Annual Report 2025

skat foundation

ZEWO ZERTIFIZIERT CERTIFIÉ CERTIFICATO

We are a Swiss nonprofit organisation based in St. Gallen, active in international cooperation since 2002. The ZEWO quality seal is evidence of our transparent, efficient, and effective use of funds and resources. Our commitment to excellence and dedication to our mission have allowed us to achieve this milestone with confidence and optimism.

Our mission is to empower individuals and organisations to drive change by learning and collaborating towards the eradication of poverty and the development of sustainable, diverse, and inclusive societies. Our organisation confidently facilitates knowledge sharing and problem solving among our partners to address the challenges arising from poverty and climate change.

We are confident that our approach will make a significant impact and we look forward to working with you towards achieving our shared goals.

We focus on three key areas:

Water

Renewable energies

Waste management

We support our partners to find, adapt and develop solutions that respond to their needs and context. We strengthen their capacities by facilitating online and in-person courses, trainings, knowledge-sharing workshops, and events, and through the development and sharing of knowledge products.

Our core competencies are:

Research

Training

Documenting

Networks

Our values are:

- Collaboration and Participation
- Efficiency and Effectiveness
- Gender Equality
- Integrity and Accountability
- Quality

Cover: © Africa AHEAD: Tinashe Size with a freshly harvested vegetable in the Mwenje Healthy Harvest garden in the Nyamukamani area, Zimbabwe.

PREFACE

In a time marked by significant social and economic uncertainty across many of the regions in which Skat Foundation operates, the need to strengthen equitable access to safe water and food security has become even more urgent. Despite budget cuts in 2025, the new leadership team has embraced their mandate with clear direction, strong commitment, and a deep conviction in the purpose and value of our work.

Dr Rolf Leutert
Chairman of the Board

Dr Xaver Edelmann
President of the Board

Dr Angelica Wehrli
Managing Director

The year marked the first full year under the leadership of our Managing Director and was characterised by several important institutional developments. Skat Foundation was included on the official list of the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC/DEZA) strengthening our position within the Swiss development cooperation landscape. In addition, Skat Foundation successfully completed its ZEWO re-certification for the next five years, reaffirming our commitment to transparency, accountability, and the responsible use of resources. During this period, we developed our 2026–30 strategy, signed new contracts, and underwent key changes within the team. Our public presence also continued to grow, and we invite you to read this report to learn more about our added value. We highly appreciate our trusted collaboration within the Sufosec Alliance. Our Self-Supply project in Tanzania is a case study for the Sufosec impact study and contributes to shared learning on the role of agroecology in strengthening food security.

The dismantling of USAID also presented significant challenges for RWSN. However, the remarkable solidarity of our long-standing partners, coupled with the strengthened collaboration with German development cooperation, has given us renewed confidence. Throughout the year, we established new partnerships, became the grant manager for the Stronger Together! Coalition Alliance of Women in Water Networks and signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the Women in Water Diplomacy Network.
We would like to express our sincere gratitude to our board members and staff for their dedication and their contributions to shaping a successful future for Skat Foundation in the interests of our stakeholders.

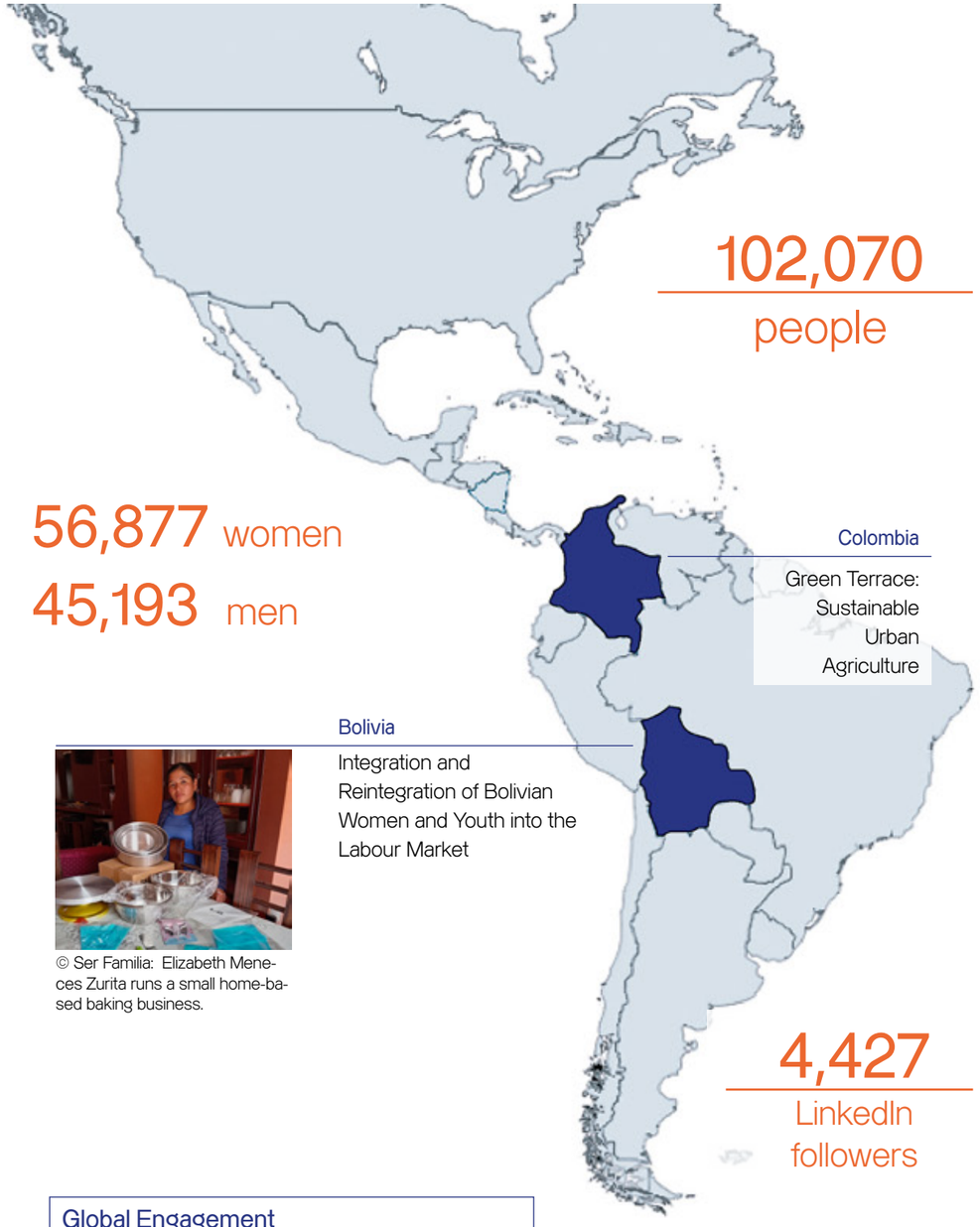
After 20 years of dedicated service as a board member and president, Dr Rolf Leutert stepped down from his role. We thank him for his long-standing commitment and leadership. At the same time, we are delighted to welcome Dr Xaver Edelmann as the new President of the Board. Dr Edelmann brings extensive experience in sustainability, systems thinking, and global collaboration. We look forward to his guidance as we continue to strengthen our strategic direction. We are pleased to welcome Dr Maria Luisa Fuchs as a new board member. Her experience at the intersection of entrepreneurship, innovation, and ecosystem development will further enrich our work as we continue to strengthen local partnerships and knowledge.

