

Peace Mediation Programme of the Swiss Federal Department of Foreign Affairs External Evaluation

Terms of Reference

1 BACKGROUND: PEACE MEDIATION PROGRAMME

During the last two decades mediation has become an increasingly important tool of the international community to promote peace by bringing warring parties to the negotiation table and by supporting them in complex peace negotiations.

Switzerland is one of the main actors in the international mediation field. According to the Swiss constitution, the promotion of peace is one of the main aims of Swiss foreign policy. This strategic priority is backed up by several important comparative advantages that enables Switzerland to engage as a mediator in violent conflict situations: First, Switzerland is too small to exert power on the warring parties and therefore is not perceived as a threat to the autonomy of the parties; second, it has no colonial past and has a long tradition and a positive image of neutrality; third, Switzerland does not have a hidden agenda or direct geopolitical interests and does not belong to any political or military power bloc, and fourth, Switzerland has a long experience of consensus oriented democracy and a long tradition of cultural diversity and minority rights.

Based on the successful mediation experiences of the Swiss Federal Department of Foreign Affairs (FDFA) in the 1990s (e.g. Burundi and Sudan) the Parliament has defined mediation and good offices as important tools for the promotion of peace and has given the Swiss FDFA the task to strengthen its competencies in this regard: *“The operational measures of the Directorate of Political Affairs relating to civilian peacebuilding include mediation activities, dialogue, civilian conflict transformation projects and programmes, deployment of experts, diplomatic initiatives and partnerships. These are implemented at the middle and upper levels of the hierarchy, primarily in situations in which there is a strong potential for violence and escalation. The focus is not so much on fundamental structural causes of a conflict as on influencing its dynamics and supporting efforts and processes aimed at restoring peace.”*¹

In operational terms, the **Political Division IV (PD IV)** of the FDFA is in charge for implementing this strategy. From 2005 onwards, PD IV has taken the following measures to achieve this objective:

- **Mediation Desk (MD):** The MD is a thematic desk within PD IV. It was created in 2005 and consists of the *Head of Mediation Support* (full-time) and an intern (half-time). The overall goal of the MD is to assess, identify, coordinate and implement FDFA's mediation activities in selected violent conflicts on a so-called “track 1 level”, and in supporting other

¹See: <http://www.eda.admin.ch/etc/medialib/downloads/edazen/topics/peasec/peac.Par.0139.File.tmp/EDA%20Botschaft%20A5%20V.pdf>

partners and mediation organizations through Swiss expertise and finances. Beyond the specific work of the MD, mediation in all its forms has become an important activity of several geographical desks of PD IV and of the *Special Representatives* on the Middle East and on the Horn of Africa (see Annex 1 for more information).

- **Mediation Support Project (MSP)²:** The main partner for mediation support is the MSP, which has been initiated in 2005 by PD IV. MSP is a joint venture between two Swiss institutions, *swisspeace* and the *Center for Security Studies* ETH Zurich (CSS). The MSP has 2 senior staff (160% work time in total), 3 desk officers (100% work time in total) and 1 intern (80% work time) and is fully funded by PD IV. The four main working areas of MSP are: knowledge management and research; training; networking and direct support of ongoing mediation processes. In all these working areas, the MSP cooperates very closely with the MD (see Annex 2).

Due to the mediation activities of the Swiss FDFA's experts and diplomats and the efforts of MD and MSP, Switzerland has become an increasingly recognized actor in the field of peace mediation with a solid mediation expertise and a broad variety of operational mediation activities. In the last ten years Switzerland's diplomats and experts have been engaged in approx. thirty processes in over twenty conflicts.³

Both, the MD and the MSP have not been externally evaluated since their existence. So far, activities of both MD and MSP have grown largely "organically" and have only been assessed through regular reporting and internal reviews. A more rigorous and comprehensive assessment of the Peace Mediation activities through an external evaluation seems timely and appropriate for the following two reasons: First, by the end of 2011, the Head of the MD is tasked to finalize the "Mittelfristkonzept" that outlines the mediation activities of PD IV for the next 4 years to come. Second, the current MSP project cycle comes to an end by December 2011 and the MSP is planning a funding request to PD IV for the next years to come. The envisaged evaluation should therefore inform the planning processes of both the MD and the MSP.

