of this paper. Drawing on existing definitions this sets out six 'dimensions' of effective LLC, against which the workshop and Working Group set out a series of goals and indicators. In order to achieve these goals, the SDC workshop identified five cross-cutting priority areas for action and Working Groups of internal experts - based in Bern and in country offices - were convened to detail plans for each of these which are available as an accompanying document. The actions and indicators that emerged fall under three spheres of engagement for SDC as set out in section 3 of this report: its engagement as an advocate for a LLC, a donor supporting LLC, and an actor whose ways of working enable LLC.

In order to motivate and maintain progress, SDC will take this pathway for action forward under the implementation of the ICS - and, if agreed by the director, will do this in continued dialogue with staff as well as local and international partners. A first step will be the elaboration of a management statement to provide the necessary leadership steer (see section 3.2), accompanied by clear internal and external communication. At the same time, it will move ahead with detailing its metrics and methods for measuring progress (see section 4) against the country and thematic level indicators which will be developed to build on their specific contexts, roles and baselines. By the end of the first year of the ICS, SDC aims to have agreed and communicated a clear set of measurable indicators to guide countries and programs in their own indicator setting. To put this into action the specific action points defined in the annexed action plan (see annex 2) will be implemented by the relevant SDC units and staff, with a named member of the directorate holding leadership responsibility for this. To ensure LLC remains or becomes a part of SDC staff work, a core group will be constituted for continued oversight of this process. This will be coordinated by sections that already have LLC as a core part of their work - Foundations and

Quality, Peace Governance and Equality, Multilateral Humanitarian Affairs, Swiss NGO and Geographic Divisions. They will involve interested country offices and other staff in a timely and relevant manner. The exact responsibilities and representations will be agreed upon together with relevant managers.

Figure 4: The process for developing this LLC action pathway



2. Defining SDC's goal of LLC

While endorsing and applying the definitions in the global commitments it has signed, SDC must also clearly articulate its own vision of what LLC means and involves. Having a clear Swiss definition of LLC will provide shared foundations for internal efforts, external partnerships, and global positioning. Importantly, given SDC's strength in linking humanitarian, development and peace approaches, this definition is 'transversal' uniting LLC understanding across the nexus. The definitional vision below, is therefore grounded in Switzerland's ICS, aligns with global frameworks from across the nexus, and was developed with SDC staff working in a range of countries and functions.

For SDC, Locally Led Cooperation means actively ensuring that local actors can shape and lead effective responses to humanitarian, development and peace challenges.

SDC applies an LLC approach to:

- ensure that action is by default determined by local actors themselves - and appropriately supported by international partners only where necessary.
- enable effective and sustainable outcomes, that are responsive to local needs and experience, in an accountable way.

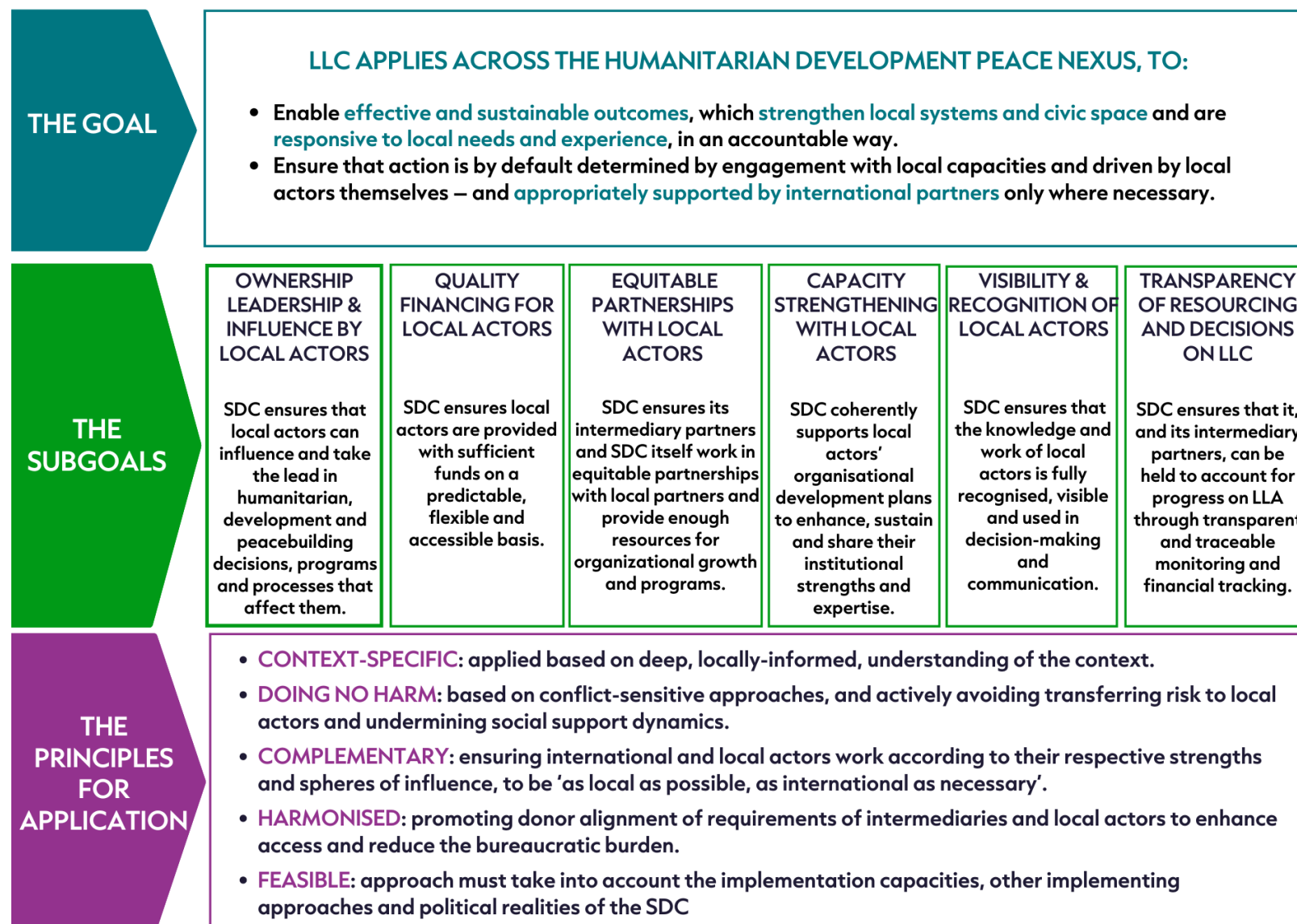
Local actors are defined as organisations and institutions originating from and working in a given country. They include those working at regional, national and sub-national levels and encompass public institutions (a.o. national and local authorities); private sector; civil society organisations and formal and informal community-led groups - as determined by the specific goal and context of the action^{xii}.

