



Regierungsrat des Kantons Basel-Stadt

International Cooperation Strategy of the Canton of Basel-Stadt 2026–2029

Global responsibility,
local engagement,
collaborative action

Foreword



Global crises and uncertainty shape our time and are increasingly affecting cities and regions as well. Climate change, armed conflicts, fragile state structures, global health risks and growing social inequalities pose major challenges to the international community. Against this backdrop, international

cooperation is part of responsible public policy and an expression of the global partnership for the United Nations' 2030 Agenda.

The Canton of Basel-Stadt has been active in international cooperation for many years, in particular by supporting development cooperation projects and through scholarships that enable the building and exchange of knowledge and skills in low- and middle-income countries. With the new Act on International Cooperation for Poverty Reduction and the Strengthening of Sustainable Development (GIZA), this engagement is given a dedicated legal basis and a binding framework. In doing so, the Parliament has issued a clear political mandate to substantially strengthen international cooperation and secure it over the long term.

As an internationally connected urban canton with strong institutions, a high capacity for innovation and an engaged civil society, the Canton of Basel-Stadt assumes responsibility beyond its borders. The canton's international cooperation is understood as a targeted, complementary contribution within the overall federal and international landscape.

At the heart of the canton's international cooperation is the targeted and impact-oriented use of resources. The Canton of Basel-Stadt focuses on setting priorities where the available resources can generate added value – particularly through high-impact approaches, collaborative action and the integration of expertise and networks linked to the Basel region.

With the International Cooperation Strategy the Government of the Canton of Basel-Stadt specifies the legal mandate for the 2026–2029 period and defines the strategic guidelines for its implementation. It combines global responsibility with local engagement and sets priorities in three areas that

leverage the canton's areas of expertise, political priorities and identity – in short: core elements of Basel's DNA. These are the promotion of global health, the strengthening of climate resilience and the use of culture as a lever for social participation and poverty reduction. This thematic focus enables high impact while highlighting Basel's added value in international cooperation.

The Government is convinced that international cooperation is an important contribution to stability and sustainable development, especially in a volatile world. With this strategy, the Government establishes the conditions for delivering this contribution in a targeted, responsible and credible manner.

Dr. Conradin Cramer
President of the Government

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1. Background

With the entry into force of the Act on International Cooperation for Poverty Reduction and the Strengthening of Sustainable Development (GIZA) on 1 January 2026, the Canton of Basel-Stadt has a dedicated legal framework for its engagement in international cooperation.

As an internationally connected urban canton with strong institutions, a high capacity for innovation and a pronounced commitment from civil society, the Canton of Basel-Stadt assumes responsibility beyond its borders. International cooperation combines solidarity with a long-term interest in stable, sustainable and inclusive global development. It contributes to poverty reduction, to the implementation of the United Nations' 2030 Agenda and to addressing global risks in an interconnected world, where global challenges have local consequences.

With the International Cooperation Strategy 2026–2029, the Government defines the political and strategic framework for this engagement. The strategy sets out how the canton positions itself within the national and international context, which objectives it pursues, and how funding schemes are to be used in a targeted manner to achieve impact and added value. It is aimed at political decision-makers, partner organisations in Switzerland and abroad, and the interested public.

The strategy was developed based on insights from previous funding practice, evaluations, and an analysis of the national and international context of international cooperation. The strategy process also incorporated feedback from partner organisations and expert input from policymakers, academia and practitioners. In addition, it takes the political and strategic framework at the cantonal level into account.

Political mandate

With the adoption of GIZA in May 2025, the Parliament of the Canton of Basel-Stadt issued a clear political mandate, committing to a substantial strengthening of international cooperation and sustained long-term engagement.

Through GIZA, the Parliament has established the institutional, financial and qualitative foundations for international cooperation. In particular, the Act defines a binding funding system, sets quality criteria and provides for the establishment of an advisory

commission. The Act also defines a financing target of 0.7 per cent of cantonal tax revenues. During the current strategy period, funding will therefore gradually increase from around 10 million to approximately 19.5 million Swiss francs per year. This phased approach allows for the gradual development of structures and instruments and for a step-by-step expansion of funding.

The purpose of the Canton of Basel-Stadt's international cooperation is to **reduce poverty and strengthen sustainable development globally, with a focus on low- and middle-income countries**. In thematic terms, it encompasses development cooperation, peacebuilding, humanitarian aid, and human security, insofar as these contribute to both poverty reduction and sustainable development.

