



June 2016

Management Response

to the Evaluation Report on the Swiss strategic partnership with Geneva Call

Introduction / The process

1. In July 2015, the steering board consisting of project officers of the FDFA directly involved in the strategic partnership and/or projects of Switzerland with Geneva Call mandated the external evaluation of the strategic partnership with the non-governmental organisation Geneva Call (Appel de Genève). Led by the Human Security Division (HSD) of the Swiss Federal Department of Foreign Affairs (FDFA), the evaluation was mandated with the overall aim to generate recommendations in the light of the planning process for the next five years of Geneva Call, as well as for the co-operation (strategic partnership) between Switzerland and Geneva Call. After careful analysis of the applications received, the mandate was given to Ms. Teresa Hanley, independent consultant for humanitarian affairs and organisational development.
2. The steering board welcomes the submission of the evaluation report and would like to express its appreciation and thanks for the work done by Ms. Teresa Hanley, who conducted the evaluation as mandated. The steering board highly values the evaluation process and appreciates the regular, frank and open dialogue and interaction with the evaluator.

Overall appreciation of the evaluation report

3. The steering board confirms its view that the evaluation report on the current strategy addresses all of the issues and questions as agreed in the Terms of Reference dated 27 July 2015, and confirms that the methodology applied is based on both the TORs and regular exchanges between the evaluator and HSD.
4. It is noted with appreciation that the evaluation report assesses the strategic partnership as, *"highly valued by both sides"* and that no fundamental changes but rather a streamlining of the partnership is recommended. This confirms the perception among the Swiss governmental stakeholders involved that the overall nature of the partnership with Geneva Call is an asset and distinct added value, *"building on the distinct advantages of each"* as the evaluation report emphasises. It thus also confirms the governmental stakeholders' view that the continuation of the strategic partnership is not questioned and helps to achieve Switzerland's goals in the domains of peace policy in general and the protection of civilians in armed conflict through the dissemination of and respect for IHL as well as other humanitarian norms and standards.
5. It is particularly appreciated that the evaluation report contains clear recommendations relevant for the streamlining of the strategic partnership in the near future. As such, the evaluation report contains a number of findings and recommendations that appear important for the development of Geneva Call.

6. The recommendations contain important food for thought and pertinent indicators on possible amendments and improvements for the strategic partnership, even though some of the recommendations will have to be duly checked against the realities of governmental management, structural hierarchies, wider policy contexts and international developments in the area of protection of civilians and IHL-compliance. The following analysis represents a first stocktaking by the steering board, however without anticipating the decisions to be made within the coming months, within the FDFA in general and within the HSD in particular.

Main focus of the recommendations

7. With regard to the **specific recommendations to the FDFA**, the steering board generally welcomes the recommendations aiming at simplifying the complex management of the partnership on the FDFA's side. The development of a strategic framework for the partnership will be considered as soon as new directives for strategic partnerships are issued by the controller, but will also have to be checked against its added value in comparison to the existing annual contracts for the core grant as well as the specificities of Swiss governmental structures. The steering board also shares the views on the added value of research capacity, but emphasises its appreciation of the operational work as a primary strength of Geneva Call; HSD will exchange with Geneva Call on this point, particularly with a view to a possible cooperation with specialised external partners, where appropriate. The steering board particularly appreciates the recommendations on the leading role among donors (donor states) and will consider ways on how to develop this role in a sustainable manner. The steering board also welcomes the recommendation with regard to a more regular exchange between Geneva Call and Swiss embassies in the countries concerned and will consider this. It will do this, however, not without assessing the possible impact on the independence of Geneva Call, and not without considering the impact of such exchanges on the external perception of Switzerland as a "*champion of Geneva Call*" and the possible impact it can have on bilateral relations with partner states.
8. With regard to the **relevance** in the broader context, the steering board fully shares the view that the places, actors and themes on which Geneva Call works are relevant, but that there are a number of trends that Geneva Call – as well as the Swiss Confederation – will need to consider. The steering board particularly notes the references to the international development of legislation on counter terrorism and violent extremism and will continue the dialogue with Geneva Call also on this particular point.
9. With regard to **efficiency, organisational stability and sustainability**, the steering board notes with appreciation the finding on Geneva Calls efficiency and its careful use of resources but also notes the key challenges the organisation faces. It particularly notes the references on the challenges to the transition on the leadership level. The steering board also notes with appreciation the references to the possible necessity of growth in favour of enhancing stability of the organisations. Being aware of the delicate balance between securing funds, donor wishes, geographical and thematic diversity and sustainable implementation of the existing tools and commitments this may represent, Switzerland will take this point up in its dialogue not only with Geneva Call but also with other donors in order to contribute to suitable solutions.
10. In this context, with regard to the overall analysis as well as recommendations made to Geneva Call, the steering board particularly notes the **ongoing debate on the organisation's thematic expansion vs. the further consolidation of Geneva Call's work in the existing four core domains** (anti-personnel mines, protection of children, prevention of sexual violence, and IHL-training). The steering board is of the view that a general priority should be given to the universal adherence to and application of existing instruments (e.g. Deed of Commitment), to IHL-training, as well as to monitoring and evaluation (to the extent possible). The steering board is further of the view that the

forthcoming discussion on Geneva Call's Strategy 2017-2019 should address this debate and provide solutions in order to avoid a fragmentation of work and impact.