Based on the above SDC will use relevant terminology (such as for example Locally Led Development for OECD-DAC or Locally Led humanitarian action and Localization for the Grand Bargain) that best fits the policy discussions it engages in while ensuring this covers the above definitions.

As figure 1 below shows, making this definition of LLC a reality requires actions by SDC as a donor, as an advocate and within its institution to advance:

1. Ownership, leadership and influence of local actors
2. Quality financing for local actors
3. Equitable partnerships with local actors
4. Capacity strengthening of local actors
5. Visibility and recognition of local actors
6. Transparency of the resourcing and decisions on LLC.

Figure 1: SDC's defining goal of Locally-led cooperation



3. Taking action

3.1 A model of pathways for action

Achieving its LLC goals, requires SDC to take action in three spheres of engagement:

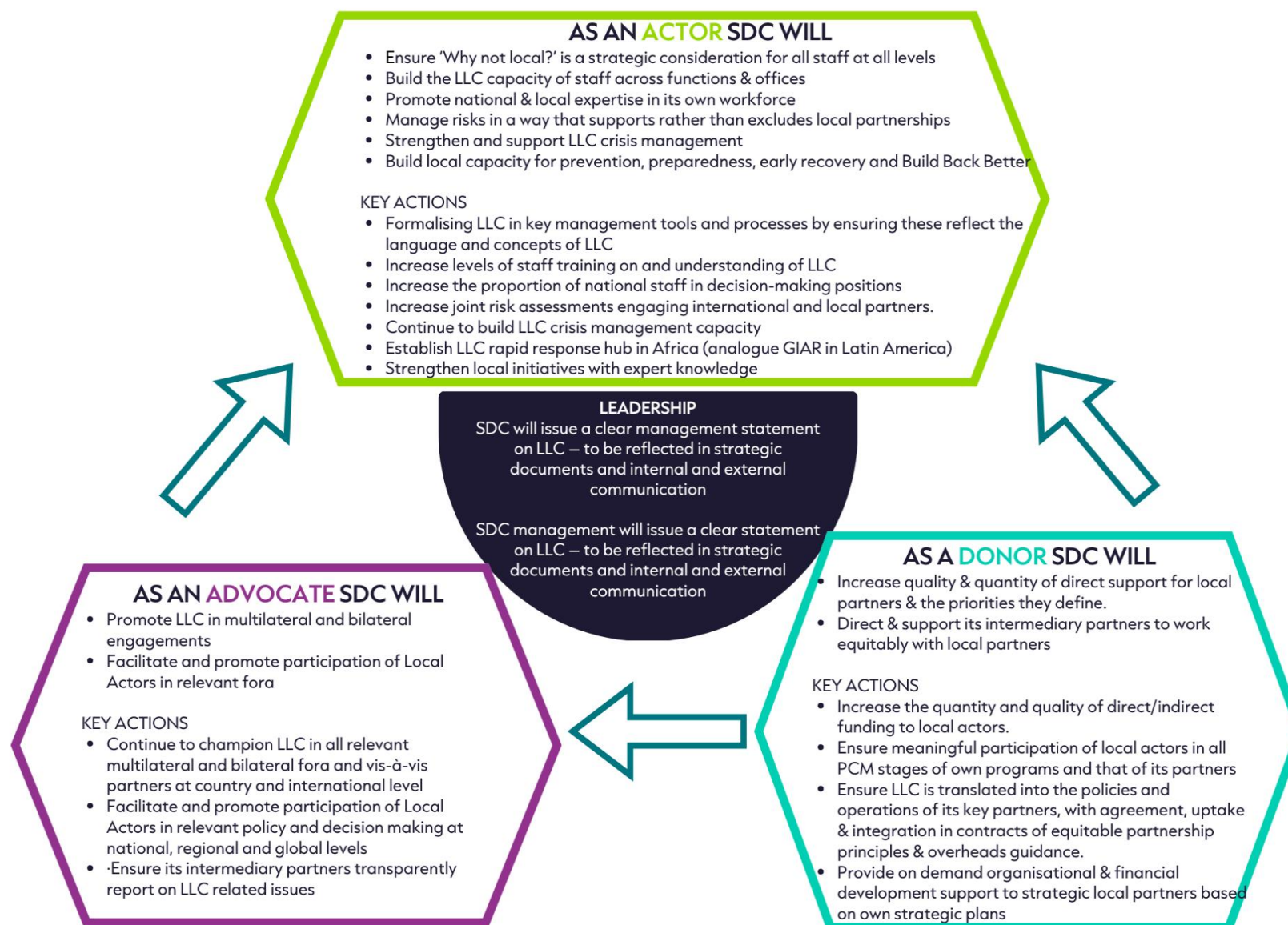
- **As an advocate:** using its position and leverage at global and country levels to lead, negotiate, and champion local leadership.
- **As donor:** working **both directly with local actors**, and **indirectly through 'intermediary'** international partners to their best comparative advantage to advance LLC.
- **As an actor:** optimising its internal ways of working to most effectively support LLC.