Reference framework at cantonal level

International cooperation is embedded in the broader political and strategic framework of the canton. Key cantonal objectives – particularly in the areas of climate and the environment, gender equality, innovation, culture and cross-border cooperation – form an important reference framework within which international cooperation is situated. This framework enables the identification of linkages and potential synergies with other cantonal policy areas and to leverage them where this generates added value in line with the funding purpose.

Connections with the canton's **innovation** policy arise where international cooperation initiatives relate to the canton's priority fields – such as life sciences, digital innovation, or a sustainable economy – and where actors from Basel's innovation ecosystem can contribute to achieving the strategic objectives of international cooperation.

Substantive links also exist with the canton's objectives in the areas of **climate protection and gender equality**, as defined in the Cantonal Constitution and relevant strategic instruments. These objectives provide strategic guidance and are taken into account in the assessment of initiatives where appropriate.

Culture represents a further point of reference. The Canton of Basel-Stadt regards culture both as an asset and as a societal resource. Cantonal cultural policy strengthens culture as a space for participation, dialogue, and societal reflection. International cooperation initiatives may build on this where cul-

tural practice contributes to social cohesion, participation and inclusion, or the addressing of societal tensions.

Finally, there are also linkages with **cross-border cooperation**. As a trinationally connected urban canton, Basel-Stadt has many years of experience in working with partners in neighbouring countries.

2. Guiding principles

The international cooperation of the Canton of Basel-Stadt is guided by three overarching principles: global responsibility, collaborative action and Basel's added value. These principles reflect the ambition to make an independent and credible contribution to international cooperation using the canton's resources. They shape both the strategic orientation of international cooperation and its day-to-day implementation and collaboration with partners.

Global responsibility

The Canton of Basel-Stadt assumes responsibility beyond its borders and contributes to poverty reduction and the strengthening of sustainable development globally. Poverty, armed conflict and fragility, the climate crisis, and global health risks are systemic challenges whose impacts also directly affect cities and regions. For the canton, international cooperation is therefore part of responsible policymaking – not merely an act of solidarity – and is guided by the idea of a global partnership in addressing shared challenges.

This cooperation addresses, for example, cross-border mobility or disaster protection. The cooperation formats and implementation approaches developed in this context provide relevant reference points for mutual knowledge exchange with border regions in low- and middle-income countries.

Collaborative action

The Canton of Basel-Stadt understands international cooperation as a collaborative process. The canton works with governmental and non-governmental actors on the basis of mutual respect and recognises local ownership, knowledge and capacities. Sustainable impact is achieved where solutions are developed jointly, rooted locally and sustained over the long term. Reliability, transparency and mutual learning shape cooperation with partners in Switzerland and abroad.

Basel's added value

The Canton of Basel-Stadt seeks to create added value through its international cooperation. This is particularly the case where political priorities align with the expertise, resources and networks of Basel-based actors and can be mobilised in a targeted and needs-driven manner. As a highly connected urban canton with strong international ties and a pronounced capacity for innovation, Basel-Stadt is well positioned to engage closely with local challenges and partners. This proximity enables an agile, pragmatic and implementation-oriented approach to international cooperation.

3. Context and strategic positioning

The international cooperation of the Canton of Basel-Stadt is implemented in a complex and dynamic environment shaped by profound global, national and subnational developments.

Global and national context

At the global level, international cooperation is increasingly characterised by financial volatility. Short-term shifts in political priorities and abrupt reallocations of funds by major donors lead to heightened uncertainty in the financing of international programmes. At the same time, a trend towards increasing standardisation, formalisation and complexity in funding can be observed. Multilateral organisations and public donors are placing greater emphasis on large-scale programmes, thematic concentration, and stringent requirements regarding impact measurement, governance and accountability. These developments are often accompanied by rising administrative burdens and reduced flexibility.

These framework conditions particularly affect smaller, locally rooted and civil society organisations. At the global level, civil society actors have faced an increasingly constrained scope for action in recent years, both in financial terms and in the political and institutional context. Rising administrative requirements, regulatory restrictions and growing pressure on civic engagement make it more difficult for civil society organisations – particularly those in low- and middle-income countries – to access funding and to implement initiatives sustainably.

At the national level, international cooperation is strongly shaped by the strategic orientation of the federal government. The federal strategy for international cooperation follows clearly defined thematic and geographic priorities as well as methodological guidelines and is aligned with the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. In recent years, the national funding landscape has also – mirroring global developments – been characterised by budgetary constraints and increasing requirements. This particularly hampers the support of initiatives whose impact is not immediately or readily quantifiable, such as innovative pilot projects, knowledge exchange, awareness-raising or process-oriented approaches.