Finally, we would like to thank all our donors — private individuals, foundations, and municipalities — for their continued trust, partnership, and support. We look forward to building on these valued relationships in the years ahead.

Dr Xaver Edelmann

Dr Angelica Wehrli

INTERNATIONAL PROGRAMME



102,070
people

56,877 women
45,193 men

Colombia
Green Terrace: Sustainable Urban Agriculture

Bolivia
Integration and Reintegration of Bolivian Women and Youth into the Labour Market

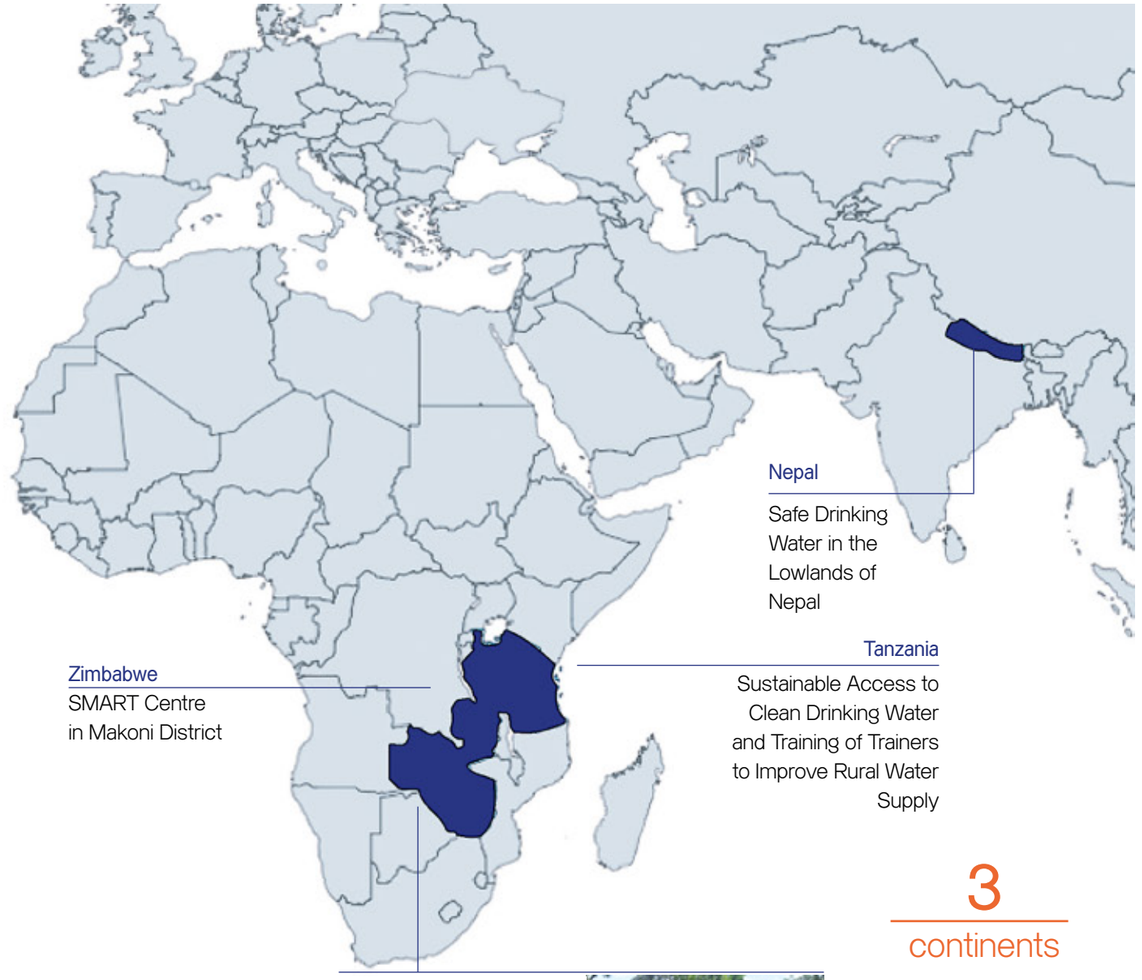
© Ser Familia: Elizabeth Meneces Zurita runs a small home-based baking business.

4,427
LinkedIn followers

3,596
employment platform users

Global Engagement

- Rural Water Supply Network (RWSN)
- Hands4Health
- Alliance Sufosec
- Women in Water Diplomacy Network
- Stockholm Junior Water Prize – Switzerland



Nepal
Safe Drinking Water in the Lowlands of Nepal

Zimbabwe
SMART Centre in Makoni District

Tanzania
Sustainable Access to Clean Drinking Water and Training of Trainers to Improve Rural Water Supply

3
continents

Zambia
Help to Self-Help – Clean Water for Zambia

© Jacana: Farmer Chiseche Tembo is watering her garden.

6
partner countries

COUNTRY PROJECTS

Working alongside local partners across six countries, Skat Foundation supports initiatives that strengthen water security, food security, and sustainable livelihoods. In 2025, these partnerships enabled communities, local governments, entrepreneurs, and civil society organisations to develop and scale solutions tailored to their specific contexts. The following pages highlight how locally led action, combined with technical expertise and long-term collaboration, is contributing to meaningful and lasting improvements in people's lives.

NEPAL: SAFE DRINKING WATER IN THE LOWLANDS OF NEPAL

In 2025, the implementation phase covering 2024–2025 of the school water programme in Nepal was successfully completed. Several systems installed at the end of 2024 became operational, significantly expanding access to safe drinking water for students across the lowlands. Compared to the initial pilot phase (2023–2024), interest from schools and local authorities increased markedly, enabling the installation of 34 systems instead of the initially planned 20 within the same budget, alongside growing local contributions. This trend reflects a gradual shift towards greater local co-financing, in line with the long-term implementation approach, as stakeholders increasingly contribute after observing tangible results.

