



Press release

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New public-private partnership to promote innovative development finance

Bern, 01.12.2021 – The State Secretariat for Economic Affairs, UBS Optimus Foundation, Credit Suisse Foundation and the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC) launched the Sustainable Development Goals Impact Finance Initiative on 1 December. The initiative aims to mobilize up to one billion Swiss francs in private capital to advance measurable impact in developing countries. SECO supports the initiative with 19.5 million Swiss francs.

The funding gap to meet the U.N. Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) by 2030 is estimated at more than USD 2.5 trillion per year. Increasing private sector investment in developing countries will be essential to bridge this funding gap. Using public and philanthropic funds to mobilize private investments is one effective way to attract the financial resources that would otherwise not be channelled into developing countries. The SDG Impact Finance Initiative aims to raise 100 million francs in funding by 2030 from public and philanthropic actors. These funds will be used to unlock up to 1 billion francs in additional private capital towards the SDGs in developing countries.

The initiative has three objectives:

- To support innovative financial solutions for new impact investing tools through grant and seed funding. Impact investing refers to investments that aim to generate positive, measurable social and environmental impact alongside a financial return.
- To scale impact investing solutions by mobilizing more private capital and strengthening underlying portfolio companies.
- To contribute to improved framework conditions for impact investing in Switzerland and promote impact management practices. For this purpose, the initiative will cooperate closely with the association Swiss Sustainable Finance and the State Secretariat for International Finance.

The initiative will select the best solutions through competitive, international calls for proposals. The first call for proposals will be launched in early 2022 in collaboration with the organization Convergence.

Leveraging the Swiss ecosystem for the SDGs

SECO and its partners invite other philanthropic and public organizations to join the initiative. Switzerland is a leading financial centre, including for impact investing, and is home to a high number of international organizations, foundations, and non-governmental organizations. The SDG Impact Finance Initiative will make use of this ecosystem and incentivize collaboration between the impact finance sector, the development community and international partners.

Statements on the SDG Impact Finance Initiative

“It is all about collaboration and joining forces between public, private and philanthropic actors to mobilize more finance for the SDGs in developing countries. The 19.5 million Swiss francs approved by President Guy Parmelin underscore SECO's commitment.”

State Secretary Marie-Gabrielle Ineichen-Fleisch, SECO Director

“It is critical to mobilize capital in all forms to tackle some of the world's most pressing challenges. As a founding member of this important initiative, UBS Optimus Foundation is pleased to contribute 5 million Swiss francs plus its long-standing expertise in innovative impact investing and public-private partnerships to create measurable, sustainable change on a global scale.”

Ralph Hamers, UBS Group CEO

“Credit Suisse sees philanthropic capital playing an important role in unlocking the innovation and collaboration needed to overcome the significant funding gap to meet the Sustainable Development Goals, particularly for SDGs and countries that have historically been more challenging to finance. I am delighted that our Foundation could play a pivotal role in supporting this initiative from its inception.”

Thomas Gottstein, CEO Credit Suisse Group

“Partnering with the SDG Impact Finance Initiative is consistent with SDC's strategic objective to reinforce its co-operation with the private sector in pursuit of sustainable development. Private impact investment is a key instrument, for example, to help reduce poverty, empower women or address climate change, also in difficult contexts.”

Ambassador Thomas Gass, Assistant Director General and Head of the South Cooperation Department, Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation

“The SDG Impact Finance Initiative provides targeted support for innovative investment solutions that aim for positive impact on the environment and society. It thereby helps to strengthen Switzerland's position as a leading hub for impact investments.”

Sabine Döbeli, CEO of Swiss Sustainable Finance.

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