Decentralisation and the role of the local level

In parallel with these developments, decentralised international cooperation by cities and regions is gaining importance. Subnational authorities are playing an important role in the implementation of global sustainability goals, as many international challenges become tangible at the local level. In countries undergoing decentralisation processes, responsibilities are increasingly being transferred to the subnational level. Where the necessary institutional, technical and financial capacities are lacking, cooperation between cities and regions can provide particular added value.

International cooperation between cities and regions enables practical, context-specific approaches to international cooperation. It promotes the exchange of knowledge and experience, institutional learning and the strengthening of local capacities – particularly in municipal fields such as public services, climate adaptation, social inclusion, participation and local governance.

This form of cooperation complements traditional bilateral and multilateral approaches by combining proximity to local contexts, a strong focus on implementation and the involvement of local actors. Its added value lies less in large-scale programmes than in the ability to pilot concrete solutions, strengthen institutional processes and build long-term relationships for learning and exchange.

Actors and funding needs

The Basel region is home to actors with recognised expertise, resources and international networks in selected thematic areas relevant to international cooperation.

Alongside non-governmental organisations, Basel hosts internationally recognised centres of excellence, universities, foundations, and globally active companies, notably in the fields of global health, peacebuilding, and governance. These actors are particularly active at the interface of research and innovation, policy advice and practical implementation. This landscape is complemented by an internationally connected cultural sector, which makes relevant contributions to social dialogue, participation and social cohesion in selected contexts.

International cooperation in Switzerland is shaped – alongside the multilateral organisations based in and around Geneva – by a broad and diverse landscape of non-governmental organisations. For decades, these organisations have formed the backbone of Swiss international cooperation. They bring long-standing experience in implementing projects and programmes in low- and middle-income countries, well-established local partnerships and strong technical expertise in the areas of development cooperation, peacebuilding, humanitarian aid and human security. This diversity of actors has also been a core element of the canton's funding practice for the last 40 years.

Across the sector, a number of recurrent funding needs can be identified. These include accessible and flexible funding schemes that allow room for innovation and pilot initiatives, process-oriented approaches as well as multi-year funding. There is also a clear need for support for cross-organisational knowledge exchange, learning and collaboration.

Positioning of the Canton of Basel-Stadt's international cooperation

The context outlined above highlights where targeted, flexible and impact-oriented cantonal funding can add value – by building on the specific strengths of the Basel region while ensuring low-threshold access for actors at both the national and international level. The canton's positioning is not intended as a prescriptive framework for individual funding decisions, but rather as a strategic reference for shaping the funding portfolio and defining funding priorities.

The Canton of Basel-Stadt understands its role as a **targeted, complementary and partnership-based contribution** to international poverty reduction and the strengthening of sustainable development. It does not act as a traditional bilateral donor and does not pursue fixed geographical or exclusively thematic priorities. Nor does the canton assume federal responsibilities or seek to fill structural funding gaps at the national or international level.

Instead, it focuses on areas and approaches where decentralised actors – owing to their proximity to local contexts, flexibility and strong implementation focus – can generate added value. To this end, the canton relies on **agile and flexible funding schemes**, especially in areas where innovative or process-oriented initiatives receive limited support from other donors.

The canton's positioning is characterised by a clear **focus on the local level as well as on context-specific and practice-oriented approaches**. International cooperation is understood to be effective where it responds to concrete needs, strengthens local ownership and capacities, and enables long-term learning and development processes.

At the same time, the canton **makes use of its scope for action to set selective priorities of its own**. Additional value is generated through the targeted use of synergies and through the **involvement of the expertise, resources and networks of actors from the Basel region**.

4. Strategic objectives 2026–2029

The strategic objectives ensure that funding decisions are aligned with the funding purpose and serve as a reference framework for reviewing international cooperation during the 2026–2029 strategy period.

Objective 1

Improve the living conditions of people affected by poverty and vulnerable groups

The international cooperation of the Canton of Basel-Stadt contributes to poverty reduction and to improving the living conditions of people affected by poverty and vulnerable groups in low- and middle-income countries. This objective is pursued in line with sustainable development, by jointly addressing social, environmental and economic dimensions and supporting solutions that are viable over the long term. Funding is provided to initiatives that recognise people affected by poverty as active agents of their own development, strengthen and build on existing capacities, and support self-determined and sustainable improvements in living conditions.