A first successful crowdfunding initiative complemented existing funding sources, reflecting broader engagement in the approach. In addition, a comprehensive market study conducted by Smart Paani in arsenic-affected areas provided critical insights into barriers, user preferences, and sustainable service models, forming a strong foundation for future interventions. The results will be published in 2026.

Donors: There for You Crowdfunding, SDC Programme Contribution
Implementation partners: Smart Paani, BluAct Technologies

Main results

17,485 students gained access to safe drinking water through school installations (**8,243** women and girls, **9,242** men and boys).

34 schools equipped with safe water systems during the project phase.

Market study conducted in arsenic-affected areas to inform future interventions.

© Smart Paani: Handwashing activity during WASH training at a primary school in Damak.

The market study addressed a critical gap: despite many past interventions, safe drinking water solutions at household level have not been adopted or sustained at scale in arsenic-affected areas. By analysing user behaviour, local preferences, and shortcomings of previous systems, the study provides a clearer pathway towards more sustainable and locally appropriate solutions.

© Smart Paani: Children take part in an interactive WASH training activity using a poster at a primary school in Tanahun.

© Smart Paani: Two students drink water from a school-appropriate drinking station installed as part of the project at a school in Nawalparasi.

COLOMBIA: TERRAZA VERDE COLOMBIA

In the southern neighbourhoods of Bogotá, where proximity to the Doña Juana landfill shapes daily life for hundreds of thousands of residents, the Terraza Verde Colombia project continues to turn an environmental burden into a community asset. Now in its fifth year, the project – implemented by Asociación Pro-ODS – operates on a simple but powerful principle: organic waste collected from households is composted and returned to community and family gardens as fertiliser, closing the loop between waste and food production.

In 2025, the project processed 2,582 kg of organic waste, producing 780 kg of organic fertiliser, and trained 599 participants across community centres and schools in Usme, San Cristóbal, Rafael Uribe Uribe, and Tunjuelito. The Terraza Verde Academy structured this learning around four modules covering waste management, agroecology, food processing, and life skills.

A notable milestone was the launch of the Creative Garden pilot module, which introduced participants to entrepreneurship – from product design to pricing and solidarity-based sales models – laying the groundwork for economically self-sustaining community initiatives. With a target of full community autonomy by 2028, Terraza Verde is steadily growing into a model of locally-owned, circular urban development.

Donors: La Fondation Philanthropic Famille Sandoz, Kanton St. Gallen Swisslos, Gemeinnütziger Fonds Kanton Zürich
Implementation partner: Ecopartner Ltd, Pro-ODS

«Excelente entidad en promover el aprendizaje y apropiación en el cuidado ambiental transformando los hábitos de cuidado, reconocimiento del medio ambiente gracias al trabajo agroecologico que se realiza en diferentes espacios con diferentes poblaciones juveniles y adultos. Es un proyecto consolidado para el diálogo de saberes y el aprendizaje continuo.»

Karen Castro

Main results

Participants in empowerment and capacity development activities improving their life skills: A total of **599** people participated in new or improved training activities, including **425** women and **174** men.

People with new access to recycling or solid waste management: A total of **368** individuals gained new access to recycling or solid waste management services, including **271** women and **97** men.

People from left-behind groups benefiting from projects to reduce exclusion, discrimination, and inequality: A total of **92** people benefited, including **66** women and **26** men.

© Pro-ODs: Distribution of seedlings to the "Women Sowers" group.

© Pro-Ods: Distribution of onion seedlings to the "Return of Emaus" group.

© Ser Familia: Ana Araceli Castro runs "Diseños ANITA", a small business producing handmade paper decorations for local use and events, contributing to her income.

BOLIVIA: INTEGRATION AND REINTEGRATION OF BOLIVIAN WOMEN AND YOUTH INTO THE LABOUR MARKET

In 2025, the ATREVE-T project in Bolivia built on the strong momentum of the previous year by expanding the PAOLA digital platform beyond its initial pilot municipalities. Originally introduced as a tool to support young people in accessing training and employment opportunities, the platform is now implemented by five municipalities, reflecting growing institutional ownership and integration into local employment support systems.

PAOLA continues to connect a large number of young people – particularly young women – to information, training, and job opportunities. While the platform's reach has expanded significantly, its main contribution lies in facilitating access and strengthening pathways into the labour market. This scaling demonstrates its potential as a sustainable tool for youth employment at the local level.

Donors: Leopold Bachmann Stiftung, SDC Programme Contribution
Implementation partners: Fundación Ser Familia

"We're doing better now – we can save. My husband and I want to open a small business near our home, so I can stay close to our children. We're determined to move forward."

Sandra Colque Parisaca, a young participant

Main results

PAOLA platform expanded to **5** municipalities and integrated into local employment support systems

3,596 young people registered on the platform (**62%** women)

616 young people trained in employability and technical skills

145 young people supported in accessing employment opportunities

ZIMBABWE: SMART CENTRE IN MAKONI DISTRICT

In 2025, the SMART Centre in Zimbabwe became operational, marking a key milestone in the establishment of a long-term foundation for integrated water, agriculture, and nutrition activities. The new facility hosted its first trainings, creating a dedicated space for practical, hands-on learning.

In parallel, a solar-powered piped water scheme began supplying safe water to a clinic, school, and surrounding community, improving access from early 2025. Alongside this, 18 demonstration gardens were established as future training sites. These gardens will serve as places of practice and proof of concept, enabling farmers to test new crops and techniques before applying them on their own farms. Initial agroecology trainings reached 53 farmers, laying the groundwork for scaling sustainable farming and water management practices.

Main results

4,690 people gained access to safe water through the piped water scheme (**2,439** women, **2,251** men)

53 farmers trained in agroecology (**19** women, **34** men)

18 demonstration gardens established as training and learning sites

SMART Centre operational, hosting first trainings

Donors: Gemeinde Maur, Leopold Bachmann Stiftung, SDC Programme Contribution
Implementation partner: Africa AHEAD

"Access to clean water at school has been a game changer, especially for girls during their menstrual cycles. We no longer miss classes or spend hours fetching water, allowing us to concentrate on our education."

Nomatter Sangulani | Student, Nyamukamani Secondary School

© Africa AHEAD: Mr Michael Magutakuona and Mrs Learnmore Manyara-Gandi in the nutrition garden at Tafadzwa Primary School.

© Africa AHEAD: Enerty Murehwa showcases her agroecology plot with green maize and a fruit orchard.