11. With regard to **effectiveness**, the steering board notes with appreciation the emphasis on the need to enhance and systematise the monitoring and assessment of the behavioural changes of armed non-state actors, and thus on the impact assessment and evaluation of Geneva Call's work. The steering board shares the view on the existing linkage between the demand for more enhanced monitoring and the increasing diversity and complexity of environments Geneva Call is operating in, as the results may ultimately also indicate the effectiveness of Switzerland's engagement in the relevant domains protection of civilians and respect for IHL. This aspect will be included in the future exchange with Geneva Call.
12. With regard to **gender**, the steering board notes with appreciation the evaluator's analysis and subsequent recommendations. Switzerland will continue to include this aspect in its regular dialogue with Geneva Call. Moreover, based on existing directives, Switzerland will continue to promote the inclusion of gender aspects into the peace and security context.

Directorate of Political Affairs DP



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ANNEX - Management Response with regard to the recommendations made to the FDFA

Management of the partnership	Current Assessment	Recommended Action	Management Response Agree / Disagree + Reference; Measures taken
Management of the partnership	Management of strategic partnership is with Multilateral Peace Policy Section, mainly for historical reasons	Move management of the strategic partnership to the humanitarian policy department.	Agree <u>Measures:</u> (already implemented)
	Funding agreements (core vs. project related) are done by different desks in different sections (>complexity)	Merge thematic and core funding into a common grant which provides flexibility for Geneva Call but has some annually agreed defined thematic products and results.	Disagree Merging the thematic and core grants would most probably limit the flexibility and the specific management of projects. Merging the grants would also limit the current efforts to gain more clarity on the overlaps between geographical and thematic approaches of projects and their substantive complementarity. Moreover, the specificities of Swiss governmental structures would not offer itself for a general merge into a common grant. However, a re-assessment of this recommendation would be placed in the medium-term (i.e. when the current political debate on cuts of the federal budgets especially for peace policy, humanitarian aid and development cooperation has settled).
	Need and utility of geographical approaches by GC is confirmed	Maintain additional country-specific links and funding as appropriate.	Agree (in principle) <u>Measures:</u> Continue the possibility to establish specific projects for geographical and thematic desks within HSD in particular and FDFA in general, in addition to the core funding. The continuous dialogue on clarity with Geneva Call will be maintained and changes implemented when and where appropriate (see above).
Monitoring and evaluation of projects		Develop a consistent approach to evaluation across funding	Agree (to the extent possible) <u>Measures:</u> Given the different nature of project management e.g.

	<i>and their impact is not fully developed</i>	contracts and departments.	among HSD, SDC or DIL, a consistent approach to evaluation will be developed to the extent possible. This depends, however, whether the projects and their evaluation are part of a geographical or a thematic strategy. Monitoring under the core grant will be intensified.
Strategic framework for the partnership	No overall strategic partnership agreement exists, all agreements are annual or project based	Develop an MoU or similar document which frames the Geneva Call-HSD partnership in a longer term strategic framework and includes overarching topics such as monitoring aspects,	Pending (New directives for strategic partnerships by the controller are expected to be issued soon.)
Build research capacity within Geneva Call	Currently, no specific support for research capacity exists	Consider additional, ear-marked resourcing for Geneva Call's work to build learning on how ANSAs can be effectively supported [...]	Disagree <u>Measures:</u> HSD is of the view that the strength of Geneva Call is its operational work. However, HSD shares the view that a more tangible self-reflection on experiences and the formulation of "lessons learned" would be well placed; HSD will discuss this aspect with Geneva Call.
Leadership among donors	Switzerland is among the largest donors of GC	Take a leadership role among other core donors of Geneva Call.	Agree <u>Measures:</u> HSD will develop measures and initiatives e.g. through regular informal consultations with donor core States and other major donors in Geneva.
	GC faces key challenges for future stability: need for broader range of sources, need for a larger scale of programmes, and need for a mid-term strategy with regard to institutional development	Encourage counterparts of other core donors to work together to support the development and implementation of a medium term strategy in ways that support learning and effectiveness as well as organisational growth and stability.	Agree <u>Measures:</u> Linked to the response above, HSD will develop measures and initiatives e.g. through regular informal consultations with other donor States in Geneva.
Linkage to embassies	Occasional contacts between Geneva Call representatives in the field and Swiss embassies exist on an	Facilitate occasional meetings between Ambassadors and Geneva Call as appropriate [...]	Agree (to the extent possible) <u>Measures:</u> HSD will include information on the work of Geneva Call in its regular exchanges with embassies in countries concerned, and encourage embassies to maintain an open exchange with Geneva Call representatives on the spot (as far as such exchanges are advisable in

	<i>irregular basis</i>		the context of the bilateral relations with the host country). HSD emphasises that Geneva Call should inform the Swiss representation on the spot when visiting a specific country.
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