2 GENERAL OBJECTIVES OF THE EVALUATION

The primary purpose of the evaluation is to learn and to capitalize from the past 5 years of mediation activities of the MD and its main partner, the MSP, in order to shape the future strategic orientation of the MD and the MSP. As a secondary goal, the external evaluation should also provide accountability with respect to past achievements and results.

The evaluation will mainly focus on the activities of the Mediation Desk and include the activities of MSP and the cooperation between MD and MSP.

The most important evaluation criteria to be used are **relevance** ("Have MD and MSP done the right things?") and **effectiveness** ("Have MD and MSP achieved their goals?"). To the extent possible, the criteria of **efficiency** ("Have MD and MSP done the things right?"), **impact** ("Are MD and MSP achieving their overarching goals in the long term?"), and **sustainability** ("Are the positive results of MD and MSP durable?") have to be taken into account. **Gender** should be considered transversally in all of these evaluation dimensions.

² See: <http://www.swisspeace.ch/typo3/topics/mediation/about/mediation-support-project.html>

³ Due to the confidential nature of most of these activities, a detailed list of these activities will only be available at the beginning of the evaluation process.

3 SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES AND KEY QUESTIONS

The specific questions for evaluating the Peace Mediation Activities are the following:

3.1 ACTIVITIES OF THE MEDIATION DESK (MD) FROM 2005 – 2010

The goal is to look back and assess the strategic direction and achievement of objectives of the MD from 2005 – 2010 by asking the following questions:⁴

Assessment 2005-2010

- a) **General achievements:** What activities and objectives have been achieved between 2005 and 2010 by MD? Which (cluster of) activities are relevant and have long-term positive impacts? What are the underlying theories of change? What are key factors of success and what are the shortcomings/constraints in the work of the MD? What “best practice” can be identified from past efforts?
- b) **Coordination and support of Swiss mediation activities:** In what ways has the MD been instrumental in coordinating, implementing and supporting mediation activities of the Swiss FDFA (both strategically and operationally)? Is the MD model (as a thematic mediation desk) efficient? How effectively and efficiently does MD work with other partners within the Swiss FDFA that are involved in mediation?
- c) **Strategic partner portfolio:** Is the composition of the “MD partners” relevant for the achievement of the overall goal of PD IV and how effective has the MD made use of it?
- d) **Capacity building:** What is the relevance of the capacity building and training efforts initiated and carried out by MD and how do these efforts contribute to the overall goals of PD IV?
- e) **Communication:** Has MD communicated effectively with its main stakeholders? What have been the major challenges in terms of “visibility” of Swiss mediation activities? What “best practices” can be identified from past efforts?

Future Orientation

- f) **Future strategic directions:** What should the future priorities of MD look like, in particular regarding the type and mix of services (see Annex 1)?
- g) **Resources:** In light of the current and future priorities and goals of the Swiss FDFA in general and the PD IV in particular, are the financial and human resources allocated to MD adequate?

3.2 ACTIVITIES OF THE MEDIATION SUPPORT PROJECT (MSP) FROM 2005 – 2010

The mandate given to MSP is to enhance the mediation capacity of the Swiss FDFA and to support mediators and conflict parties in gaining knowledge and skills for effective peace negotiations. The goal of the evaluation is to look back and assess the strategic direction and achievement of objectives of the MSP from 2005 – 2010 by asking the following questions:

- a) **MSP General Achievements:** What activities and objectives have been achieved between 2005 and 2010 by MSP as set out in the respective project proposals? How relevant were these activities in relation to the overall goal of DP IV? How efficient does MSP work in general (input vs. output)? Do the various MSP activities have

⁴ The questions outlined are indicative and should be refined and elaborated further by the evaluation team.

long-term positive impacts? What are key factors of success and what are the shortcomings/constraints in the work of MSP?