© Jacana: As part of the external evaluation, lead evaluator Chaiwe Mushauko-Sanderse facilitates a group discussion with women participants in Petauke.

ZAMBIA: WATER AND AGROECOLOGY IN ZAMBIA

An external evaluation of the 2021–2024 phase confirmed the strong impact of the SMART Centre approach in Zambia. By promoting a market-driven self-supply model, the project improved water access while strengthening local entrepreneurship and livelihoods. High functionality rates and widespread income gains demonstrate the effectiveness of linking water supply with agricultural production.

Building on this foundation, the new phase (2025–2028) was launched in April 2025. Activities focused on identifying and training motivated farmers, who invested in water access to expand their businesses. Business and agricultural training enabled participants to apply practical, low-cost techniques, strengthening both productivity and income while increasing access to water within their communities.

Donors: Kanton Basel-Stadt, Wasserversorgung Herisau, SDC Programme Contribution
Implementation partner: Jacana Business Empowerment

"To increase productivity, I modified my system by installing two solar pumps in one borehole. I can now irrigate a 100 × 30 m garden, which is larger than the originally recommended area. This allows me to expand production and make better use of the available water."

A farmer from Kolwe Village, interviewed during the external evaluation

Main results

44 entrepreneurs trained in business skills, including **21** women and **23** men

40 households increased their income through improved access to water

More than **590** people gained access to water (**54%** women)

TANZANIA: SUSTAINABLE ACCESS TO CLEAN DRINKING WATER AND TRAINING OF TRAINERS TO IMPROVE RURAL WATER SUPPLY

In 2025, activities in Tanzania combined grassroots innovation with institutional strengthening. Through the Self-supply and SMART Centre approach, local entrepreneurs, farmers, drillers, and welders strengthened both their technical and business skills, improving access to safe water while diversifying income sources and enhancing food security. As Skat Foundation's case in the ongoing global Sufosec impact study (2025–2026), the initiative demonstrates how locally driven solutions can effectively link water supply with resilient livelihoods.

At the same time, the Training of Trainers with RUWASA enhanced the capacities of rural water engineers and contributed to the standardisation of procedures. This systemic approach supports sustainable service delivery at scale, translating into improved water access for thousands of people and a meaningful contribution to SDG 6.

"Before the training many designs contained critical errors, often leading to delays or system failures. Today, engineers can plan and implement systems independently, with far fewer mistakes and reduced need for central support. This has significantly improved the quality and reliability of water supply projects in the regions."

Mr Simon Sasala, Project Construction Manager at RUWASA Headquarters

Main results

A total of **78,846** people gained or improved access to water, including **46,277** women and **32,569** men.

In addition, **154** people strengthened their technical and business skills, of whom **86** were women and **68** were men.

A total of **144** participants attended **15** training sessions on gender topics, including **75** women and **69** men.

Donors: Däster Schild Stiftung, Symphasis Stiftung, SDC Programme Contribution
Implementation partner: Southern Highlands Participatory Organisation – SHIPO

© SHIPO: Artisans trained under the Self-Supply programme complete the apron of a newly constructed well.

© SHIPO: Smallholder farmers from the 2025 Self-Supply agroecology training pose in front of SHIPO's offices after completing the programme.

GLOBAL ENGAGEMENT

Beyond project implementation, Skat Foundation contributes to international platforms and partnerships that shape policy discussions, foster learning, and strengthen collaboration across the development sector. These engagements allow us to connect local experiences with global debates and advance shared solutions.

STOCKHOLM JUNIOR WATER PRIZE | SWITZERLAND

In 2025, Skat Foundation hosted a dedicated coaching session for Swiss finalist Loris Affolter, winner of the Stockholm Junior Water Prize Switzerland. Held shortly before the international competition in Stockholm, the session offered a valuable opportunity to refine both presentation skills and technical arguments under realistic conditions.

Through a hybrid format, Loris presented his project to a panel of 16 water professionals, including experts from Skat Foundation and external specialists from industry, academia and NGOs, participating both in person and online. He received targeted and constructive feedback from this diverse group. His research explores the impacts of climate change on fragile water systems in Swiss alpine pastures, highlighting how earlier snowmelt, declining snowfall, and summer droughts are challenging traditional water supply. The exchange strengthened his confidence and helped position his locally grounded work within a global context.

Loris chose to travel to Stockholm by train, reflecting a strong personal commitment to the values underpinning his research – an approach that Skat Foundation actively supports as part of its broader commitment to sustainability and responsible engagement.

"Meeting young people from all over the world and discussing water challenges together was an unforgettable experience. Beyond the competition, I built connections and gained new perspectives that will stay with me. In a way, I feel I've already won."

Loris Affolter, Swiss finalist

HANDS4HEALTH

Hands4health is a collaborative research and implementation initiative bringing together NGOs, academic institutions, and private sector partners to improve hand hygiene, water quality, and sanitation in primary health care facilities and schools in Mali, Burkina Faso, Nigeria, and Palestine. The project focused on facilities lacking reliable and functional water supply systems, combining practical WASH interventions with applied research to strengthen hygiene practices and generate evidence on sustainable health outcomes.

In June 2025, the project was officially completed after four and a half years of implementation. The closure was marked by a WASH symposium held in Muttenz, Switzerland, bringing together consortium partners and sector stakeholders to reflect on lessons learned and discuss pathways for scaling and sustaining impact.

Throughout the final project phase, Skat Foundation continued to lead stakeholder engagement and communication efforts. In addition to knowledge management and dissemination activities, we documented the project's country-level results through four dedicated impact stories (one for each partner country) capturing changes in hygiene practices, local ownership, and system strengthening processes. These stories contribute to the project's long-term knowledge legacy and are further presented in the Publications section.

Skat Foundation was also involved in the development of a smartphone-based chlorination application designed to support facility caretakers in correctly dosing chlorine for water treatment and monitoring Free Residual Chlorine (FRC) levels. The app provides practical guidance, a dosing calculator, and step-by-step instructions, aiming to improve water safety management in health care facilities and schools where technical support is limited.

© SF: WASH Symposium

Main Outputs of the Consortium

68 health care facilities in Mali and Burkina Faso and **56** schools in Nigeria and the Occupied Palestinian Territories were supported.

94 Gravit'eau handwashing systems were installed across both Mali and Burkina Faso.

643 health workers and community members were trained in WASH FIT, and **32** health care facilities received chlorination training.

494 schools in the Occupied Palestinian Territories were enrolled on a digital platform for water quality monitoring.

