



**Evaluation 2017/3**

# **Independent Evaluation of SDC Partnerships with Swiss NGOs**



# Independent Evaluation of the SDC Partnerships with Swiss NGOs

Commissioned by the Evaluation and Corporate Controlling Division  
of the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC)

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Bern, October 2017

## I Evaluation Process

Evaluations commissioned by the SDC's Board of Directors were introduced in the SDC in 2002 with the aim of providing a more critical and independent assessment of the SDC activities. These Evaluations are conducted according to the OECD DAC Evaluation Standards and are part of the SDC's concept for implementing Article 170 of the Swiss Constitution which requires Swiss Federal Offices to analyse the effectiveness of their activities. The SDC's **Senior Management** (consisting of the Director General and the heads of SDC's departments) approves the Evaluation Program. The **Evaluation and Corporate Controlling Division**, which is outside of line management and reports directly to the Director General, commissions the evaluation, taking care to recruit evaluators with a critical distance from the SDC.

The Evaluation and Corporate Controlling Division identified the primary intended users of the evaluation at both the SDC and the Swiss NGO partners, and invited twelve representatives from SDC and from NGO partners to participate in a **Core Learning Partnership**. The Core Learning Partnership actively accompanied the evaluation process. It commented on the evaluation design (Approach Paper); it validated the evaluation methodology (Inception Report); and it provided feedback to the evaluation team on their preliminary findings. During a presentation on the Draft Evaluation Report, the Core Learning Partnership had the opportunity to comment on the evaluation findings, conclusions and recommendations.

Additionally, the evaluation process was accompanied by an **External Reference Group**. The External Reference Group, consistent of six distinguished persons from the private sector, civil society, academia and national politics, discussed the evaluation design (Approach Paper) and discussed the Draft Evaluation Report with the evaluation team.

The evaluation was carried out according to the evaluation standards specified in the Terms of Reference.

Based on the **Final Report of the Evaluators**, the **Senior Management Response (SMR)** was approved by the SDC's Board of Directors and signed by the SDC Director-General.

The SMR is published together with the **Final Report of the Evaluators**. Further details regarding the evaluation process are available in the evaluation report and its annexes.

### Timetable

Step	When
Approach Paper finalized	November 2016
Implementation of the evaluation	March – August 2017
Senior Management Response in SDC	October 2017

## II Senior Management Response

### Senior Management Response of SDC's Directorate

The Management Response states the position of the SDC Board of Directors on the recommendations of the Independent Evaluation of SDC Partnerships with Swiss NGOs

#### Introduction

The SDC commissioned an independent evaluation with the overall objective to assess the performance of the SDC's partnerships with Swiss NGOs in order to assure accountability, generate knowledge and strengthen the SDC's institutional partnerships with NGOs and the management of programme contributions. Structured along the lines of the three key OECD/DAC evaluation criteria, the evaluation reviewed the relevance of the partnerships, the effectiveness of programme contributions for Swiss development and the efficiency of the management processes and their modalities. The evaluation was carried out between March and August 2017, resulting in a final evaluation report which was endorsed by the SDC's senior management at the end of August 2017. This Management Response contains the SDC's overall appreciation of the evaluation process and outlines its position on the recommendations that point the way ahead.

#### The evaluation process

The evaluation was conducted by a team of independent experts in accordance with international standards. The evaluation process was well managed and, given the scope and the topic of the evaluation, comprehensive and participatory as a result of an open dialogue and a structured learning process, as defined by the Core Learning Partnership (CLP) where both NGOs and the SDC were represented. Key elements of the evaluation process, including the approach paper, the inception report, the initial findings and the recommendations, were discussed in the format of workshops with the CLP.

#### Appreciation of the report's findings and recommendations

The evaluation report provides a timely and useful assessment of the SDC's institutional partnerships with Swiss NGOs. The three main objectives of the evaluation – assessing relevance, assuring accountability and furthering learning processes – have been met. The SDC appreciates the comprehensiveness of the evaluation report and the sound analysis of key elements of the SDC's model of institutional partnerships combined with reporting on good practices and suggestions from selected NGO partners, contextualised with other donors' recent policies on working with civil society. The report's analysis and resulting recommendations are considered to be useful for strengthening the strategic orientation and for the SDC management's implementation of the SDC's institutional partnerships. Of the eleven recommendations six have been fully endorsed and five partially endorsed.<sup>1</sup>

**Relevance:** The SDC has taken note with satisfaction that the evaluation confirms the relevance of its institutional partnerships, confirming the overall good alignment between NGO programmes and Swiss development cooperation and humanitarian goals. The