The focus is on context-specific and locally rooted initiatives that respond to the concrete realities of people's lives and directly strengthen their capacities and scope for action. Poverty reduction is understood as a multidimensional process and includes, among other aspects, the strengthening of economic, human, political, socio-cultural and protective capabilities – such as access to basic services, secure livelihoods, social participation and the ability to cope with crises and risks.

Objective 2

Strengthen local capacities and institutional structures

The international cooperation of the Canton of Basel-Stadt strengthens local actors, institutions and structures so that they can shape development processes independently, effectively and sustainably. The focus is on individuals and organisations in low- and middle-income countries whose work contributes to poverty reduction and the strengthening of sustainable development.

Priority is given to initiatives that contribute to building or strengthening institutional, technical and organisational capacities and that have the potential to generate sustainable multiplier effects. This applies in particular at the local and subnational level and to civil society actors. Relevant approaches include knowledge and experience exchange, individual and institutional learning as well as cooperation between public administrations and organisations that enables the long-term anchoring of capacities and expertise.

Objective 3

Create added value through knowledge, innovation and partnerships from Basel

The international cooperation of the Canton of Basel-Stadt aims to create added value beyond the provision of funding alone. This added value arises in particular through high-impact, learning-oriented and innovative approaches, as well as from the targeted involvement of the expertise, resources and networks of actors from the Basel region.

Funding is provided for initiatives where this added value is clearly identifiable, for example through the generation of practically relevant knowledge, the exchange of knowledge and experience, applied innovation processes, or cooperation between institutions – including city-to-city partnerships.

5. Funding priorities 2026–2029

Thematic funding priorities

Thematic priority: Health

Health is a fundamental prerequisite for human development and a key lever for poverty reduction. Limited access to healthcare, fragile health systems and health-related risks disproportionately affect populations living in poverty and vulnerable groups, thereby reinforcing existing social inequalities. The funding priority «Health» therefore makes a direct contribution to improving living conditions and strengthening sustainable development.

Health is a core objective of the 2030 Agenda and, at the same time, a thematic area in which Basel has well-established expertise, experience and networks. This is reflected in particular in the presence of centres of excellence and private-sector actors in the area of global health and the life sciences.

Within the thematic priority «Health», the Canton of Basel-Stadt supports in particular initiatives in low- and middle-income countries that:

- promote the development and strengthening of effective, accessible and high-quality health systems,
- improve the health of mothers, newborns, children and adolescents,
- strengthen sexual and reproductive health and related rights,
- support the prevention, treatment and control of communicable and non-communicable diseases,
- promote mental health and strengthen psychosocial support services,
- strengthen health promotion and prevention across the life course, including the prevention of substance use and other risk behaviours,
- reduce health inequalities and respond to the needs of vulnerable population groups,
- strengthen the resilience of health systems as well as preparedness for and response to health crises,
- promote knowledge transfer, capacity building and the institutional strengthening of local health actors.

Thematic priority: Climate resilience

Climate change disproportionately affects populations living in poverty and vulnerable groups. Extreme weather events, water scarcity, heatwaves and the loss of livelihoods exacerbate existing inequalities and increase the risks of poverty, migration and social instability. Strengthening climate resilience is therefore a key lever for poverty reduction and for safeguarding sustainable development.

In the context of international cooperation, the Canton of Basel-Stadt understands climate resilience as the interplay between adaptation to climate-related risks and the mitigation of harmful climate impacts. The focus is in particular on locally grounded solutions that respond to concrete risks, promote the sustainable management of natural resources and are viable over the long term.

With ambitious climate policy objectives and initiatives – including the net-zero target for 2037 anchored in the Cantonal Constitution, as well as the climate goals set out in the 2025–2029 legislative plan – the Canton of Basel-Stadt has anchored climate policy strategically and institutionally at an early stage. These experiences form a key basis for selecting climate resilience as a thematic priority for the 2026–2029 strategy period. The canton can draw on insights from its own climate transition and bring them into international contexts, thereby promoting the exchange of knowledge and experience at strategic, institutional and planning levels.

At the same time, this thematic priority creates linkages with the canton's objectives in the areas of innovation and economic promotion. Synergies can emerge in particular where climate-related innovation, corporate sustainability and international cooperation interact – for example in addressing climate- and poverty-related impacts along global supply chains of Basel-based companies.

Within the thematic priority «Climate Resilience», the Canton of Basel-Stadt supports in particular initiatives in low- and middle-income countries that:

- strengthen the adaptive capacity of vulnerable population groups to climate-related risks,
- improve protection against climate-related natural hazards such as flooding, heatwaves or droughts,

- promote the conservation and sustainable use of natural livelihoods,
- strengthen climate-resilient agriculture and forestry,
- promote the sustainable use of natural resources and access to them, in particular in the areas of water and energy,
- strengthen climate-resilient urban development and local governance structures,
- promote income and employment opportunities in the context of climate-friendly and resilient approaches.