SUFOSEC ALLIANCE

The Sufosec Alliance entered a new programme phase in 2025 (2025–2028), accompanied by structural adjustments aimed at strengthening strategic coherence, advisory support, and measurable impact. As part of this restructuring, the former thematic Learning Groups were transformed into three Advisory Networks: Nexus, Gender, and HRBA & LNOB.

© SF: A crowd watching the Sufosec Escape Hunger Game during World Nutrition Day in Bern.

Skat Foundation leads the HRBA & LNOB Advisory Network, working closely with seven internationally renowned experts to provide strategic guidance and technical support to Alliance members and partners. Following an initial set-up phase, the network was formally launched in September 2025 and hosted its first two events: a webinar and a panel discussion. These formats aim to facilitate peer exchange, critical reflection, and practical guidance on strengthening rights-based and inclusive programming across country contexts.

A milestone of the new phase is the strengthening of outcome-level measurement across Alliance projects. While the Zambia project conducted the harmonized household survey for the third time since the creation of Sufosec, Skat Foundation's partner SHIPO in Tanzania was selected as one of six case studies in the Alliance's global impact study on agroecology and food security. The 2025–2026 study aims to better understand how agroecological interventions from the first phase contributed to food security outcomes and to help strategically inform future interventions. It is carried out in collaboration with renowned research institutes in Switzerland and the respective partner countries to ensure scientific rigor.

In addition, the Alliance took over the national "Welternährungstag" campaign and launched a large public relations initiative on 15 October in Bern. A key highlight was the collaborative development of the interactive "Escape Hunger" escape room, which premiered on the Bundesplatz and subsequently toured Lucerne, Zurich, and Basel (further details are provided in the Events section).

© SF: The Sufosec Escape Hunger container on the Bundesplatz in Bern, October 2025.

RURAL WATER SUPPLY NETWORK (RWSN)

2025 was a year of strategic resilience and landmark results for RWSN. Despite the sudden loss of the USAID REAL-Water project in February, which created a significant funding gap, the network responded by diversifying partnerships, deepening its technical leadership, and securing new multi-year support. The result: RWSN enters 2026 with a stronger governance framework, a broader funding base, and a flagship policy achievement at continental level.

Groundwater on the African Agenda

The most significant achievement of 2025 was RWSN's contribution to placing groundwater at the heart of Africa's water policy architecture. A Groundwater Task Team, led by Dr Callist Tindimugaya from the Africa Groundwater Network and supported by BGR and Skat Foundation, helped develop and champion the Strategic Programme on Groundwater for Water Security and Resilience in Africa (SPGWR) 2026–2033. After regional consultations, a validation workshop in Nairobi, and sustained advocacy at PANAFCON-3 in Lusaka, the programme was formally adopted at the 14th AMCOW General Assembly in Dakar in September 2025, embedded within the Africa Water Vision 2063. Endorsement at the African Union Heads of State meeting is expected in early 2026.

© SF: Sean Furey and Aline Saraiva Okello with Dr Callist Tindimugaya (left to right) at the 22nd AfWASA International Congress and Exhibition

This represents years of patient, expert-led engagement and demonstrates the distinctive value of a network approach: connecting African technical leadership with multilateral processes to achieve systemic policy outcomes that no single organisation could deliver alone. The origins go back to Skat Foundation's role as Knowledge Broker for the Unlocking the Potential of Groundwater for Poor, UPGro, programme (2013–2020) and specifically the process of bringing AMCOW, BGR, Africa Groundwater Network and RWSN together at the 20th African Water Association Congress in February 2020.

Drilling Professionalisation and Associations

RWSN deepened its long-standing commitment to borehole drilling professionalisation through engaging with drilling associations in Sub-Saharan Africa, examining how external agencies can effectively support these bodies without creating dependency. A webinar in November brought together association leaders from Nigeria, Kenya, Zambia, and Uganda alongside government and NGO representatives, attracting 675 registrations from 65 countries. The session discussed critical themes: the need for enforceable standards, continuous training, quality assurance, stronger data systems, and inclusive membership models.

A new Water Well Drillers WhatsApp Group, launched in October, grew rapidly to over 220 members by year-end. It became a vibrant space for peer learning, with practitioners sharing field videos, debating regulations, troubleshooting drilling methods, and discussing professionalisation. A spin-off "Pumps & Pipes" group followed. This experiment in reaching practitioners directly through the platforms they actually use marks a shift in how RWSN facilitates knowledge exchange.

World Water Week and Global Engagement

RWSN had a strong presence at World Water Week 2025 in Stockholm, co-organising sessions on climate finance and systems strengthening, hosting an informal "Groundwater Gathering" at the Swiss Water Partnership stand, and co-convening a Women's Mingle event. The week was rich in bilateral meetings with the World Bank, BMZ, the Coca-Cola Foundation, Osprey Foundation, AfDB, Grundfos, and many others.

Dr Angelica Wehrli, Skat Foundation Managing Director and RWSN Executive Committee member, attended World Water Week for the first time, and signed a Memorandum of Understanding between Skat Foundation and the Women in Water Diplomacy Network.

Key strategic meetings also took place in Charleston (Global Water Center), Washington DC (Inter-American Development Bank and World Bank), and Geneva (UN-Water).

New Partnerships and Funding

Despite the challenging funding climate, RWSN secured several important new partnerships in 2025. A two-year grant from the Conrad N. Hilton Foundation (Stronger Together!) supports women professionals in the water sector and strengthens women's networks globally. A general support grant from Osprey Foundation provided vital core funding. A Supporting Partnership Agreement with the Alliance for Rural Electrification (ARE) opened the door to the water-energy nexus, including discounted access for RWSN members to ARE's 2026 Energy Access Investment Forum in Nairobi. The Memorandum of Understanding with the Women in Water Diplomacy Network was signed at World Water Week. Discussions advanced on SIRWASH Phase 2 with the Inter-American Development Bank and SDC for South-South learning on rural WASH.

© SF: Skat Foundation team attending the Stockholm World Water Week

Knowledge Exchange and Learning

RWSN delivered two full webinar series in 2025, covering topics from climate-resilient groundwater solutions and systems strengthening to handpump corrosion, laundry transformation, and self-supply policy. The Annual Network Meeting was held in two time-zone sessions to maximise global participation. A white paper on Multiple Use Water Services was published, synthesising discussions from Stockholm 2024. The blog series on Pastoralists and Water continued with several new instalments, and an article on endowment funds for rural water maintenance explored innovative financing for last-mile service delivery.

Monthly newsletters in English, French, Spanish, and Portuguese kept the membership informed, and all editions were cross-posted to LinkedIn for wider reach.