- b) **MSP portfolio of activities:** Are the current working areas and the thematic priorities adequate and relevant means to fulfill the overall mandate given by the mediation desk of PD IV?⁵ Is the hypothesis that they benefit from each other and that there are synergies resulting from them correct? Has the growing prioritization of the working area “process support” been appropriate for achieving the overall goal of the MSP?
- *Working area “research/Knowledge management”:* What is the quality of the MSP publications (both in terms of substance and format)? Are the topics of the research relevant for the achievement of the overall goals?
 - *Working area “training”⁶:* What is the relevance of the various training courses for the achievement of the overall goal of PD IV? Is the target public of the training courses relevant and does it make use of the training (impact)? What type of trainings (lengths, focus, proximity to ongoing mediation processes, choice of participants, providing follow-up opportunities etc.) is most relevant for the overall goals? What is the overall assessment of the quality of the trainings? How far is the content of the course relevant for the daily work of the participants?
 - *Working area “process support”:* What are the relevance and the added value of “process support activities” for ongoing mediation processes? Is the target public relevant and does it make use of the training (impact)? How well is MSP situated to fulfill this process support function (e.g. availability, experience, expertise of staff)?
 - *Working area “networking”:* How well is the MSP linked with other actors in the mediation support network field? What is the relevance of these activities for the achievement of the overall goal of the MSP?
- c) **MSP Set-up:** What are the pros and cons of a joint venture project between swisspeace and CSS? How efficient and effective is the cooperation and how could it be improved? Specifically:
- *Communication:* One key challenge of having the MSP as a joint-venture is branding and communication: How was this dealt with? How do its partners and other important members of the mediation community see the MSP?
 - *Team-work:* How efficient and effective is the teamwork of the MSP? Is the MSP human resources management sustainable? How can the sustainability of the MSP activities be ensured?
 - *Other activities:* Beyond MSP both institutions pursue their own (i.e. non-MSP related) mediation support activities: what is the potential and challenge in pursuing such a strategy as regards the work of the MSP?
- d) **Future strategic directions:** How can the MSP best fulfill the main goal of its mandate in the future? What should the future priorities of the MSP look like (in particular regarding the type and mix of services and working areas, as well as thematic priorities) and shall the mandate be changed? In view of its mandate and potential future directions, is the current size of the MSP (staff, finances, contract duration) and institutional set-up adequate and reasonable?

⁵ See Annex 2

⁶ See www.peacemediation.ch

3.3 COOPERATION BETWEEN MD AND MSP FROM 2005 – 2010

- a) **Institutional set-up:** What are the potential and the challenges of a very close collaboration between the Swiss FDFA, CSS and swisspeace in the area of peace mediation activities and support?
- b) **Strategic steering of MSP:** Is the strategic steering of the MSP by MD done effectively and efficiently?
- c) **Operational cooperation:** What is the quality of the operational cooperation between MD and MSP? What are the potential and the challenges in this regard?
- d) **Financial dependency:** The MSP is fully financed by PD IV and is therefore strongly depended on one single donor – what are the impacts of this dependency and how could the resulting risks be mitigated? What are the pros and cons of the “core” contribution by MD versus project funding by geographic desks of PD IV?
- e) **Personal working relations:** One key factor of success in the collaboration between the MD and the MSP are the excellent, personal relationships that have been developed over the past 5 years. What are the challenges of such a “personal relation” driven approach and how can they be tackled?

Future Orientation:

- f) **Future collaboration:** How future-fit is the cooperation between the MD and the MSP to help fulfill the overall mandate of PD IV? What should the future modalities for cooperation look like?

4 METHODOLOGY

The evaluation shall be based on document studies⁷ and on interviews⁸. The theories of change that underpin the work of the MD and the MSP have so far not really been made explicit. Therefore, the evaluation team will have to base their work largely on the implicit assumptions and theories of change of the MD and the MSP.

The evaluation should take the following perspectives into consideration:

- a) **Internal perspective:** MSP team (swisspeace, CSS/ETH), MD team (PD IV)
- b) **“Clients” perspective:** geographic desks within PD IV, experts and mediators in- and outside PD IV, diplomats in- and outside PD IV, parties to a conflict
- c) **Strategic partners:** UN/MSU, regional organisations, partner NGOs
- d) **International Mediation Community:** Norway, Finland, etc.