Thematic priority: Culture as a lever for poverty reduction

Cultural expression and creative practices make an important contribution to social inclusion, community empowerment and the promotion of agency and civic participation. In the context of international cooperation, culture can reach marginalised groups and amplify their voices. It creates spaces for dialogue and enables both social and political participation. Culture is therefore not understood as an end in itself, but as a lever for poverty reduction in a broad sense, for reducing violence and for strengthening sustainable and self-determined development.

Within this thematic priority, the Canton of Basel-Stadt explicitly does not understand culture as cultural promotion focused on artistic production and its international promotion, supply-driven approaches or the improvement of framework conditions for artists and cultural professionals. Rather, culture is approached as an impact-oriented instrument with a clear contribution to the strategic objectives of international cooperation.

As an internationally recognised cultural city, the Canton of Basel-Stadt has strong competencies, resources and networks in the fields of arts, culture and the creative industries. These strengths form an important basis for selecting this thematic priority for the 2026–2029 strategy period. Through the targeted involvement of artists, cultural institutions and creative networks, international cooperation initiatives can generate added value particularly in contexts where formal structures are weak or where other intervention approaches reach their limits.

Such initiatives enable low-threshold access, open up new perspectives, foster self-efficacy, support experiential and identity-building processes and contribute to strengthening social cohesion.

Within the thematic priority «Culture as a lever for poverty reduction», the Canton of Basel-Stadt supports in particular initiatives in low- and middle-income countries that:





- promote the social inclusion and participation of marginalised groups,
- open up perspectives and opportunities for young people (youth empowerment),
- prevent various forms of violence or substance use, thereby strengthening the social environment,
- contribute to political and civic participation,
- create spaces for freedom of expression, dialogue and the peaceful resolution of conflicts,
- make visible and strengthen the cultural competencies of marginalised groups,
- develop skills and income-generating opportunities in the cultural and creative sectors,
- use cultural expression to raise awareness on societal challenges and to promote responsible behaviour.

Funding portfolio

To implement the strategic objectives, the Canton of Basel-Stadt employs a differentiated funding portfolio. The strategy defines how the funding schemes within this portfolio are applied during the 2026–2029 period, where thematic priorities are set and what role the canton assumes in this context.

The funding schemes within the portfolio complement one another and enable the canton to deploy its resources in an impact-oriented, efficient and strategically coherent manner. The combination of thematically open and targeted schemes ensures

continuity and accessibility of funding, while also allowing the canton to set strategic priorities. While programme grants and general project grants provide continuity and broad reach, targeted project grants and cooperation schemes enable thematic depth and the strategic positioning of the canton's priorities in international cooperation.

Funding schemes		Thematic funding priorities 2026-2029	Contribution to strategic objectives			Role of the canton	
			Improve living conditions	Strengthen capacities and structures	Create added value		
	Programme grants	Programme grants to Basel-based organisations	None	●●●	●●●	●●●	Funding
	Project grants	<i>General</i> project grants to Swiss-based organisations	None	●●●	●●		
		<i>Targeted</i> project grants to Swiss-based organisations	Health, climate resilience, and culture as lever for poverty reduction	●●●	●●●	●●●	Priority setting, funding
	Cooperations and engagements	Cantonal partnerships in selected cities, regions or countries		●●	●●●	●●●	Strategic steering, funding, expertise
	Scholarships	Scholarships for students from low- and middle-income countries at Basel universities	None	●	●●●	●●●	Funding
	Emergency aid	Donations to humanitarian aid in acute emergencies	None	●●			Funding

Programme grants

strengthen the long-term impact and innovative capacity of established organisations headquartered in the Basel region. These include, in particular, established non-governmental organisations as well as internationally recognised centres of excellence that contribute to poverty reduction and sustainable development in low- and middle-income countries through multi-year programmes. Programme grants provide a reliable planning basis as well as flexibility for learning processes and the further development of innovative approaches. They are not tied to the thematic priorities of the respective strategy period. The role of the canton is limited to providing financial support; the design and implementation of the programmes lie with the organisations.

General project grants

provide low-threshold access to cantonal funding for organisations across Switzerland, in particular non-governmental organisations with long-standing experience in international cooperation. General project grants are thematically open and not restricted to the thematic priorities of the 2026–2029 period. The role of the canton is limited to financial support; the conceptual design and implementation of the projects lie with the organisations.

