



ADVOCACY CONCEPT

This concept provides guidance to collaborators and informs development partners and third parties on what advocacy means for HELVETAS Swiss Intercooperation. It specifies on what, when, how, with and towards whom we advocate, how we deal with inherent risks and challenges for our strategic partners, allies and primary stakeholders as well as ourselves. In addition, it shows how we measure impact and effectiveness of our engagement. At the same time, the concept outlines the complementary roles of collaborators in partner countries and in Switzerland as well as of development partners at different levels, including local, national, regional and international networks, alliances and campaigns.

Thus, this concept contributes to a coherent advocacy engagement across the organization, and helps to strengthen the consistency of our positions and the effectiveness of our actions.

INTRODUCTION

HELVETAS Swiss Intercooperation believes that purposive collective action, contestation as well as transformed beliefs, ideas and values are important drivers of political, economic and social change. Hence, we systematically engage in policy processes by advocating for systemic change at all levels. As an organisation that bases its actions on human rights, we are committed to securing the rights of poor and disadvantaged men and women. We are also convinced that advocacy is instrumental for enhancing our effectiveness and sustainability in the field and for turning our organization's positions into practice. The Advocacy Concept helps to further develop our organisation's advocacy engagement in a coherent and systematic manner, and provide clear guidance to all collaborators and partners at various levels. At the same time, it outlines three major strategic shifts for the organisation.

1. We want to increasingly think and act beyond the logic of logframes and project interventions. This means to understand and engage with the broader political context from the local to the global level, and to look for other strategic partners and allies, be part of and initiate alliances, networks and transformative movements.
2. We want to care more about the enabling environment, in order to strengthen our partners and allies and to avoid potential adverse impacts on our work.
3. We want to make better use of the 'outsider route' in order to make existing 'insider' approaches more effective – be it on our own or through our partners, allies and networks.

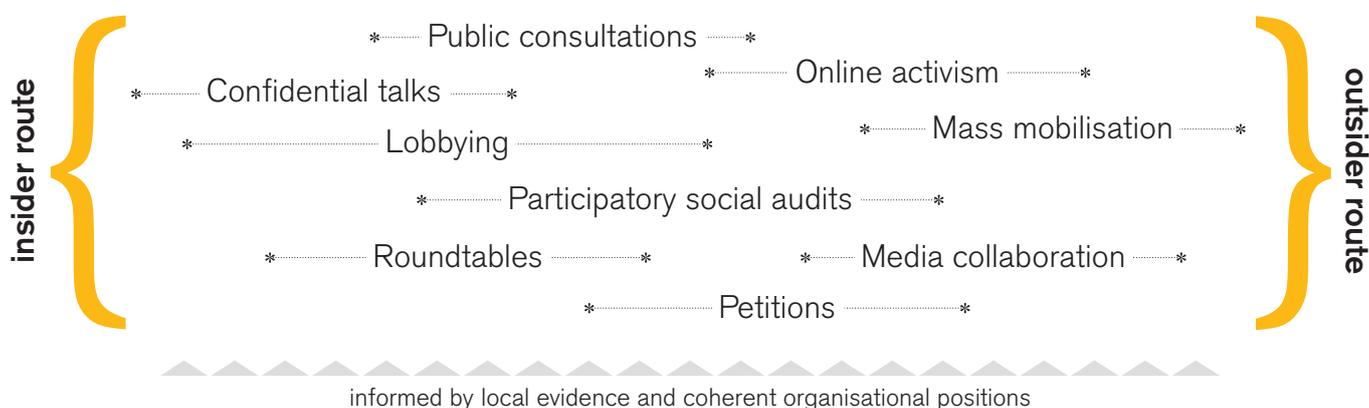
WHAT ADVOCACY MEANS FOR US

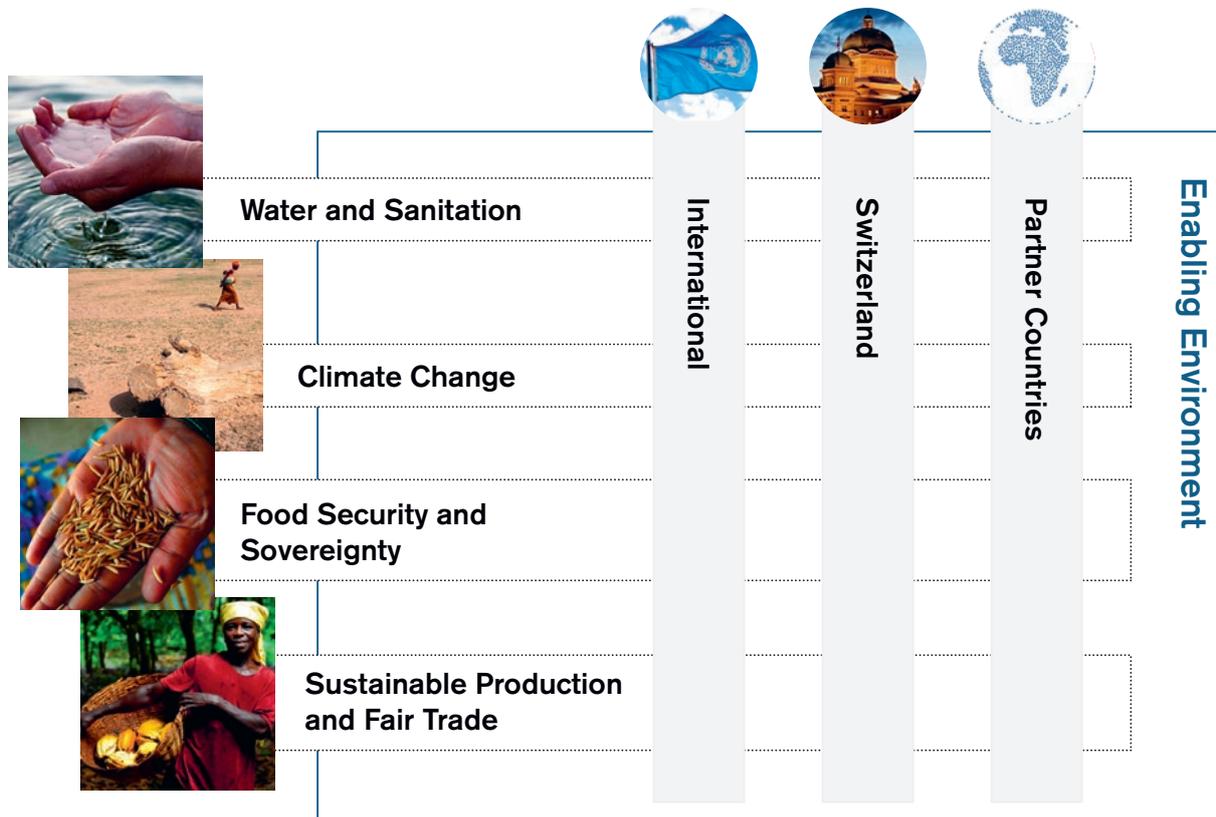
In the context of development cooperation, advocacy is best defined as the deliberate process of influencing decisions within political, economic and social systems and institutions with the aim of making policies and processes more just, inclusive and pro-poor, including through public action. This can focus on the formulation, reform, implementation and enforcement of public, corporate and organisational policies, both by speaking up on behalf of people and by supporting them to speak up themselves. Advocacy entails a very broad spectrum of approaches and methods. These range from informal or confidential talks with decision makers or roundtables with selected participants (insider route) to methods that seek to expose the target audience to a broader public (outsider route). Effective advocacy often combines different approaches in a complementary manner.