Strong leadership is at the centre of action across all three areas. A clear statement of high-level management strategic intent on LLC as a general approach will drive SDC's LLC work as an advocate, as a donor and in its internal institutional change. This management statement can then be reflected in key communication and strategic documents - including thematic strategies and decision notes on country programmes. Leadership support will also support culture-change, providing the 'licence to operate' and institutional steer for staff at all levels to navigate the context-specific decisions involved in making LLC an operational reality.

The sections below (3.2, 3.3 and 3.4) outline the pathways to action in each of the three focus areas, highlighting the current state, priority actions, and key progress indicators. These actions are based on detailed plans developed by the five expert Working Groups as part of this process, which are available in annex 2.

The actions focus on what needs to be done to effectively deploy and enhance SDC's efforts to consistently advance its LLC goals and achieve a step-change in delivering LLC. It builds on what SDC already has in place including benefits from a flexible range of instruments, adaptable ways of working, and a track record of good practices in multiple countries in addition to its policy commitments (see box 1).

Figure 5: Summary of SDCs pathway to action to advance effective LLC



3.2 SDC's pathway for action as an actor

State of play

SDC is largely felt to have the room within its institutional structures and instruments to be able to support LLC. However, it needs to take active measures to ensure that understanding and use of this room is systematically embedded in the working culture. And that working with LNAs becomes a default option.

This involves reviewing the configuration, culture and capacity of staff. As the OECD DAC peer review Deep Dive on Locally-Led Development in Switzerland noted (OECD, 2024d), SDC benefits from significant autonomy for staff at the mission level due to its decentralised system, and of good practice in some countries to prioritise LLC in ways of working,^{xiii}. However, consultation of external stakeholders revealed that understanding and good practice was felt to be country or staff dependent rather than systematically institutionalised. This was also evident in perceptions around SDC's risk appetite, where although SDC's Partner Risk Assessment tool can be an enabler rather than a hindrance to LLC, some partners still felt that SDC was risk averse (see annex 1)^{xiv}.

Further, a field in which SDC functions as an actor is humanitarian aid. Switzerland actively uses its pool of Expert of the Swiss Humanitarian Aid unit (SHA) to building local capacity for and in crisis management, prevention, preparedness, early recovery and Build Back Better. In times of sudden onset disasters local crises management mechanism are often to the extend weakened, that they require support from neighbouring districts or countries or even international support. Since years, SDC specialised in building local capacity to react in times of crisis to international standards and in accordance with humanitarian principles. With its direct action approach, SDC works directly with affected communities and/or local institutions, often in hard to reach areas in reconstruction and protracted crises contexts, by supporting with sector SHA and local expert knowledge (e.g. WASH, earthquake proof construction, etc.). This area of action therefore largely involves continuing and enhancing already good practice

Pathway for action

SDC has identified four priority areas for action to ensure systematic integration of LLC in the way it works, and that it ensures that its workforce is suitably configured and empowered to support and deliver this, that it: builds the LLC capacities of all staff; promotes the expertise of national staff; that it ensures a consistent approach to risk; and that it further strengthens and supports LLC crisis management and continues to build local capacities.

Priority aims

- **SDC takes a common approach, which considers leadership by and partnership with local actors as a default option by**
 - Turn 'Why not local?' into a guiding question throughout all country, programmatic and thematic tools and documents.
- **SDC builds the capacity of, and incentives for, its staff across functions and offices to confidently and consistently promote LLC by:**
 - Systematising institutional knowledge management repositories and processes on LLC across SDC, including through a network of practitioners for sharing learning.
 - Formulating staff guidance on role of SDC's various instruments and tools in supporting LLC across the programme management cycle and promoting this through routine and bespoke training.
 - Formalising LLC in key management tools (in particular country and thematic decision notes and programs as well as Entry and Credit Proposals) and processes by ensuring these reflect the language and concepts of LLC.

- Analysing the potential need of a partner to be accompanied with organisational development and/or financial measures (analysis mainly through existing instruments like the Partner Risk Assessment and the Audit reports).
- Routinely building in space for strategic consultation of local and international partners - including in-country opportunities for local actors to engage with SDC directly, and ongoing and participatory institutional dialogue with international partners on LLC.
- **SDC increases and promotes national and local expertise in its own workforce by:**
 - Increasing opportunities for responsibility to be held by colleagues from the countries SDC works in, including through staff promotion and creation of more regional expert pools.
 - Using existing performance management tools consistently to encourage fair and equitable treatment of national and international staff and partners.
 - Using local actors for improvement of financial practice (e.g.: local audit company, or international audit company with local branches).
- **SDC manages programme risks in a way that supports rather than excludes local partnerships and that addresses risks together with local and international partners rather than transferring risks to them by:**
 - Strengthening its professional capacity by fostering training and capacity building measures to ensure that staff can use the 'margin to manoeuvre' within its regulations to adapt to local actors' circumstances.
 - Ensuring that guidance is routinely used to guide in joint assessments of risks with partners for a fair, holistic, and responsible sharing of risks.
- SDC further strengthens and supports LLC crisis management and continues to build local capacities:
 - SDC will continue to build local/national partners capacity in crisis management including Urban Search and Rescue (USAR).
 - SDC establishes a Rapid Response Hub in Africa (analogue GIAR in Latin America).
 - SDC strengthens locally-led prevention, preparedness, early recovery and Build Back Better initiatives with SHA expert knowledge.