Governance and Strategy

A year-long governance review culminated in the Executive Committee's approval of the RWSN Handbook: Governance 2026–2028, providing a clear operational framework for the network's next phase. The first RWSN Country Chapter was formally established in Ecuador, represented by Corporación Agua Para Todos. RWSN also supported the Sustainable Sanitation Alliance (SuSanA) in completing its own major governance review, which was adopted by SuSanA's Global Steering Committee. The Secretariat continued chairing the MDB Rural WASH Community of Practice, facilitating quarterly Stop the Rot Action Group meetings, and progressing the "RWSN 2030" strategic development process, with proposals for an improved business model tabled at the December Executive Committee meeting.

Mentoring and Professional Development

The 2025 Mentoring Programme was brought to a successful conclusion, and the Stronger Together! project began supporting six women's water and WASH networks over a two-year period. Research continued for a "Story of Change" on drilling professionalisation, documenting two decades of RWSN's influence on standards, training, and practice across Africa.

WOMEN IN WATER DIPLOMACY NETWORK

© SF: At the signing of the Memorandum of Understanding with the Women in Water Diplomacy Network.

In 2025, Skat Foundation strengthened its engagement in global water diplomacy through a new strategic partnership with the Women in Water Diplomacy Network. During the Stockholm World Water Week, Skat Foundation signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the Women in Water Diplomacy Network and Bridging Waters Advisory to support the implementation of the Network's Global Strategy 'A Path Forward for Women, Water, Peace and Security'.

The collaboration aims to advance gender equality in high-level decision-making related to shared water resources, with a particular focus on strengthening women's leadership in water diplomacy processes. Through this partnership, the organisations seek to combine their respective expertise and networks to promote more inclusive governance of transboundary water systems and to support the broader agenda linking water cooperation, peace, and security.

The agreement marks an important step in positioning Skat Foundation within global dialogues on water governance and diplomacy. The partnership will also contribute to knowledge exchange and joint initiatives that elevate the role of women in shaping water policy and cooperation frameworks.

Looking ahead, 2026 is expected to be a pivotal year for the collaboration, with several high-level international engagements, including the upcoming UN Water Conference, providing opportunities to advance the Network's agenda and strengthen global attention to women's leadership in water diplomacy.

ORGANISATION & IMPACT

In 2025, Skat Foundation continued to strengthen its reach and engagement through events, publications, and a growing digital presence. LinkedIn remained our primary online channel, complemented by the launch of our quarterly newsletter – a new way to keep our community informed and connected. This section also introduces the dedicated team driving our work, alongside our financial results for the year.

PUBLICATIONS

In 2025, Skat Foundation contributed to a range of knowledge products spanning field-level impact documentation, technical research, and network-wide reflection.

hands4health Impact Story Series

A central publishing achievement of 2025 was the completion of the hands4health Impact Story series – four country-level publications documenting how the project transformed hygiene and water safety in Mali, Burkina Faso, Nigeria, and Palestine. Authored by Valérie Bertschy and published by FHNW, the series brings field voices and qualitative research together to illustrate what systemic change looks like in practice across four very different contexts.

Stop the Rot Diagnostic Survey 2024 – Results and Next Steps

Published in 2025 and co-authored by Kerstin Danert, Donald MacAllister, and Steven Kumwenda, this report presents findings from the latest diagnostic survey of the Stop the Rot initiative, which works to address the widespread premature failure of handpumps due to rapid corrosion across sub-Saharan Africa. Co-published by Skat Foundation and RWSN, the report advances the evidence base for stronger quality standards in rural water infrastructure.

RWSN Story of Change: Triggering Reflection and Change

Co-authored by Valérie Bertschy and Sean Furey and published in April 2025, this publication traces how RWSN's 2010 "Myths of the Rural Water Supply Sector" paper prompted Welthungerhilfe to fundamentally rethink its approach to rural water programming. After an internal review of around 200 installations confirmed the publication's findings on system failure rates, the organisation shifted from a project-based model to a WASH systems-strengthening approach – with lasting effects on its work in Malawi and beyond.

EVENTS

Throughout the year, Skat Foundation participated in and contributed to a range of events that foster dialogue, knowledge exchange, and collaboration across the water and development sectors.

© SF: During the 164th Aguasan Meeting in St. Gallen, the team ventured below ground for a tour of the city's sewage system.

AGUASAN Meeting n° 163

March 2025

The quarterly Aguasan meeting, co-hosted by Skat Foundation and Skat Consulting, brought together water and sanitation practitioners for a day of exchange and reflection. The meeting provided an opportunity to introduce the new management of both organisations to the wider community. Participants also enjoyed a guided tour of the St. Gallen sewer system, offering a rare glimpse into the city's urban water infrastructure.

Interdisciplinary Water Symposium, OST Rapperswil

March 2025

The event created a platform for exchange between academia and practice, highlighting the importance of interdisciplinary approaches in addressing complex water-related challenges and advancing sustainable water management. Dr Angelica Wehrli presented one of our projects in Tanzania, which has already provided access to safe drinking water for more than 70,000 people.

WASH Symposium – hands4health

June 2025

The symposium brought together project partners, donors, and local stakeholders to reflect on the lessons learned during the implementation of the multi-country research project and to discuss pathways for sustaining and scaling successful approaches.

World Water Week, Stockholm

August 2025

Team members engaged in discussions with global water practitioners, researchers, and policymakers, strengthening partnerships and exchanging perspectives on current challenges in water governance and sustainable WASH solutions. In addition, Skat Foundation signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the Women in Water Diplomacy Network.

Welternährungstag Campaign, Bern

October 2025

As part of the Sufosec Alliance campaign, an interactive public engagement initiative was launched to raise awareness about global food security. The Escape Hunger escape game invited participants (including public figures from politics, culture, and civil society) to explore the complex causes of hunger in an immersive format.

© SF: Dr Angelica Wehrli, Managing Director of Skat Foundation, and Rupa Mukerji, CEO of Skat Consulting, at the 164th Aguasan Meeting in St. Gallen.

Humanitarian Communications Workshop

December 2025

Building on last year's collaboration, Skat Foundation again worked with students from the University of St. Gallen to explore practical communication challenges in humanitarian and development contexts, sharing real-world case studies and encouraging critical reflection on responsible storytelling.

OUTREACH AND VISIBILITY

In 2025, Skat Foundation continued to grow its digital presence and deepen engagement with its global community.

LinkedIn

Our LinkedIn following grew from **3,895** to **4,427**, reflecting sustained and growing interest in our work across the water and development sectors.

Newsletter

2025 marked the first full year of our quarterly newsletter, a new channel through which we share updates on our projects, publications, and events with a dedicated audience. Over the course of the year, we sent out three editions, generating a total of **681** opens.

