



Bern University
of Applied Sciences



Center for Development and Cooperation CDC

We make use of our competencies and technical expertise for capacity development in the fields of wood and construction in emerging and developing countries. Thereby we strengthen the capacities of individuals, organisations and communities from education, research and economy and contribute to sustainable development.

Wood and Construction in Emerging and Developing Countries

Capacity Development: We support communities, organisations as well as individuals in the fields of wood and construction with the aim of strengthening their capacities to mobilise resources and realise their development goals efficiently.

The Center for Development and Cooperation CDC is specialised in the cooperation with emerging and developing countries in the areas of wood and construction. Thanks to our extended experience in international cooperation, our closeness to the private sector and our tight links with the teaching and research divisions of the Bern University of Applied Sciences BFH, we rely on state of the art knowledge and an extended pool of experts. Through our projects, we contribute to the advancement of emerging and developing countries while strengthening Switzerland's excellence in knowledge and expertise through mutual learning.

The combination of expertise in wood processing and construction, together with approaches and capacities relevant for development cooperation allows us to develop, in close collaboration with our local partners, solutions to the challenges of emerging and developing countries. Thanks to our focus on applied solutions, we make concrete contributions to social and economic development. In all our work we are guided by the Millennium Development Goals of the United Nations as well as the post-2015 Development Agenda.

Knowledge and the ability to use it, is, in our view, the most prestigious capital of human beings and the basis for sustainable development. In an ever-more global world, researchers, teachers and students must be able to create and exchange knowledge and skills in an international, multidisciplinary context. In turn, qualified and well-informed human beings are the foundation for successful enterprises and well-functioning societies.

Our team has excellent professional and methodological know-how and outstanding social and management skills. We are used to working in intercultural contexts and are proficient in German, French, English, Russian and Spanish. On behalf of government agencies, development institutions, non-governmental organisations, foundations as well as the private sector, we plan, implement and support projects and advise our partners in

areas related to our core competencies. In emerging and developing countries, we cooperate with government agencies, institutions of higher education, professional and technical schools, research institutions, enterprises, associations as well as non-governmental organisations.

“We combine our knowledge in wood and construction with our competencies and methods in development cooperation.”

Bern University of Applied Sciences Architecture, Wood, and Civil Engineering

The CDC is a division of the department of Architecture, Wood and Civil Engineering from the BFH. As a nationally and internationally recognised University of Applied Sciences with extensive experience and long traditions, the department of Architecture, Wood and Civil Engineering prepares architects, civil as well as wood engineers and technicians for successful careers. Through continuing education, the BFH ensures that existing professionals keep up-to-date with the newest knowledge. The research activities are grouped in three institutes, aiming to develop innovative solutions for their respective industry partners. The BFH also conducts product tests, reviews planning studies, and generates expert opinions for industry and society. This makes it the ideal partner for small and medium sized enterprises.



Images: Bern University of Applied Sciences BFH and Josef Pichler, www.jp-arts.ch; top left: applied education in Gabun; top right: business consulting in Eastern Europe; bottom: visit of a Swiss company.

Capacity Development

We consider capacity development as an ongoing process that enables humans to formulate relevant questions, to mobilise resources and to develop adequate solutions, which then are conveyed and applied in context. Our work is focused on the needs of people and the challenges encountered by the wood and construction sector in emerging and developing countries. Together with our partners, we use applied research and development activities to search for practical solutions that are transferred to the private sector and communities through knowledge and technology transfer and professional education and training.

Applied research and development

In close collaboration with scientists in our partner countries, we conduct research and develop adequate solutions that are fitting the needs of our beneficiaries and clients. As such, we explore the use of tropical wood species, develop new materials from renewable, local resources, design and plan – under consideration of the prevailing social, ecological, and economic conditions – affordable housing, or design timber bridges that are easily assembled and replicated.

Knowledge and technology transfer

We offer our services in form of consultancies, studies, expert reviews and exchanges. We assist for instance research centers in the development and accreditation of testing laboratories or advice export promotion agencies in the wood sector. We exchange research insights and technological developments with our partners. With affiliated partner institutions in emerging and developing countries, we promote the professional and intercultural exchange and organise internships, international conferences and training opportunities. In emerging and developing countries, we value the close collaboration with the private sector and the society to promote the immediate practical application of the existing and the newly created knowledge.

Vocational and professional education and training

We promote vocational and professional education and training at all levels: from on-the-job skills training, to apprenticeship schemes and technical education at higher education institutions and universities. As such,

we support the creation and advancement of vocational education systems through technical assistance to decision makers. For local experts in partner countries, we offer an Executive Master of Business Administration (EMBA) with a focus on education management in the timber economy. In cooperation with educational institutions in emerging and developing countries, we develop concepts for basic and continuous training programs, introduce new teaching methods, define the necessary infrastructure, and develop teachers' skills through methodological-didactic and technical courses. In the spirit of the Swiss dual track vocational education system, we encourage the cooperation between professional education and the private sector to create an applied, demand-oriented educational experience.

Private sector development

In collaboration with small and medium sized enterprises, we develop solutions for commercially viable products and services and promote development along the value chains of the wood and construction sector. To this end, we analyze industries and value chains, support product and technology development, and streamline production processes. We advise enterprises on management and marketing topics and support membership associations in defining and executing their tasks. In private sector development, we focus on improving the profitability of the enterprises while minimising their environmental footprint as well as creating as many inclusive long-term employment opportunities as possible.

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Contacts

Center for Development and Cooperation CDC

Markus Schär
Head of Center for Development and Cooperation CDC
+41 32 344 17 44
markus.schaer@bfh.ch

Bern University of Applied Sciences

Architecture, Wood and Civil Engineering
Center for Development and Cooperation
Solithurnstrasse 102
P.O. Box 6096
2500 Biel 6

Telephone +41 32 344 03 41
Fax +41 32 344 03 91

fe.ahb@bfh.ch
ahb.bfh.ch/cdc