Possible indicators for use by relevant management at country programme level and for thematic and multilateral divisions

- Numbers of staff across functions and offices engaging in trainings on LLC approach
- Percentage of national staff in country offices and average length of postings for national and international staff
- Percentage of national staff with leadership, advisory, expert, or fiduciary responsibility
- Number of staff who have completed the PCM - Risk Management training
- Increase in joint risk assessments directly engaging International and local partners
- Number of local staff participating as peer reviewers in evaluations/assessments (and number of opportunities given to them by SDC).
- An increase in partner countries / institutions having increased crisis management capacity (USAR)
- The Rapid Response Hub for Afrika (analogue GIAR in Latin America) established
- Number of locally-led initiatives in prevention, preparedness, early recovery and Build Back Better with SHA expert knowledge supported

3.3 SDC's pathway for action as a donor

State of play

While limits to 'hard data' measurement make it difficult to assess SDC's performance, the available figures (see section 1.2 above) back up survey findings that SDC is perceived to have some way to go as an LLC-enabling donor. Respondents to our survey were less positive about SDC as a donor than as an advocate of LLC and most negative about its performance in providing quality financing for LLC (see annex 1). Within SDC, Working Group members concluded that although there was sufficient flexibility in instruments, there needed to be a 'culture shift' in SDC to optimise use of these instruments and to move from a project-oriented approach to a strategically planned portfolio that reflects the LLC priority.

Pathway for action

Two priority aims for action were clearly identified to improve SDC's role as a direct and indirect donor for LLC:

- 1) that it improves its **direct funding to local actors**, and
- 2) that it supports its international partners to improve as **intermediaries** with local actors.

Priority aims

- **AS A DIRECT DONOR TO LOCAL ACTORS: SDC increases the quality and quantity of its direct support for local partners' and the priorities they define by:**
 - Adapting budgeting/reporting processes to enable better access to for local actors- including considering accommodating submissions in local languages and providing training on processes
 - Ensuring a better balance on modality types - with fewer mandates and more core and program/project contributions^{xv} to enable support for LLC.
 - Supporting the organisational growth of local actors as defined in consultation with them, including through dedicated budget-lines, providing external support to accompany them on key organisational needs (e.g. fulfilling audit standards) and more core contributions.
 - Developing equitable partnership principles (aligned with other donors and developed with partners) including an equitable overheads policy, to guide own partner engagements.
 - Involving local partners throughout the project cycle - including in design, evaluation and communication
 - Reviewing the operational relevance and internal practicability of increasing the maximum budget volume of small grants and budget allocation per partial action as well as expanding the duration of small grants contracts.
- **AS AN DONOR TO INTERMEDIARIES: SDC directs and supports its international partners to work in equitable, respectful and empowering relationships with their local partners by:**
 - Developing equitable partnership principles (aligned with other donors) and integrate partnership principles in SDC's contractual and reporting requirements for international partners.
 - Make pass-through of overheads and quality funding conditions (flexible, multi-year) mandatory for international partners, and backing this up through monitoring and reporting.
 - Favouring tenders that include local partners in the design and planning - and supporting this with budget space and with models for good practice.
 - Establishing 'why not local' as a default question and standard agenda item in SDC's ongoing dialogues with international partners.

Possible indicators of action for use by relevant management at country programme level and for thematic and multilateral divisions

- An increase in the amount of SDC funding going directly to local actors (also institutional level indicator monitored at IC Strategy level - see section 4.1).
- An increase in the number of SDC contracts directly agreed with local actors (linked to institutional level indicator monitored at IC Strategy level - see section 4.1).
- A change in the quality of contracts agreed with local actors and international intermediaries - with more LLC-enabling 'contribution' modalities; and fewer 'mandate' modalities.
- Agreement, uptake and integration in contracts of equitable partnership principles, and overheads guidance and tracking of results of this including increase of quality funding, overhead pass through.
- An increase in the amount of SDC funding going indirectly to local actors via its intermediary partners.
- An increase in the partial actions embedded in credit proposals aiming at funding organisational and/or financial development measures of the partner organisation.

3.4 SDC's pathway for action as an advocate

State of play

Because Switzerland already uses its position on the global stage and at a country-level to advocate for LLC, this area of action largely involves continuing and enhancing already good practice. The survey of external stakeholders conducted for this process, showed respondents rated SDC's performance in this advocacy role most positively. Of the six dimensions of LLC, they were also most positive about its role in promoting local leadership, ownership and influence of local actors (see annex 1).

As outlined above (section 1.2), Switzerland leverages its role at policy level as a signatory, and at an operational level in coordination fora to promote action amongst its peers and its partners and will continue to do so including through its active engagement on:

- Grand Bargain - as an inclusive space to advance LLC commitments at global and national levels.
- Boards of UN agencies and International Financial Institutions (IFI), and through partnership engagement with them, and through secondments - to support them in concrete steps towards working in equitable partnerships and transparency on LLC related issues such as pass-through funding and overhead sharing with local partners.
- Management boards of Pooled Funds - to promote participation of local actors, increased funding to local actors, risk sharing and space for innovation.
- Engagement at country level in coordinating bodies such as HCT, relevant IFI's, UN agencies, Pooled Funds, RC/HCs, Grand Bargain NRGs and other international partners and networks to ensure their global commitments on LLC and involvement and accountability to local actors and are translated into concrete action
- OECD DAC, including through the CSO Working Group and the multiple DAC networks which it participates in and/or co-chairs^{xvi} - advancing concrete actions towards equitable partnerships and due diligence passporting and agreeing on a joint indicator on pass-through funding by intermediary partners.

Pathway for action

Through concerted action to advance its performance as a donor and as an institution (see sections 3.3 and 3.4), SDC will further optimise its opportunities and credibility to influence wider progress on LLC across multilateral and in-country stakeholders. Tools, guidance, and best practice can be used to inspire, influence and inform others.