Targeted project grants

create incentives for innovation, new approaches and focused impact within the thematic priorities of the 2026–2029 strategy period: Health, Climate resilience, and Culture as a lever for poverty reduction. Targeted calls for proposals are launched for these priorities, while responsibility for project development and implementation remains with the organisations. The canton assumes a strategic role by prioritising themes and pooling resources but does not intervene operationally in individual projects.

Cooperations and engagements

enable partnership-based initiatives in which the canton assumes a more active, shaping role in addition to contributing financially. This scheme is particularly suited to cooperation with selected cities or regions, institutional knowledge and experience exchange, as well as pilot and model initiatives. The involvement of private-sector actors from Basel is

also envisaged, for example through public-private partnerships. In addition to financing, the canton takes on a facilitating and strategic role, for instance by initiating and steering partnerships, contributing municipal expertise or by supporting learning and exchange processes.

Scholarships

support the individual qualification of early-career professionals from low- and middle-income countries and contribute to the development of competencies and institutional capacities required for poverty reduction and the strengthening of sustainable development in these countries. They are aimed in particular at students with a clear institutional affiliation in their country of origin and are awarded in close cooperation with selected universities in Basel. The canton's role is limited to financing; coordination, training, and the academic and institutional integration of scholarship holders lie with the participating universities.

Emergency aid

enables rapid and targeted financial support in extraordinary crisis situations. It is designed to provide short-term relief in acute emergencies where support through other funding schemes is not feasible, safe to implement or effective.

Allocation of funds

The largest share of funding is allocated to project and programme grants. By contrast, comparatively more resource-intensive schemes such as cooperations and engagements, as well as scholarships, account for a smaller proportion of total funding. Due to its exceptional nature, emergency aid is not included in the budget planning for the strategy period; accordingly, no fixed allocations are foreseen.