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<sup>1</sup> For detailed answers see table in annex

evaluation recommends that the SDC more clearly define its rationale and purpose within a comprehensive policy framework. The SDC reiterates that the rationale for its institutional partnerships is enshrined in the current dispatch, which acknowledges the crucial role Swiss NGOs play in the implementation of Swiss international development cooperation and humanitarian aid. However, in the context of the changing development paradigm and with the 2030 Agenda calling for leaving no one behind, strengthened inclusive societies and multi-stakeholder partnerships, the SDC recognises the importance of a clear definition of the rationale and purpose of the strategic partnerships with Swiss NGOs through the development of a new comprehensive policy framework, which will set out priorities and provide the strategic elements for reviewing and updating the admission procedures. This policy will be worked out in close consultation with key stakeholders in the Federal Department of Foreign Affairs (FDFA), and partners from civil society and academia (fully agreed recommendations 1, 2).

**Efficiency:** The evaluation's assessment acknowledges – in line with reports of GPK-S<sup>2</sup>, OECD/DAC Peer Review and FDFA Internal Audit – that the selection criteria for partners and procedures established in 2011-2013 are transparent. Nonetheless, the evaluation indicates various ways of how to optimise the efficiency of portfolio management through streamlining and aligning admission procedures, providing guidance on comprehensive reporting and fostering both shared learning and cooperation across the SDC. While welcoming most of the seven related and interconnected recommendations, the SDC reiterates that elements with regard to monitoring and evaluation as well as unified reporting are already largely in place but could indeed be spelled out more explicitly. The new policy framework will provide the basis for updating and adjusting the overall portfolio management, including the monitoring framework, as well as for reviewing the admission procedures (recommendations 3, 4, 8 partially agreed; 5, 6, 7, 9 fully agreed).

**Effectiveness:** The SDC notes with satisfaction that the evaluation found clear evidence that the SDC's partnerships with Swiss NGOs have effectively strengthened the institutional development of NGOs, promoting the transition from a project to a programmatic approach, their knowledge management and the consolidation of thematic competencies. The evaluation also highlights the benefit of clearer communication on the value added and the effectiveness of institutional partnerships, including reference to the SDGs for reporting purposes (recommendation 10, 11 partially agreed).

Bern, 6 October 2017

Manuel Sager, Director General Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Manuel Sager', written over a horizontal dotted line.

Annex: Table overview on recommendations and measures

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<sup>2</sup> Geschäftsprüfungskommission des Ständerats (GPK-S)

## Annex: Table overview on recommendations and measures

<p><b>Recommendation 1:</b></p> <p>The SDC to consult with Swiss NGOs to draft a comprehensive, publicly available policy framework for SDC-NGO institutional partnerships.</p>		
<p><b>Management Response</b></p>		
Fully agree	Partially agree	Disagree
<p>The strategic relevance of the SDC's partnerships with NGOs is enshrined in the current Dispatch on Switzerland's International Cooperation 2017–2020, which acknowledges that the SDC, in implementing both international cooperation and humanitarian aid, relies, among other things, on strategic partnerships with NGOs and in particular on their capacities and competencies. Furthermore, the important role of partnerships as well as the need to promote partnerships with civil society is also confirmed in the 2030 Agenda.</p> <p>Drawing on the previous NGO policy (2007), the new policy framework will examine key opportunities for working in partnership with Swiss NGOs in line with the Dispatch on implementing the 2030 Agenda. It will spell out the rationale for these partnerships, provide an important strategic reference, and foster overall collaboration with the SDC's strategic partners. Further, it will specify the purpose and set out jointly agreed priorities, and where possible focus more explicitly on a number of strategic and effectiveness goals (<i>strategische Ziele und Wirkungsziele</i>) set out in the Dispatch on International Cooperation. The new policy framework will thus enable streamlined reporting and provide the elements for reviewing and updating the admission procedures.</p>		
<p><b>Measures:</b></p> <p>The SDC will work on a new policy framework for its engagement with Swiss NGOs in broad consultation with stakeholders within the FDFA and Swiss civil society. The IPD is tasked with coordinating the process of the elaboration of the new policy framework by end of 2018.</p>		
<p><b>Recommendation 2:</b></p> <p>The SDC, while maintaining the quality of bilateral dialogue, to adopt a more strategic approach to managing the whole portfolio of institutional partners to facilitate the achievement of development and partnership goals.</p>		
<p><b>Management Response</b></p>		
Fully agree	Partially agree	Disagree
<p>The SDC's management acknowledges that partners highly appreciate the bilateral dialogue established for portfolio management. While the format of bilateral dialogues with institutional partners will remain important, the SDC's management agrees that a more strategic and systematic portfolio approach will increase the effectiveness and efficiency of the institutional partnership scheme.</p> <p>Starting from the new policy framework, fine-tuning and aligning core management procedures will be a key element in portfolio management in order to achieve partnership results.</p>		
<p><b>Measures:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Define admission/approval process in line with Dispatch periods.</li> <li>– Develop guidance on NGO partner reporting to strengthen their RBM.</li> <li>– Review the portfolio and the allocation of resources in light of priorities.</li> </ul>		