The next specific priority for action for SDC is to ensure that it opens access for, as well as supports and financially resources, local actors' self-representation in the spaces where it advocates, and promotes and amplifies the voices and views of local actors. SDC will focus its efforts to achieve this around the following aims:

Priority aims

- **SDC consistently provides local actors with the space, resources and capacities they require so that they can co-shape decisions that affect them - ensuring that its intermediary partners do the same by:**
 - ensuring that opportunities and resources for meaningful local engagement are routine built into the policy, programme and project development and management cycles
 - consistently highlighting the contributions of local actors in SDC communications and reporting, involving local partners in the content creation of these - and ensuring that its international intermediaries do the same
 - advocating for strengthening of LLC with its UN and IFI partner agencies and coordination spaces (in multilateral fora, in its function as a board member of partner agencies, through its secondments and through its program cooperation)
- **SDC promotes LLC and facilitates local representation and influence at a multilateral level by:**
 - Contributing consistently to facilitating and resourcing the active participation of Local Actors in relevant policy, coordination and decision-making bodies at national, regional and global levels
 - Continuing to proactively provide leadership and engagement in multilateral efforts to strengthen LLC (e.g. at OECD DAC level); joint definition of LLC, efforts to harmonize risk assessments, etc.
 - Highlighting and amplifying local contributions and locally-led evidence in SDC contributions to multilateral fora.

Possible indicators of action for use by relevant management at country programme level and for thematic and multilateral divisions

- Increases in the frequency and depth of involvement of local actors and experts in policy, programme, project design, evaluation and communication.
- Increases in the numbers of self-representation of local partners in global or multilateral fora, facilitated and resourced by SDC and partners.
- Increases in the frequency of substantive references to contributions of local partners and locally-generated knowledge.
- Changes in specific multilateral policy and practice as advocated by SDC and partners

4. Measuring progress

4.1 Setting indicators for success

Three inter-connected high-level indicators will be used as an institutional top-line measure of progress towards SDC's overarching vision of LLC:^{xvii}

- **Indicator 1. Quantity of funding: Percentage of direct bilateral SDC funding to local actors.** Baseline 2024: 12%.
- **Indicator 2: Quality of funding (proxy): percentage of SDC bilateral funding through core-contributions to local actors.** Baseline 2024: 0.7%.
- **Indicator 3: Quality of partnerships of SDC's international priority organisations and Swiss NGOs with their local partners: Number of SDC core contribution contracts with international and Swiss priority organisations include a formal commitment of them adhering to equitable partnership principles^{xviii} with local actors.** Baseline 2024: 0.

A series of potential additional indicators on other aspects of LLC action are set out under the action areas above (section 3). These can be selected, adapted and elaborated at country programme level or by the relevant thematic and multilateral division, in order to motivate and monitor their contribution to achieving the SDC LLC goal.

Given the contextually-driven differences in performance between countries to date, and their different potential pathways for change, next to the three high-level institutional indicators, country and program teams will be in a position to set more detailed LLC indicators in specific areas - for example on capacity strengthening. Critically, SDC will need to ensure that these country level metrics also reflect local priorities for success, and to involve partners in their development.

4.2 SDC's pathway for monitoring progress

State of play

A range of approaches and measurement tools will be needed to capture Switzerland's LLC progress across SDC and its partners. SDC already has many of the monitoring mechanisms required for tracking progress. However, as the DAC review noted, these are not yet being brought together to provide easily communicated measures of SDC's work on LLC. Reviews undertaken by SDC staff as part of this LLC process^{xix} highlighted that these can be used, adapted and augmented to gather data on progress, and incentivise action by staff and partners by making expectations around LLC central, explicit and routine.

This will include monitoring against the three high level indicators above to track the quantities of funding and the overall portfolio of contracts with local actors as part of the monitoring of IC Strategy modalities in the annual report as well as:

- Integrating evaluation of LLC in other independent external evaluations of SDC funded support during 2025-2028.
- Adapting proposal and decision notes and annual reports to include response to 'why not local', and to articulate country or thematic targets on what a balanced portfolio of international/local partnerships looks like for that country/section.

- Integrating quality and quantity of funding to local actors in programme financial reporting
- Reporting on the organisational & financial development measures taken (if applicable).

To further improve its monitoring and accountability against its LLC action plan, SDC is also actively engaging with the OECD DAC's ongoing work to develop a framework for measuring LLC (OECD, 2024) and will ensure that its processes and metrics align with and utilise agreed methods and platforms. If opportunity arises it will work towards achieving agreement on an indicator on pass-on funding by intermediary partners. The SDC Working Group engaged with the DAC team on this, and also identified the following specific priority aim and actions for SDC. Review and adaptation of respective internal guidelines and programme cycle management instruments has already begun under the current process, with measures to be taken detailed in the action plan (see annex 2).

Priority aims

- **SDC ensures that it and its intermediary partners can be held to account for progress on LLC by:**
 - Proactively communicating the LLC goal internally (management statement) and calling on all staff members to contribute to its achievement.
 - Setting clear budget requirements, linked to the financial reporting system and contractual agreements to track quantity and quality of funding to local actors (as part of equitable partnership principles).
 - Organisational & financial development measures (if embedded in the project) are part of the regular reporting of the partner and those providing such measures.
 - Ensuring that local experts are involved in measuring success - with national staff and consultants in substantive roles in evaluation teams, and active engagement of local partners in ongoing monitoring processes.
 - Minimising bureaucratic burden of reporting requirements - including through harmonising requirements with other donors.

While metrics and reporting processes are vital for incentivising and being accountable for action, SDC will also capture its learning and progress on LLC in other ways. This includes maintaining investments in evaluating the impacts of the programmes it supports to demonstrate how LLC improves effective and sustainable outcomes. It also includes maintaining formal and informal dialogue with international and local partners to elicit lessons - and importantly integrating the findings of all of its measurements into an ongoing cycle of doing better.