The evaluators are invited to submit the main elements of their methodological approach and work plan. The details will be included in the inception report.

5 EXPECTED RESULTS

The **evaluation report** is expected to have the following characteristics:

- Have 3 separate sections on MD, MSP and cooperation between them
- Ca. 30 pages long (plus annexes)
- Summary of findings of past activities (strengths and weaknesses)
- Based on finding, it formulates options and recommendations for the future
- Executive summary

⁷ In particular MD’s annual work plans, MSP project proposals and corresponding reports, minutes of strategic MSP meetings, selected reports on MSP activities (see Annex 3).

⁸ See Annex 4 for a list of potential interview partners.

In addition, the evaluation team should debrief the Steering Committee and MSP.

6 PROFILE OF EVALUATORS

PD IV is looking for an evaluation team with the following characteristics:

- Evaluation team should preferably consist of 2 persons
- Working language is English
- Team should have proven skills and experiences as evaluator
- Team should also have sound knowledge of mediation and mediation support
- Team should also have knowledge of the Swiss and international peacebuilding environment
- Team should also have sound knowledge of organizational development and broad experiences with institutional processes
- Team should also have practical working experiences with both governmental and non-governmental actors.

7 HOW TO APPLY

Applicants **are encouraged to apply as a team**, or PD IV proposes to individual evaluators to team up. Interested consultants should submit a **proposal** for carrying out this mandate as follows:

- Statement of methodology (not more than 3 pages) outlining the competence of the consultant to carry out this evaluation, and explaining the methodology that will be adopted
- A full CV of the team members
- Availability and proposed time line
- Detailed budget of the overall cost of the evaluation

The proposal should be sent by email to Murezi Michael (Murezi.Michael@eda.admin.ch) no later than 24 March 2011.

8 PARTNERS, ASSIGNMENT AND RESPONSIBILITIES

PD IV mandates and finances the external evaluation. The planning, management and guidance of the evaluation process is assigned to a “**Steering Committee**” (SteeCom) consisting of PD IV (Markus Leitner, Roland Salvisberg, Monika Egger and Murezi Michael). The SteeCom can delegate certain tasks to MD and/or MSP if need be.

9 APPROXIMATE ESTIMATION OF WORKING DAYS AND BUDGET

Item	Estimation of working days	
	Lead Evaluator	Evaluator
Preparation (study of documents, methodology, planning/ inception report) and briefing session at DP IV	5	4
Interviews, meetings	5	4
Analysis of data, drafting report	5	4
Debriefing / final report	3	2
Travelling (from abroad)	(3)	(3)
Reserve	2	1

Total suggested working days (without travelling)	20	15
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Based on the estimation of a **total of 35 working days** (without travelling), a detailed budget shall be proposed by the evaluation team.

10 TIME TABLE

Item	Responsible	Deadline 2011
Adoption of ToR	SteeCom, in consultation with MSP	End of February
Open of tender	MD	Beginning of March
Submission of proposals	MD	24 March
Selection of evaluators	SteeCom, in consultation with MSP	End of March
Planning of evaluation / Acceptance of inception report	SteeCom, in consultation with MSP	Mid of April
Evaluation process (data collection and analysis)	Evaluation Team	April - June
Draft report	Evaluation Team	24 June
Discussion of draft report	SteeCom, in consultation with MSP	1 July
Incorporation of comments and finalizing of report	Evaluation Team	8 July
Management response by MD and MSP	MD / MSP	15 July
Adoption of final report	SteeCom	Beginning of August

8 March 2011

PD IV / Head of Mediation Desk / Murezi Michael

Annex 1: The Mediation Support Desk (MD)