Crowdfunding

In December **2025**, we launched our first-ever crowdfunding campaign in partnership with There for you, raising over CHF **5,000** in support of our project in Nepal. This new initiative opened an exciting avenue for community engagement and direct public support for our work on the ground.

ORGANISATION & TEAM

Under the direction of Dr Angelica Wehrli, an organisational development process was initiated to further enhance the long-term sustainability and effectiveness of our work. A central focus of this initiative has been to strengthen collaboration across teams and to more closely integrate RWSN and the water project portfolio within a cohesive, shared leadership framework.

To support and reinforce this strategic evolution, the Board and Managing Director have appointed Karla Schlie and Sean Furey as Co-Deputy Managing Directors, recognising the significant depth of experience, and strong commitment they bring to the organisation.

In 2025, we also marked the end of Valérie Bertschy's traineeship and welcomed her as a full-time Knowledge Management Officer, a transition we are very pleased to support. At the same time, we said a warm farewell to Susanna Germanier, Sandra Méndez, and Matthias Saladin all made meaningful contribution to our work, and we wish them well in their next chapters.

Skat Foundation remains proud of its diverse and dynamic team, spanning multiple continents and bringing together expertise across water, sanitation, agriculture, governance, and communication. We are particularly pleased with our strong female representation, which reflects our core values of equity and inclusion. While our working language is English, our offices continue to resonate with a vibrant mix of German, Spanish, and French — a fitting reflection of the international spirit that defines who we are.

Dr Angelica Wehrli
Managing Director

Sean Furey
Co-Deputy Managing Director & RWSN Director

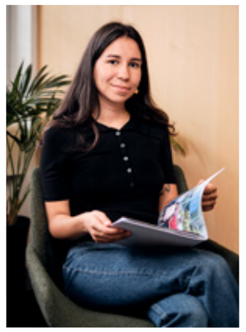
Karla Schlie
Co-Deputy Managing Director & Project Manager

Andrea Güpfert
Head of Finance & Administration

Valérie Bertschy
Knowledge Management Officer

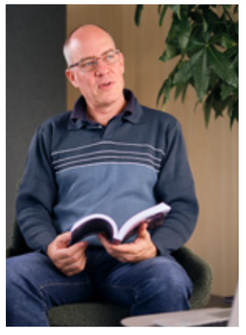
Dr Aline Saraiva Okello
RWSN Global Network Manager

Batima Tleulinova
Global Network Communications and Membership Officer



Susanna Germanier
Junior Programme Officer, until April 2025

Dr Sandra Méndez
Project Manager, until May 2025



Matthias Saladin
International Programme Coordinator, until October 2025

Miriam Orellana Peña
Co-Lead Sufosec Advisory Network on HRBA / LNOB

Dr Kerstin Danert
Associated Specialist in Water Supply

Ueli Rickenbach
benevol St. Gallen, IT

Renata Rölli
benevol St. Gallen, Administration

Ramona Müller
benevol St. Gallen, Graphic Design

Irène Ferraro
büro ò, Accounting

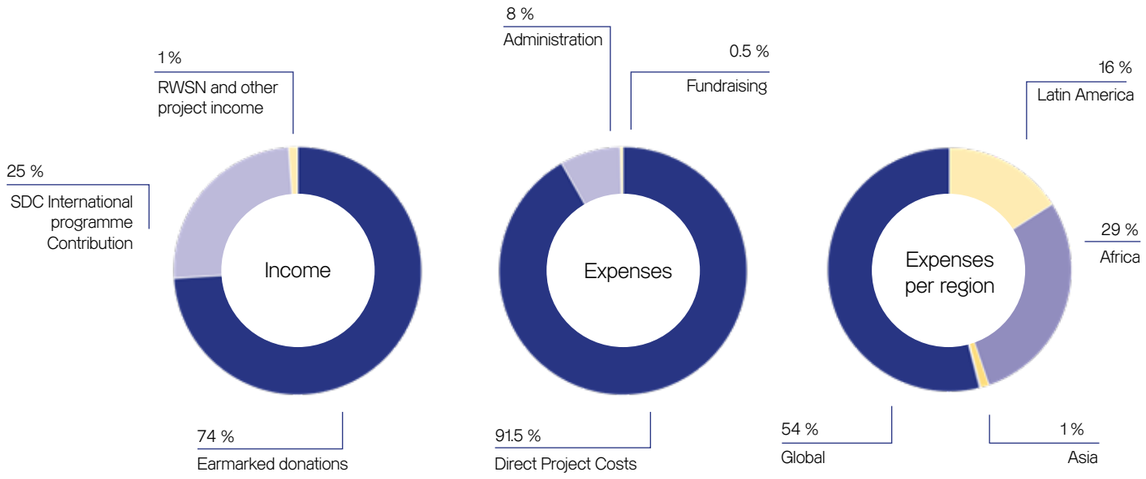
FINANCES

Balance sheet as of 31.12.2025

Description	2025	2024
Assets		
Cash and marketable securities	487'608.74	800'519.13
Receivables third parties	141'217.32	163'639.18
Other short-term receivables	9'850.85	26'756.30
Work in progress	-	-
Accrued income	68'830.34	85'490.23
Total current assets	707'507.25	1'076'404.84
Fixed assets	1.00	1.00
Total non-current assets	1.00	1.00
Total assets	707'508.25	1'076'405.84
Liabilities		
Liabilities third parties	22'033.01	40'471.09
Other short-term liabilities	49'131.74	25'295.00
Liabilities from pre-payments	6'766.75	-
Short-time provisions	20'500.00	25'400.00
Deferred income/accrued charges	56'062.57	122'061.79
Total liabilities	154'494.07	213'227.88
Restricted funds	291'637.04	544'106.97
Total restricted funds	291'637.04	544'106.97
Free capital	215'000.00	215'000.00
Internally generated unrestricted operating funds	46'377.14	104'070.99
Total capital of the organisation	261'377.14	319'070.99
Total liabilities	707'508.25	1'076'405.84

[all numbers are CHF currency]

The full Report of the Auditors is available on our Website.