5. Conclusion

Being locally led is at the heart of Swiss values and is central to effective development cooperation at a time of increasingly high demand and scarce resources. Locally-led cooperation is enshrined in multiple global commitments which Switzerland has championed and signed. However, assessments of Switzerland's progress on fulfilling these commitments and values show that its track record has been positive but inconsistent, and data shows that the share of its funding to local actors is low and has been stagnating at 9% while the share towards international actors is increasing.

There is therefore a clear imperative for SDC to advance its work on LLC. In agreeing this pathway to action, it has demonstrated its commitment to seizing this imperative and to building on the foundations of its commitments and work to date. The explicit inclusion of LLC in the IC Strategy 2025-2028 not only signals its importance as an approach for Switzerland, but it also provides a specific timeframe for measurable improvement.

Given that Switzerland is in the relatively strong position among donors of having a flexible range of instruments, significant operational latitude, and ability to draw on its LLC good practices in multiple countries – there are few barriers to achieving this improvement. Indeed, this pathway to action represents a systematisation and optimisation of existing commitments, instruments and practices. The definitions of LLC; the goals and indicators; and the concrete actions which the Directorate mandated this 'action pathway' process to provide, now provide SDC and its partners with the clarity to move ahead.

Making progress will now demand concerted and consistent engagement across all levels of SDC as an actor, a donor, and an advocate for LLC. A first step to underpin this engagement will be the elaboration of a management statement to provide the necessary leadership steer accompanied by clear internal and external communication. At the same time, SDC country and thematic teams will move ahead with detailing relevant indicators and methods for measuring progress, to support progress towards the institutional goals. The action points set out in the action plan will be implemented by the specified units and staff, with nominated directorate members ensuring internal accountability. All combined, these efforts will enable Switzerland and its partners to demonstrate by 2028 a positive trajectory towards more locally-led cooperation.

Abbreviations

ECHO - European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations
HCT - Humanitarian Country Team
HDP - Humanitarian-Development-Peace
ICS - International Cooperation Strategy
IFI - International Financial Institutions (IFI)
INGO- International Non-Governmental Organisation
LLC - Locally-led cooperation
LNA - Local or National Actor
LNNGO - Local or National Non-Governmental NGO
NRG - National Reference Groups
ODA - Official Development Assistance
OECD DAC - Development Assistance Committee of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development
PCM - Programme Cycle Management
RC/HCs - United Nations Resident Coordinators/ Humanitarian Coordinators
SDC - Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation

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ANNEX 1: CONSULTATION PROCESS AND FEEDBACK

Consultation process

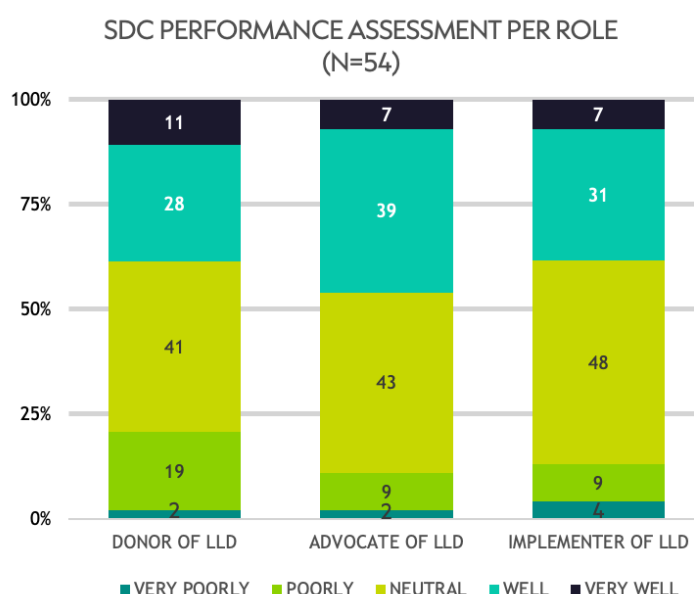
A consultation of external stakeholders was conducted as part of the process for creating this pathway for action. Conducted between July and September 2024, it involved a four-step process:

- **Step one:** An invite-only online survey was conducted in both French and English. A total of 54 participants responded, including 23 LNAs, 25 INGOs, and 4 research institute representatives/consultants.
- **Step two:** A two-hour online consultation with select survey respondents to dive deeper into the survey results, allowing participants to share additional perspectives and experiences. This was attended by 11 LNAs, 12 INGOs, and 1 independent consultant.
- **Step three:** The data from both the survey and consultation were analysed and consolidated to identify key themes, challenges, and opportunities for advancing LLC across different dimensions. The findings were summarised in a report shared with SDC.
- **Step four:** customized summaries were presented to each of the SDC working groups, in a series of on-line working group meetings. These drew out findings that were pertinent to each of their priority areas and taken as the starting point for WG discussions to ensure that this external feedback was fully considered in each working group action plan.

Fuller details of the consultation findings are available in the full report shared with SDC, the overarching points of which are summarized below.

Views on SDC's roles on LLC

Overall, SDC is viewed positively for its commitment to LLC with the survey responses reflecting both strengths and challenges in SDC's roles. Survey participants were asked to reflect on three aspects of SDC's role in LLC: namely its role as a donor, as an advocate, and as an implementer. They were asked to rate these on a scale ranging from very poorly to very well (see figure below).



External stakeholders generally have a positive view of SDC's roles as donor, advocate, and implementor of LLC is generally positive, with more positive responses around its work as an advocate and less so in its role as a donor and direct implementer. The large proportion of neutral answers may include a range of views - from a perception of 'middling' performance to a lack of opinion. Indeed, the consultation process indicated some neutral responses stem from a lack of awareness of SDC's LLC practices.

