



“Sustainable development is the pathway to the future we want for all. It offers a framework to generate economic growth, achieve social justice, exercise environmental stewardship and strengthen governance.”

(Ban Ki-Moon, 2013)

How to promote true Sustainability and Impact Readiness?

In the Swiss Federal Council and Parliament prevail discussions about the SDC's budget. The global 4-year credit 2017-2020 for the SDC has been intensely debated in the parliament and the authorization in the National Council ended up in a close run. There are various criticisms on SDC's approach in development cooperation. The SDC is therefore under pressure to take action and change its previous approach. In the SDC's dispatch 2017-2020 one of the priorities and focal areas which guide Switzerland's development cooperation includes “strengthening partnerships with the private sector and diversifying sources of funding for sustainable development”. This means that the SDC is looking for new approaches which have greater impact and therefore, the effectiveness of SDC's work will be questioned less in the future.

Public Private Development Partnerships seem to be the solution for more effective and sustainable development cooperation. They are also one of the targets of the UN's Sustainable Development Goals and necessary to implement all of the other goals. Through partnerships with the private sector it is possible to bundle public and private resources, expertise and know-how. The overall goal is that businesses take action in the area of development cooperation and are no longer only driven by profit but rather by sustainable impact.

Therefore, the question emerges with which companies the SDC wants to cooperate when working on sustainable development projects and how SDC can support companies to become more sustainable. The current criteria the SDC applies to assess potential private partners are mainly focusing on risk aspects and on minimizing negative externalities of the companies. Since it is the SDC's goal to find out how they can support private actors to move towards true sustainability, the criteria should also focus on what those private partners can positively contribute to tackle certain social or environmental issues. During our practical project, we were able to identify various levers where the SDC has potential to implement different measures to promote private actors' development towards true sustainability. In case we gained your attention to hear more about SDC's possibilities of fostering a true sustainable development of companies, we encourage you to read the interesting paper on Sustainability 4.0 and Impact Readiness from Nathalie Lutz, Marina Rieder and Katja Schönle.