

SWISS-SUPPORTED CLIMATE ACTIONS IN BANGLADESH

Bangladesh ranks among the world's most climate-vulnerable countries — 7th in the Global Climate Risk Index and 9th in Natural Disaster Risk. Each year, natural disasters cost around 3 billion dollars, displacing about 700,000 people. Cyclones, floods, Salinity intrusion, and extreme heat threaten lives, livelihoods, health, and food security - especially for marginalised groups.

Despite limited resources and competing development needs, Bangladesh has developed strong frameworks, including the Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan (2009), National Adaptation Plan (2023), and Delta Plan 2100. However, implementation gaps persist, especially locally, where communities often lack early warning systems, adaptive infrastructure, and green technologies.

WHY CALL: A TIME-WORTHY INITIATIVE

In response to this urgent reality, the **Climate Action at Local Level (CALL) programme** emerged as a unified and strategic response, supported by the Embassy of Switzerland. The CALL consortium brings together 9 Swiss NGOs and 18 local partner organisations, working collaboratively across 18 districts in Bangladesh, directly reaching over 2 million people living in the most climate-risk areas and conditions. Nearly half of the country is covered, strategically targeting climate hotspots in the northwestern river basins, the southwestern coastal belt, and the southeastern disaster-prone zones. The consortium addresses diverse issues— from rising salinity to climate-induced migration— with broad reach and deep thematic expertise. CALL is more than a thematic coverage. It is a purpose-driven climate action platform, strategically designed to generate measurable, impactful results across climate adaptation, resilience building, disaster risk reduction, and a just green economic transition. The programme aligns with international climate protocols and guidelines, including the Paris Agreement, the UNFCCC, and recommendations from the IPCC, and responds directly to global calls for locally led, inclusive, and coordinated climate-adaptive solutions.

COLLABORATION AT THE CORE: THE UNIQUENESS OF THE CONSORTIUM

Climate change is not a single-issue problem. It is complex, interconnected, and cross-sectoral. No single actor or organisation can solve it alone. One of the core strengths of the CALL consortium is that each Swiss NGO brings a distinct expertise to climate adaptation and mitigation, and together, their work forms a cohesive and impactful whole. It unites actors with complementary strengths, bringing together expertise in climate justice, local & nature-based solutions, adaptation, WASH, livelihoods, maternal health and child nutrition, climate finance, disability inclusion, disaster preparedness, green technology, and inclusive governance.

Moreover, the members bring with them a profound understanding of the local realities, built through long-term relationships with communities, Local Government Institutions (LGIs), Civil Society Organisations (CSOs), and private sector actors. Members of the consortium share a strong commitment to a Human Rights-Based Approach (HRBA), ensuring the most marginalised groups are not only included but truly empowered. In the CALL programme, **Helvetas Bangladesh** bolsters climate-vulnerable communities with inclusive adaptation measures, resilient livelihoods, equitable water access, women's leadership promotion, and disaster preparedness.

Swisscontact drives green growth in the garment sector by upskilling workers and supporting factories in adopting energy-efficient practices. **GAIN** enhances food and nutrition security by promoting climate-resilient agriculture and healthier diets through workplace and community initiatives.

Meanwhile, **HEKS/EPER** empowers marginalised communities to address droughts and floods via better access to rights and economic opportunities. **Solidar Suisse** combats climate-induced child labour while advancing cleaner, safer practices in the leather sector through social dialogue and environmental compliance. **CBM Globa**l promotes disability-inclusive disaster risk reduction, focusing on accessibility and participation in preparedness. **Swiss Red Cross** builds community resilience with early warning systems and anticipatory actions.

Enfants du Monde weaves climate resilience into maternal and child health services, bolstering public health responses. **Terre des Hommes** helps vulnerable youth develop resilience and coping skills through sport-based strategies.

Each organisation adds a unique strength, collaborating synergistically rather than in silos. For instance, Helvetas' water filtration systems in saline areas are made accessible to persons with disabilities by CBM Global. This diverse expertise in climate adaptation and mitigation fosters valuable mutual learning across the consortium.

PILLARS OF COLLABORATION: A DRIVE TOWARDS COLLECTIVE IMPACTS

This consortium structure is efficient and strategic, pooling knowledge, technical expertise, networks, and institutional experience. It promotes sharing of specialized resources and know-how, broadens access to local and national stakeholders, and bolsters localization of context-specific, sustainable solutions.

A key strength of CALL is its **joint initiatives**—structured collaborations that maximize impact through shared planning and implementation, cross-learning among members, and joint advocacy for inclusive climate governance and finance. These harness diverse expertise, aligning strategies to co-deliver more effective, inclusive, and scalable interventions.

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The consortium features three Thematic Working Groups (Gender, Disaster Risk Reduction, Localisation) as knowledge platforms, where international and local actors exchange insights, innovate approaches, and co-create scalable solutions. This ongoing dialogue builds a robust evidence base, fueling policy advocacy at local, national, and global levels.

CALL is not just about implementing projects. It is about learning and enabling others to do better. Through systematic **knowledge sharing**, the consortium:

- Builds local capacity to lead future climate efforts
- Ensures that learning flows both ways (from global partners to local actors, and vice versa)
- Identifies scalable models of success

This shared platform ensures that local innovations, from climate-adaptive solutions to gender-responsive DRR planning, can be documented, improved, and replicated. In alignment with building a climate-smart and disaster-resilient Bangladesh, the programme prioritises locally owned solutions and strengthens the leadership of local actors in planning and implementation.

ONE VISION, MANY STRENGTHS: A UNITED PATH TO A CLIMATE-RESILIENT FUTURE

The true strength of the CALL consortium lies in its cohesiveness. When nine Swiss organisations with distinct technical specialisations, joined hands with 18 local partners and embedded their efforts in local systems, something transformative began.

What emerged is a model of climate collaboration that respects local knowledge, applies global science, shares learning openly, and delivers results collectively. From anticipatory action to resilience building to green jobs and food systems, the programme is richer, more responsive, and better prepared to meet the needs of Bangladesh's most vulnerable communities.

Together, the CALL Consortium is not just responding to climate change, it is shaping a future where Bangladesh's resilience is built from the ground up.

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