SDC as an advocate of LLC: Respondents commend SDC for its advocacy and active participation in initiative to support locally-led cooperation, particularly at a global level, with a few examples cited including:

- actively maintaining localization as a priority through initiatives like the Grand Bargain Localisation Workstream (including through the caucus of intermediaries),
- co-chairing advisory groups for country-based pooled funds
- being Co-Chair in the Community of Practice on the Civil Society of the Development Assistance Committee (DAC).

SDC as a donor of LLC: SDC is recognized for its flexible and responsive funding approach (programme and core contributions), essential for local ownership and adaptation. However, challenges such as high reporting requirements, poor communications, timeliness, and complex administrative procedures hinder its effectiveness (as discussed below).

SDC's role as an implementer has significantly less visibility among external stakeholders, many of whom felt they had limited knowledge to assess its performance in this regard. A common suggestion was to improve direct coLLCaboration with local stakeholders.

In their own words: Respondents' feedback on SDC'S areas for improvement in LLC

We sometimes don't have confidence to ask SDC questions or make requests of SDC. If the relationship were closer (maybe less formal) this probably wouldn't be an issue (LNNGO).

SDC should accept that the projects are diverse and not always aligned with the indicators or themes defined by Switzerland. This often involves long-term partnerships to build trust and not operation on mandate or 'on call' (LNNGO).

SDC is recognized for its commitment to transparency and accountability, as evidenced by publishing cooperation information on its website. Expanding this practice to include information about downstream partners would enhance the comprehensiveness of the disclosure, provided it is balanced with the security concerns and contextual sensitivities of the operating country (LNNGO).

SDC is generally recognized for its commitment to financing local initiatives, directly supporting local actors in various contexts, including humanitarian, development and peace projects... However, some criticism may exist regarding the complexity of administrative procedures and the slowness of funding approval processes (INGO).

SDC appears very risk adverse. Mostly, security and financial risks have to be covered, addressed by local actors or its international NGO or other partners (INGO).

SDC has several requirements, especially in the area of reporting, that go against LLC. For example, SDC requires project audit reports in English even if none of the involved actors speak English (INGO).

SDC's definition of LLC and role is very different in different countries/cooperation offices, depending on different people/staff (INGO).

SDC is often too prominently visible, mainly in publications, in contrast to local partners and implementing organizations (INGO).

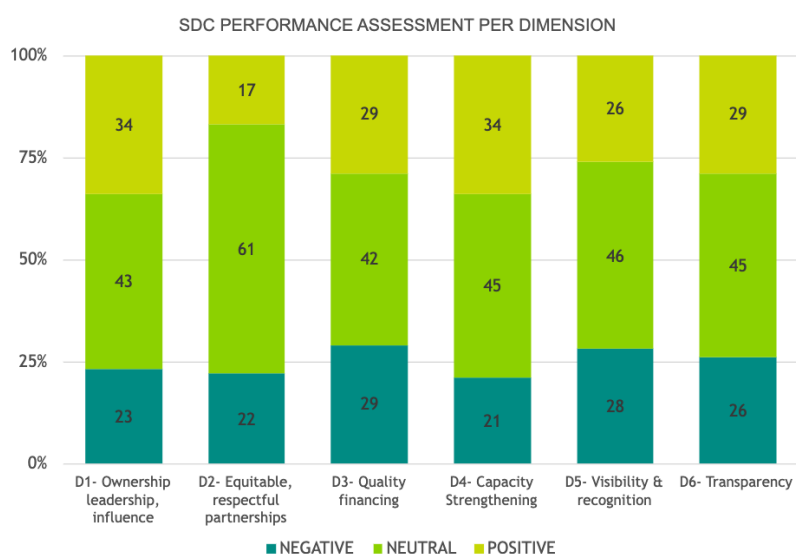
It is important to note that across all roles and dimensions, local and national non-governmental organizations (LNNGOs) generally provided more positive assessments compared to international NGOs (INGOs). This may reflect a greater and longer direct exposure to SDC on the part of INGOs compared to LNNGOs. Differing perceptions between LNNGOs and INGOs might reflect cultural and power dynamics, with INGOs feeling more empowered to critique donors—a trend noted in other evaluations of locally-led cooperation.^{xx}

External stakeholders identified a number of existing good practices that SDC could continue and scale up, which cut across the six dimensions of LLC. These good practices include:

- SDC's mappings of local actors and partners to encourage networking and highlight their skills.
- SDC's active participation in international advocacy spaces for LLC, such as the Grand Bargain's localisation workstream, ensuring that local actors have a voice in strategic decision-making.
- Examples of SDC's staff engaging with local partners to understand and analyse local contexts, learning from and supporting their ideas and practices, while also seeking local actors' input in shaping SDC's strategy
- SDC's core contributions and multi-year funding which provide significant flexibility.
- SDC's current arrangements are harmonised with the reporting requirements of other donors.

Views on SDC's performance in the six dimensions of LLC

Survey responses indicate that SDC performs best in Ownership and Leadership, and Capacity Strengthening, where a significant portion of respondents rated performance positively. Conversely, the least positive responses were in Quality Financing and Equitable Partnerships. Across all dimensions, LNNGOs consistently provided more positive assessments of SDC's performance. Fuller analysis of feedback including suggestion for improving action under each dimension are available in the consultation report and were shared with each Working Group.



ENDNOTES

ⁱ LLC is one of five implementation modalities in the new Swiss IC Strategy 2025-28 (the others are multilateral, multi-stakeholder, Swiss Expertise, new technology/digitalization). These implementation modalities are not mutually exclusive and will be implemented together and in relation to each other in the realisation of the IC Strategy. Within SDC, the term “modality” is used to describe the nature of an SDC activity/engagement (project contribution, core contribution, mandate, private sector engagement, etc.). In order to be able to make the distinction, the term “approach” instead of “implementation modality” will be used to define locally-led action within the framework of the IC Strategy.

