



Note

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To: WCL, SVR
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Management Response to the “External Evaluation of the Peace Mediation Programme of the Swiss FDFA”

K.234.33-16-1/08-MMZ/ZEa

The findings of the evaluation are interesting, useful and actionable – the results will serve as a good basis for inspiring and guiding the planning processes of the Mediation Desk (MD) in the years to come, including the Mediation Support Project (MSP).

The Steering Committee has taken note of the conclusions and recommendations of the evaluation and endorses the following aspects that seem particularly important:

General Assessment: The evaluation team acknowledges the specific value of building specialized mediation support capacities within and outside the Swiss FDFA. It concluded that the past five years have demonstrated the feasibility and the added value of such capacities: notably, the MD has increased the visibility and stature of Swiss mediation and mediation support and has helped to better integrate the notion and practice of mediation within the FDFA. The work of the MD and the MSP has created a substantial reserve of mediation and mediation support expertise within the FDFA. The MD is emerging from a pilot phase of intense activity, experimentation, reflection, learning and adjustment. This pilot phase has come to an end and it should be followed by a phase of more focused, strategic, systematic mediation and mediation support work.

Due to the limited time available to the evaluators to process all the data, the evaluation team was not in the position to fully assess all mediation activities and achievements of MD, and particularly of what has worked and what did not work (see TORs p. 3). Nevertheless, the present evaluation indicates important ways to develop the future DPIV mediation strategy:

- better use of internal synergies within the FDFA and
- greater clarity of focus and portfolio (now that the pioneer phase is over).

Responses to the main conclusions of the evaluators: The new Midterm Concept (MC - “Mittelfristkonzept”) will be drafted and adopted by the end of 2011/early 2012. Among other sources of input, the new MC will take up specific points from the evaluation, in order to better translate the existing know-how and potential into practice. These points are listed below and include responses on how to address them:

- a) Limited use of internal synergies:** The evaluation team argues that the linkages between the MD and other actors of the FDFA involved in mediation processes are often unused (within DP IV

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and the FDFA). As a consequence, the MD today represents a reserve of expertise responding to different requests for assistance, rather than being the lead actor in the design of strategy and planning for Swiss-led mediation.

- **Response A1:** The expert resources of the **MD will be better integrated** in the overall mediation work of the FDFA. The role of the MD will be to serve as a point of reference and to provide leadership in mediation processes where the FDFA is involved.
- **Response A2: “mediation support”** (understood as structured, systematic, multi-dimensional, and longer term support of peace processes) will be the core business of the MD, rather than simply the sporadic, more ad hoc advice to mediators.
- **Response A3:** The MD will move from an activity-based to an impact-based approach. The specificities of this change in strategy, including the respective consequences on the required resources, will be formulated in more detail in the MC.

b) Lacking clarity of goals, strategy and portfolio: Over the past five years the portfolio of interventions of the MD has grown and many of the mediation and mediation support activities are not “big enough or sustained enough” to have greater impact. This is also due to a lack of clarity of goals, strategy, theories of change and indicators of success. Nevertheless, while clarifying indicators of success is useful for evaluation, there are limits to this approach in the FDFA and in the field of political mediation.

- **Response B1: The goals, strategy and underlying theories of change** (i.e. working hypothesis: if we do this, then this will happen) and the corresponding indicators of success will be clearly spelt out in a manner that takes the political nature of mediation into account.
- **Response B2: The portfolio of intervention will be reduced** in order to maximize the impact of the MD work; the depth of engagement will be the guiding principle and is more important than breadth of engagement. The focus will be laid on conflicts or regions of particular interest/priority to PDIV/FDFA.
- **Response B3:** Nevertheless, “opportunities” for mediation and mediation support will remain an important field of intervention, but for assessing the relevance of such interventions, a clearly structured process with criteria will be established. Financial and human resources will be reserved to **react quickly and flexibly to “opportunities”**.

c) Limited human and financial resources compared to the goals set: Compared to the ambitious goals that were set (“To substantially expand and improve the impact of direct Swiss contributions to on-going peace processes.”) and the multiple roles fulfilled by the MD (thematic, expert, programmatic and internal tasks) the MD had insufficient human and financial resources.

- **Response C1:** The mediation desk will be strengthened in terms of human resources.
- **Response C2:** Particular emphasis will be put on how to **invest in and train the next generation of mediators and experts** as human resources are the main capital for mediation.

d) Relations between MD and MSP: The evaluation finds that the MSP efficiently produces quality mediation support products. The current arrangement between MD and MSP has proven to be effective and efficient.

- **Response D1:** The current set-up between MD and MSP will be continued based on a long-term partnership. Within the process of drafting the new MC, which includes a strategic review,

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the specificities of the cooperation between MD and the MSP will be reviewed as well. In addition, for specific tasks, other partners could be considered instead of the MSP.

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