FINANCES

Statement of operations

Description	2025	2024
Income		
Donations without earmarking	3'058	2'516
Earmarked donations and contributions	1'175'377	1'313'043
SDC international programme contribution	393'800	440'000
RWSN and other project income	18'387	189'676
Knowledge management projects	-	3'217
Operating revenue	1'590'623	1'948'452
Expenses		
Direct costs international programme	-1'069'749	-1'192'843
Direct costs international programme support	-55'707	-81'360
Direct project costs RWSN	-32'008	-32'530
Direct project costs, knowledge management and other related project costs	-39'670	-50'344
Personnel Costs (project-related)	-432'827	-371'519
Total direct project expenditures	-1'629'961	-1'728'596
Administration	-140'375	-159'232
Fundraising and general advertising expenses	-6'639	-7'867
Total administration and fundraising expenditures	-147'013	-167'099
Total expenditures	-1'776'974	-1'895'695
Depreciation	-	-
Operating surplus	-186'352	52'757
Financial result	-24'851	7'306
Extraordinary result	-10'265	82
Net surplus for the year	-221'467	60'145
Allocation earmarked funds	-1'612'691	-1'942'519
Withdrawal earmarked funds	1'776'464	1'883'746
Change in fund capital	163'773	-58'773
Net surplus / deficit for the year after allocations	-57'694	1'372
Withdrawals / Allocations		
Free capital	- 57'694	1'372

Skat Foundation's accounts are prepared in accordance with the accounting recommendations of Swiss GAAP FER, in particular Swiss GAAP FER 21, the Swiss Code of Obligations, and the guidelines of the ZEWO Foundation. They give a true and fair view of the net assets, financial position, and results of operations. The annual financial statements comply with Swiss law and Skat Foundation's statutes.

The "Statement of changes in capital" in the audit report provides detailed information on the use and allocation of the earmarked funds and the organisational capital.

The costs for administration and fundraising are determined by separate cost positions. Personnel expenses are allocated to the cost centres based on the hours worked at effective hourly rates including social security contributions. The other operating costs are allocated to the administration costs in accordance with the Zewo guidelines for minimum ratios.

The organisation's total capital decreased from CHF 319'070.99 to CHF 261'377.14.

The net loss for the year 2025 was due to restructuring costs, and the negative impact of former contracts where costs exceeded revenue.

From left to right: Bernd Rickert, Head of Finance and Administration as of January 2026, Esther Haldimann, Xaver Edelmann, Angelica Wehrli, Karla Schlie, Yvette Sánchez, Maria Luisa Fuchs, Sean Furey

ORGANISATION

Skat Foundation's Board

- Dr Xaver Edelmann, Chairman of the Board
- Prof. em. Dr Yvette Sánchez, former Chair of Latin American Studies (CLS-HSG), University of St. Gallen
- Esther Haldimann, Director Advisory Services, Helvetas, Zürich
- Prof. Dr Georg von Krogh, Professor and Chair of Strategic Management and Innovation, ETH Zürich
- Andrés Marín, Senior Relationship Manager, Bank Julius Bär & Co. Ltd.
- Dr Maria Luisa Fuchs, Co-Head Entrepreneurship & Innovation Service Center, University of St. Gallen

Committee of the Board

- Dr Rolf Leutert, until April 2025
- Dr Xaver Edelmann
- Prof. em. Dr Yvette Sánchez

Management

- Dr Angelica Wehrli, Managing Director
- Andrea Güpfert, Head of Finances and Administration
- Sean Furey, Co-Deputy Managing Director
- Karla Schlie, Co-Deputy Managing Director

Accounting

- büro ö ag, Burggraben 27, 9000 St. Gallen

External Auditor

- Treviso Revisions AG, Gaiserwaldstrasse 6, 9015 St. Gallen

PARTNERS & DONORS

We thank our partners and donors for their support and trust in 2025.

PARTNERS

AfricaAhead
Ask for Water Ltd.
Asociación Pro Objetivos de Desarrollo Sostenible (Pro-ODS)
benevol St. Gallen
BluAct Technologies Ltd.
Corporación Comabaquinta
Eawag – Sandec
EcoPartner Ltd.
Fundación Ser Familia
Helvetas Swiss Intercooperation
Jacana Business Foundation
Parish St. Marcelino Champagnat
Rural Water and Sanitation Agency Tanzania (RUWASA)
SmartPaani
Social Programme PROSOFI
Javeriana University
Sociedad Científica Cubana para el Desarrollo de la Familia
Sokoine University of Agriculture (SUA)
Southern Highlands Participatory Organisation (SHIPO)
Swiss Toilet Organisation
Swiss Water Partnership
The Water Institute, Tanzania
University of St. Gallen

Sufosec Alliance

Aqua Alimenta
Fastenaktion
SWISSAID
Vivamos
Vétérinaires Sans Frontières Suisse (VSF-Suisse)

Hands4health Consortium

CESVI
Martin Systems Ltd.
Palestine Polytechnic University
RANAS Ltd.
Swiss Federal Institute of Technology Lausanne (EPFL)
Swiss Tropical and Public Health Institute (SwissTPH)
Terre des hommes Foundation (tdh)
University of Northwestern Switzerland (FHNW)
University of Maiduguri

RWSN

Executive Committee Members:

Bundesanstalt für Geowissenschaften und Rohstoffe (BGR)
Global Water Center
One for All alliance
Osprey Foundation
The World Bank
UNICEF
WaterAid
Welthungerhilfe

RWSN Project Partners

REAL-Water programme (Aquaya Institute lead)
SNV
Sustainable Sanitation Alliance (GIZ)
Stop the Rot (Ask for Water Ltd. Ltd, British Geological Survey, BASEflow, University of Surrey, UNICEF)
Stronger Together! Coalition
Women in Water Diplomacy Network

DONORS

- Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC)

Swiss cantons, cities and municipalities

- Gemeinde Baar, Gemeinde Maur, Gemeinnütziger Fonds Kanton Zürich, Kanton St. Gallen Swisslos

Swiss foundations and institutions

- Däster-Schild Stiftung, Fondation Philanthropique Famille Sandoz, Symphasis Stiftung, Leopold Bachmann Stiftung, There for you, Wasserversorgung Herisau

Swiss and international research funds and universities

- University of Oxford

Bi-lateral organisations

- Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit GmbH (GIZ), Germany; Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office (FCDO), UK; United States Agency for International Development (USAID), USA

International NGOs

- FOS Feminista, Global Aid Network (GAiN), Global Water Center, IRC, SNV, WaterAid UK, Water for People, Water for Good, Welthungerhilfe, Global Water Center, World Vision

International foundations

- Conrad N. Hilton Foundation, Osprey Foundation, The Waterloo Foundation

CONTACT

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Switzerland

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SWIFT / BIC Code:	
CHF	IBAN: CH81 0078 1608 6366 8200 0
Euro	IBAN: CH27 0078 1608 6366 8200 2
US-Dollar	IBAN: CH54 0078 1608 6366 8200 1

IMPRINT

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Photographs: partners and Skat Foundation
St. Gallen, June 2026