The aim of the Mediation desk is to formulate, conceptualize and implement the mediation policy of the Swiss FDFA. The specific tasks are:

a) Coordinate and Support Swiss FDFA in Mediation

- ***Strategic coordination and support:***
 - Coordinate mediation activities of the Swiss Federal Department of Foreign Affairs strategically.
 - Assess internal and external requests for support in mediation activities.
 - Search for opportunities of a Swiss engagement in mediation and generate options for Switzerland to play an active role in mediation processes, either as a lead mediator, supporting a multinational mediation team or coaching and capacity building for parties to a conflict.
 - Conceptualize and formulate a Swiss FDFA mediation policy.
- ***Operational coordination and support:***
 - Coordinate the assignment and the activities of Swiss mediators and experts on an operational level.
 - Plan and implement mediation activities, assign mediators and experts, and identify partners, if needed.
 - Advice and support PD IV special envoys, Swiss mediators (and PBAs, etc.), and program officers in geographic focal regions on issues concerning peace mediation.
 - Create a pool or network of Swiss experts and mediators and coordinate the dispatching of personnel to partner organizations (particularly to the UN).

b) Management of strategic partner portfolio

- ***Mediation Support Project (MSP):***
 - Strategic leadership of the Mediation Support Project;
 - Delegate activities to the Mediation Support Project;
 - Supervise and co-operate on all activities with the Mediation Support Project as needed;
- ***External partners:***
 - Coordinate mediation activities with external partners (UN DPA MSU, specialized NGOs);
 - Support with funds and/or personnel mediation activities of external partners;

c) Capacity Building and Networking

- ***Training:***
 - Plan and implement mediation capacity building and coaching for parties to a conflict, UN, regional organisations and states;
 - Decide upon, plan and implement training activities for Swiss diplomats and mediation experts, experts of international organisations and from conflict regions in mediation and related topics.
 - Take part in relevant meetings and conferences of the wider mediation community and represent Switzerland

d) Knowledge Management

- Decide upon and accompany practice-oriented research and publications on mediation and mediation topics;
- Secure the evaluation of Swiss mediation activities, the development of lessons learned and best practice;

e) Communication

- Keep the Swiss FDFA informed about the mediation activities;
- Inform members of the Swiss Parliament and institutions based on instructions from the Department;
- Inform the wider Swiss public when necessary.

Annex 2: The Mediation Support Project (MSP)

The goal of MSP is to support mediators and conflict parties in gaining knowledge and skills for effective peace negotiations. This overall goal is broken down into the following four objectives:

a) Research and knowledge management:

MSP develops mediation methodology and topical expertise that is crucial for addressing the mediation gaps in peace processes (knowledge capitalization and management, topical research, research on mediation methodology etc.). Learning from practitioners, it “digests” these lessons to then feed it back to practitioners, e.g. in the form of reader friendly publications and guidance notes.

b) Training and capacity building:

MSP offers training activities for mediation support staff, experts and future mediators. The “flag ship” course that MSP organizes is the annual “Peace Mediation Course” (PMC) that lasts for 2 weeks. In addition, MSP organizes various other, tailor-made mediation courses upon request.

c) Direct process support:

In contrast to the other activity lines that can all be understood as general “mediation support” of ongoing mediation processes. This includes activities such as providing advice to mediators and parties, capacity building, debriefing, being in charge for logistics etc.

d) Networking and outreach:

MSP acts as the secretariat of the “Mediation Support Network” that MSP has established in 2008. It regularly bringing together representatives selected member organizations.⁹ In addition, MSP also organizes roundtables and platforms of exchange.

The specific tasks in these four basic working areas are outlined in the project proposals that MSP has drafted for PDIV and that generally lasts for 2 years (available upon request).

Annex 3: List of available documentation

Will be made available to the selected evaluators

Annex 4: List of possible contact people

Will be made available to selected evaluators

⁹ The following currently belong to the MSN: the Berghof Foundation for Peace Support (Berlin), Conciliation Resources (London), Crisis Management Initiative (Brussels and Helsinki), Folke Bernadotte Academy (Sando), the Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue (Geneva), the Initiative on Conflict Prevention through Quiet Diplomacy (Essex), the Mediation Support Project (swisspeace and the Center for Security Studies/ETH Zurich), the U.N. Mediation Support Unit (N.Y.), USIP (Washington, D.C.), the Center for Peace Mediation and the Institute for Conflict Management (European University Viadrina/Humboldt-Viadrina School of Governance, Berlin), and Western Africa Network for Education for Peace/WANEP (Abuja).