ⁱⁱ These indicators should not imply a considerable Increase In the number of contracts since this would mean a high Increase In workload for SDC offices. Indicators should be in accordance with the resources available.

ⁱⁱⁱ See the V-Dem democracy indices 2024, Nord et al (2024)

^{iv} For example, detailed analysis on the cost efficiency of funding local intermediaries in Ukraine, revealed that local intermediaries deliver programs 15.5% more cost-efficiently than international counterparts, based on actual project data representing 30% of total funding through the Ukraine humanitarian country based pooled fund (ShareTrust 2024)

^v When asked to rate SDC's performance as an advocate of LLC, 39% of respondents said that it was performing well and an additional 7% that it was performing very well.

^{vi} The peer learning review drew on three DAC member case studies (Canada, Ireland and Switzerland, along with three country deep dives (Colombia, Ethiopia and Nepal) and six thematic deep dives.

^{vii} “Bilateral aid represents flows from official (government) sources directly to the recipient country. Multilateral aid represents core contributions from official (government) sources to multilateral agencies which use them to fund their own developmental programmes. Multilateral agencies, such as United Nations agencies, are governed by representatives of governments, unlike non-governmental organisations (NGOs). A donor can contract a multilateral agency to deliver a programme or project on its behalf in a recipient country: the funds are typically counted as bilateral flows, and often referred to as Bi/Multi. Donor funds channelled through NGOs are also typically counted as bilateral flows.” Source: [OECD DAC - Official development assistance \(ODA\): Frequently asked questions](#)

^{viii} The self-reporting process for the Grand Bargain is widely acknowledged to be highly variable, as signatories have different methods and metrics for assessing their own action. Similarly, using the OECD DAC's Creditor Reporting System for estimating donor performance is problematic due to issues including: reporting consistency; time-lags in data release; conflation of budget support to governments and funding to non-governmental actors; inability to capture funding beyond the first level of recipients; and poor proxies of quality of funding (see OECD 2024c:10).

^{ix} The report also highlights the need to address internal administrative barriers that impede LLC, establish a culture that encourages considerate risk taking, move from a deficit to a local capacity framing, enable greater local leadership in the design of SDC programming and promote equity into contracts with multilateral international intermediary partners.

^x <https://ec.europa.eu/echo/files/policies/sectoral/dg%20echo%20guidance%20note%20-%20promoting%20equitable%20partnerships%20with%20local%20responders%20in%20humanitarian%20settings.pdf>

^{xi} In Ukraine, the Swiss mission developed a specific set of ‘fair partnership principles’ for its international partners to adhere to, and has been working to expand these to encompass risk-sharing and duty of care. They have also worked to partners with insurance companies to cover frontline responders in Ukraine. In Myanmar, SDC has financially supported local CSOs’ capacity strengthening directly to maintain civil society space. In Latin America, the Swiss Humanitarian Aid Unit - the operational arm of SDC - created a deployable pool of regional and national experts which can serve as a positive model for replication elsewhere.

^{xii} Regional bodies representing national actors, and global networks of national and local actors also play a critical role in supporting LLC and shifting power towards them. However, based on the OECD-DAC learning exercise they are only included if member organisations maintain independent fundraising and governance systems. Local actors do not include international NGOs including country offices, multilateral organisations, and international private sector organisations. See p.15 https://www.oecd.org/en/publications/pathways-towards-effective-locally-led-development-co-operation_51079bba-en/full-report.html

^{xiii} This includes best practice from the country team in Nepal which ensured that national staff are valued in decision-making

^{xiv} As one INGO respondent to the survey noted: “SDC appears very risk adverse. Mostly, security and financial risks have to be covered, addressed by local actors or its international NGO or other partners”.

^{xv} The SDC can provide contributions and award mandates. Contributions represent SDC support for NGO-initiated activities, whereas mandates are SDC-initiated activities carried out by NGOs or other actors. The Subsidies Act (for contributions) and the Public Procurement Act (for mandates) are applicable (Bundesgesetz über Finanzhilfen und Abgeltungen (Subventionsgesetz, SuG, SR 616.1) and Bundesgesetz über das öffentliche Beschaffungswesen (BöB, SR 172.056.1)). The fact that mandates are SDC-initiated projects and come with high procurement requirements, makes them less suitable and accessible for locally-led action. For this reason, mandates tend to de facto be granted to Swiss CSOs, INGOs, or only well-established “elite” local organisations. The use of local (restricted) mandates aimed at targeting other local actors in a specific context is exceptional. Contributions however are grants to NGOs own programmes and projects - the ownership of the programme/project is with the NGO. For project contributions to

INGOs/Multi-Bi partners, SDC demands a 50% co-contribution from other sources but for local NGOs, this is reduced to 20%.

^{xvi} These include INCAF, Govnet, Environet and Gendernet.

^{xvii} These indicators should not imply a considerable increase in the number of contracts since this would mean a high increase in workload for SDC offices. Indicators should be in accordance with the resources available.

^{xviii} Either in a separate annex or integrated in the FDFA Code of Conduct.

^{xix} As part of the process, ALNAP mapped existing indicators, metrics and methods used under accepted frameworks already in use by SDC and its partners. These fed into a process led by a dedicated cross-SDC goal-setting working group where indicators and mechanisms for measurement were discussed, before being taken up and further detailed by the Tracking and monitoring Working Group.

^{xx} See Swithern, S., Lattimer, C., Atim, T., Karame, G., Kondratenko, D., Korenkova, K., and Zahau, C. (2024). Supporting Local Actors: Evaluation of Sweden's Application to the Grand Bargain Localisation Agenda. The Expert Group for Aid Studies (EBA)