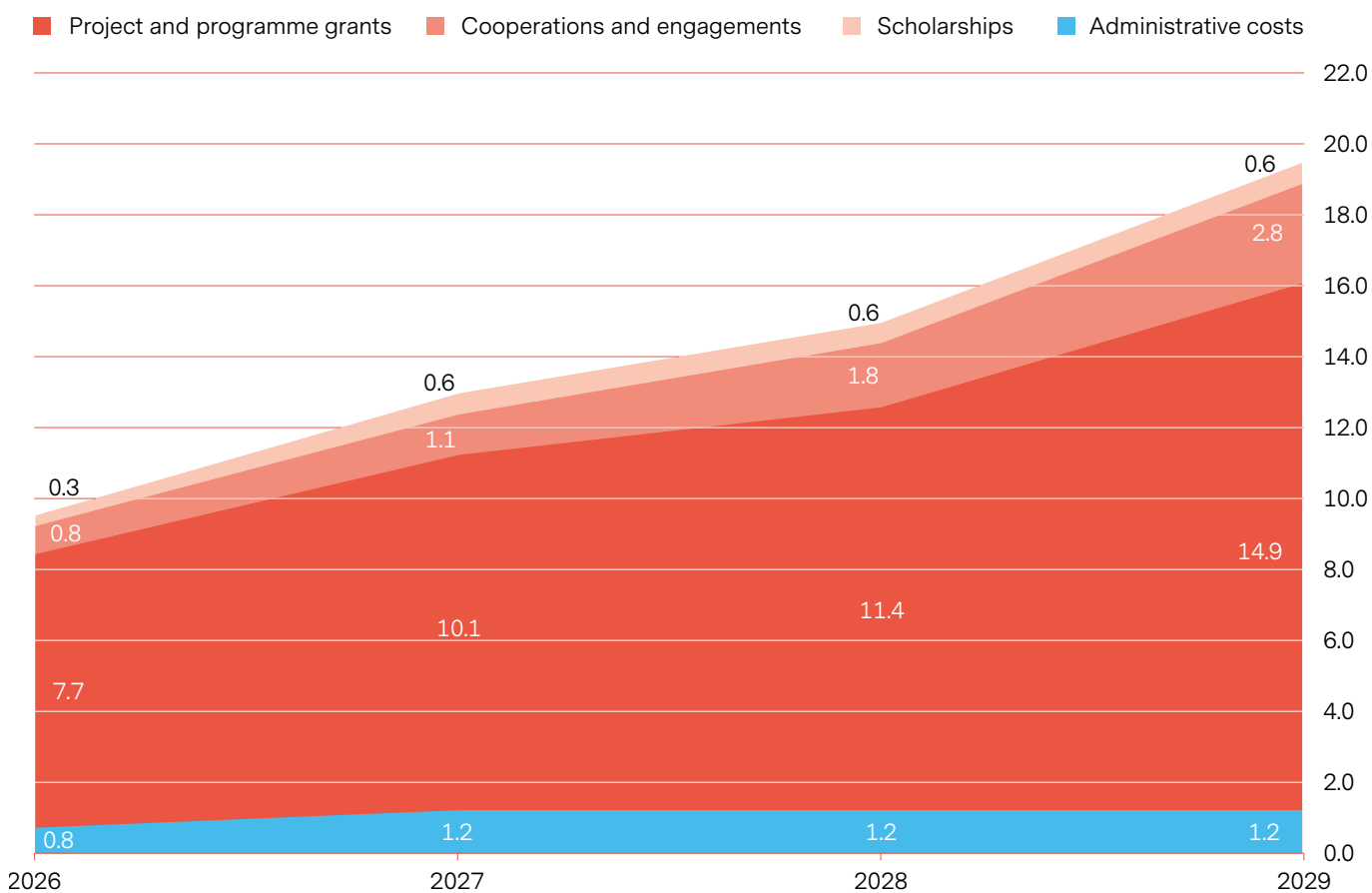


Figure 1: Phased increase in funding over the 2026–2029 period and planned allocation of funds within the funding portfolio (in millions of Swiss francs).

6. Implementation

The implementation of the strategy is designed to ensure that funding is allocated in compliance with the law, efficiently and transparently, and that the strategic objectives are reflected in funding decisions. To this end, the canton deploys its financial, human and technical resources in a targeted way and establishes clear structures, appropriate partnerships and – where possible – standardised processes.

Responsibilities

The **Division of External Affairs and Marketing within the Department of Presidential Affairs of the Canton of Basel-Stadt** is responsible for implementing the strategy and for the operational steering of international cooperation. It coordinates funding procedures, accompanies supported initiatives, ensures compliance with legal and strategic requirements and serves as the main point of contact.

Specific responsibilities apply to individual funding schemes. The administration of scholarships is handled by the Office for Educational Grants within the Department of Education. Emergency aid in connection with natural disasters falls under the responsibility of the Swisslos-Fonds within the Department of Justice and Security. Emergency aid in other extraordinary humanitarian crises is the responsibility of the Department of Presidential Affairs.

The government-appointed **Commission for International Cooperation** advises the Government and the Department of Presidential Affairs on strategic matters and funding decisions. It contributes technical expertise and supports quality assurance. Responsibility for the approval of scholarships lies with the government-appointed Scholarship Commission for Early-Career Professionals from Developing Countries.

Funding processes and systems

The **funding processes** are designed to ensure that initiatives are assessed on the basis of clearly defined criteria and procedures. These are derived from the legal framework, the strategic objectives and the defined funding priorities. Criteria and procedures are communicated transparently and ensure fair and comprehensible access to cantonal funding.

Compliance with the quality criteria – impact orientation, efficiency, sustainability and transparency – as well as with the funding purpose is an integral part of the funding process. This applies throughout the entire funding cycle, from the assessment of initiatives through implementation to completion.

The assessment of initiatives follows a multi-stage procedure based on clearly defined minimum requirements and assessment criteria. During and after implementation, regular reporting, technical support and systematic financial and impact monitoring ensure that initiatives are implemented as intended and that funds are used appropriately. Depending on the scope, risk and complexity of an initiative, additional tools such as project visits, external evaluations or audits are applied.

Monitoring and controlling ensure not only accountability to the Parliament and the public, but above all serve as a basis for the strategic and operational management of international cooperation. They allow developments within the funding portfolio to be tracked, lessons learnt to be consolidated and the implementation of the strategy to be reviewed on a regular basis. The design of impact monitoring is addressed in greater detail in a later chapter.

Adjusted processes apply to specific funding schemes. Scholarships follow separate, long-established procedures for selection, support and quality assurance, implemented in close cooperation with the participating universities. Emergency aid is designed as an exceptional financial support and is used only in extraordinary crisis situations. It follows simplified procedures and is not intended as a regular funding scheme with project-based reporting requirements.