WHAT WE ADVOCATE FOR

To ensure our advocacy is strategic, coherent and effective, our organisation as a whole concentrates on four broadly defined 'key topics for advocacy': Water and Sanitation; Climate Change; Food Security and Sovereignty; and Sustainable Production and Fair Trade. It is on these four topics where we systematically strengthen and further develop our advocacy engagement to build leverage. However, this thematic focus does not prevent us from seizing advocacy opportunities on context-specific and locally relevant issues. At the same time, we recognize our responsibility and take every opportunity to advocate for an enabling environment, in order to empower our primary stakeholders and our local development partners to have a voice on their own and make it heard in an effective manner.

Range of advocacy methods and approaches (non exclusive)





Key topics for advocacy

OUR ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

In partner countries, our role of choice is to convene and facilitate advocacy for local strategic partners, allies and primary stakeholders and to support them in building their respective skills and capacities. We only engage directly when our partners and allies are barred from doing so and when our project experience provides us with sufficient credibility and legitimacy. In Switzerland and at international level we primarily engage on our own and/or with our strategic partners and allies. We are aware that these three roles are not exclusive, but may overlap at times and tend to change along with a dynamic external context, and that there are potential tensions fields between them.

	Countries	Switzerland	International
Converner / Facilitator	*****	**	***
Capacity Building for Advocacy	*****	**	*
Own, Direct Engagement	**	*****	*****

METHODS AND TONE OF VOICE

Our choice and combination of methods depends on the institutional and political context, the accessibility and openness of the target audience, the public interest in the issue addressed, as well as the resources, skills and capacities of strategic partners, our allies and ourselves. Assuming that decision makers are principally willing to listen and act if there is ample evidence and good reason to do so, our first choice is the insider route, i.e. a silent, at times confidential policy dialogue with our target audience. Wherever possible and reasonable, we facilitate such a dialogue between our strategic partners, primary stakeholders and their target audience. We explore the outsider route only where policy dialogue has proved ineffective in achieving the desired change, so that building public pressure becomes necessary.

WITH WHOM WE ENGAGE

We work in alliances and networks whenever reasonable and possible. Besides formally established, long-term strategic partnerships, we seek less formal, issue-based partnerships and liaisons with other agents of change / allies who have additional skills and resources to leverage an engagement. These may include institutions or individuals from research, the media, the private sector, from government, parliament or administration, as well as donors or local, national and international organizations, and communities.



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WHERE WE ENGAGE

Together with our strategic partners, allies and primary stakeholders we therefore seek to value each opportunity and optimize every space to systematically advocate for a particular change. Depending on the wider context and the level of engagement, our theory of change, the target audience, the issue addressed and the chosen method, we advocate within existing, formalised programme and project frameworks, or seek to reach out to other spaces including thematic platforms and networks or high-level meetings. We actively think and engage beyond immediate project frameworks, seeking to create new spaces where reasonable and possible.

HOW WE DEAL WITH RISKS

Exposure and risks depend on the institutional and political context as well as the sensitivity of the issue addressed. We seek to identify advocacy-related risks together with our strategic partners, allies, and primary stakeholders and weigh up the possible impact of an en-

gagement on their and our security. We actively involve project partners and seek for alliances and networks to mitigate risks, and share information broadly and in an open manner where possible and reasonable. Where we work through strategic partners, allies and primary stakeholders, it is largely up to them to decide whether to engage in advocacy.

HOW WE MEASURE RESULTS

Policy change is often non-linear and not necessarily followed by action. When measuring policy change, we therefore apply adequate systems and tools to capture the nuances of change, including shifts in definition (of the issue addressed), in behaviour (of the broad public and our partners), in engagement (of decision makers), in policy and practice. We understand that advocacy is long term, goes beyond the mere endorsement of laws and regulations, and requires persistence and obstinacy at all levels and by all actors.

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