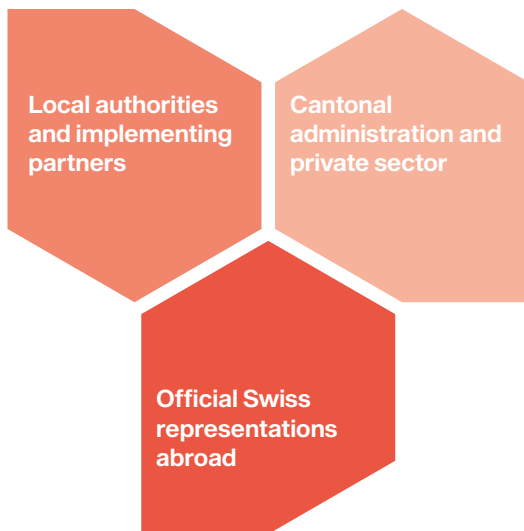
To support funding processes, the Canton of Basel-Stadt uses appropriate **systems** for data management, monitoring and risk management. These systems ensure traceability of funding decisions, support consistent management of the funding portfolio and enable transparent communication with political bodies, partner organisations and the public.

Resources and partnerships

The implementation of the strategy follows the principle of efficient use of resources. The Canton of Basel-Stadt deploys its own staff and expertise in a targeted manner where they are needed for steering, quality assurance and the strategic development of international cooperation.

Partnerships play a key role in complementing limited or missing internal capacities. The canton enters into partnerships particularly where external actors bring specific expertise, implementation capacities, local anchoring or additional resources, thereby enhancing the quality and efficiency of international cooperation.

At project and programme level, cooperation takes place primarily with non-governmental organisations and centres of excellence. These partners are responsible for operational implementation together with local partners, assume technical responsibility and contribute co-financing. They also add value through innovation, learning and capacity development. Centres of excellence further contribute scientific evidence, applied innovation and institutional learning.



In the case of cooperations and engagements, the focus is on exchange with local authorities and implementing partners in low- and middle-income countries. Where this creates added value, actors from the private sector and the cantonal administration are also involved. The aim is to share knowledge, strengthen institutional capacities and promote sustainable structures.

Contributions from the cantonal administration mainly take the form of technical and implementation expertise in particular, while private-sector actors may contribute specialised know-how, innovation potential or additional funding. Swiss representations abroad support these efforts through their local knowledge and networks.

At a broader level, the canton maintains exchange with federal authorities relevant to international cooperation, with other cities and cantons in Switzerland and abroad, and with actors from academia, think tanks and advisory organisations. These partnerships primarily serve the exchange of knowledge and experience, as well as the strategic development and quality assurance of the canton's international cooperation.



Impact orientation and learning

Impact orientation serves strategic steering, institutional learning and the continuous development of the canton's international cooperation. The canton's approach to impact orientation is based on three core principles:

Collaborative: Impact is reflected on jointly with partner organisations. Responsibility for impact orientation is shared and learning processes are shaped collaboratively. Deviations from individual objectives are used as opportunities for joint reflection and further development.

Agile: The canton recognises that complex contexts involve uncertainty. It remains open to adjustments and uses insights from implementation, from comparable initiatives and from practical experience to continuously refine its approaches.

Methodical: Impact orientation is guided by internationally recognised standards, in particular the OECD-DAC criteria, which are applied in a targeted and proportionate manner. Scientific evidence can play an important role; however, concrete insights from implementation and from comparable initiatives in similar contexts are central. To ensure coherence and avoid duplication, the canton also draws on established methodological approaches used by relevant federal authorities.

Impact monitoring

Impact monitoring focuses on understanding the contribution of funded initiatives to the strategic objectives of canton's international cooperation. It operates at two levels:

At the **strategic level**, impact monitoring is used to review the overall orientation of the canton's international cooperation. Within the four-year strategy cycle, an assessment is made of whether the objectives, positioning, funding priorities and their implementation remain appropriate. This review is qualitative in nature and focuses on strategic questions rather than on aggregated impact indicators.

At the level of **projects, programmes, cooperations and engagements**, impact monitoring relates to the implementation of individual initiatives. From the assessment stage onwards, attention is paid to a plausible theory of change, realistic assumptions and sustainable approaches. During and after implementation, reports, evaluations and selected in-depth analyses provide insights into progress towards objectives and learning processes. The scope of impact monitoring is always proportionate to the size, complexity and risk of the funded initiatives.

Learning and further development

The Canton of Basel-Stadt understands learning as an integral part of professional international cooperation. Insights gained through impact monitoring are continuously fed back into funding practice and provide an important basis for shaping future strategy periods. Learning takes place both within the cantonal administration and through exchange with partner organisations, other cities and cantons, the federal level and relevant professional networks.

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