<b>Recommendation 3:</b>		
The SDC to publicly announce invitations to apply for a programme contribution in coordination with the Dispatch and budgetary cycle, with eligibility criteria and admissions processes clearly defined.		
<b>Management Response</b>		
Fully agree	<b>Partially agree</b>	Disagree
<p>The SDC's management reiterates that following an external review and an internal review, the SDC has substantially adjusted and streamlined the overall admission process and started to shift as of 2009 from individual project support to programme contributions. Following the recommendation of a parliamentary audit (GPK-S) in 2009 on a more systematic and detailed admission and approval process for institutional partnerships, together with the findings of an OECD-DAC Peer Review which suggested strengthening SDC relations with Swiss NGOs, a three-step admission procedure was introduced in 2011 for the 2013 – 2016 Dispatch period. These steps include (i) an examination of the NGO applying for a programme contribution according to eligibility criteria set for each type of partner organisation by an admission commission. Upon approval by the admission commission, (ii) a programme contribution is negotiated against a set of eight admission criteria. Finally the proposal for programme contribution is (iii) subject to SDC-internal approval procedures as are all other projects and core contributions.</p> <p>The SDC's management agrees to align, in the future, the formal admission procedures with the Dispatch periods and its budgetary cycles in order to implement institutional partnerships in a more systematic way (see response to Recommendation 1).</p>		
<b>Measures:</b>		
The policy framework will include an update of the admission procedures, including eligibility criteria.		

<b>Recommendation 4:</b>		
The SDC to conduct admission processes through an admissions panel with independent representation and report to the SDC's senior management on the reasons for successful and unsuccessful applications, and funds allocated.		
<b>Management Response</b>		
Fully agree	<b>Partially agree</b>	Disagree
<p>Since 2011, an admissions panel (including external representatives) has already been in place and is reporting to the SDC's senior management. However, in its new policy framework the SDC will, as part of the updated admission procedures, also consider the role and set-up of the admission panel.</p>		
<b>Measures:</b>		
(see response to Recommendation 3).		

<b>Recommendation 5</b>		
The SDC to streamline the admission / assessment / approval process with the aim of conducting it within a 12-month period.		
<b>Management Response</b>		
<b>Fully agree</b>	Partially agree	Disagree
The SDC agrees to review the admission procedures with a view to making it shorter and more focused, and to be conducted within one year.		
<b>Measures:</b> (see response to Recommendation 3).		

<b>Recommendation 6:</b>		
The SDC to provide guidance on minimum standards of reporting for partner NGOs appropriate to their mission and approach, and to clarify whether NGOs must report directly on their own strategies and/or the programmes and investments to which programme contributions have been allocated.		
<b>Management Response</b>		
<b>Fully agree</b>	Partially agree	Disagree
While partners must retain their independence and authority in <i>Results-Based Management (RBM)</i> and in reporting according to their own strategy and programme goals, the SDC must be able to account for the results achieved through institutional partnerships as part of the Dispatch Accountability Report.		
To this end, the SDC has already introduced <i>Aggregated Reference Indicators (ARIs)</i> to its programme partners, thus providing a minimum standard for more unified reporting in relation to the Dispatch. In addition, support for RBM will strengthen the NGO partner's evidence base.		
<b>Measures:</b>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– The new policy framework will consider streamlining reporting mechanisms.</li> <li>– Update institutional performance indicators appropriate for NGOs and identified together with partners.</li> <li>– Strengthen NGOs in their results-based management and monitoring.</li> </ul>		

<b>Recommendation 7:</b>		
The SDC to consult with institutional partners and include a learning strategy in the Policy Document to actively promote shared learning between Swiss NGOs and the SDC.		
<b>Management Response</b>		
<b>Fully agree</b>	Partially agree	Disagree
One of the key pillars of the SDC model on institutional partnerships is strengthening multi-sectoral partnerships and alliances for transferring their competencies and expertise and replicating innovations. Institutional learning and knowledge sharing are therefore a key element of institutional partnerships, and the SDC recognises the great potential and added value of shared learning among knowledge-rich NGOs and a wider range of stakeholders, including academia.		

The SDC's management agrees to further strengthen and systematise joint learning processes. Systematic learning and the mobilisation of the different types of expertise available through partners will help to harness complementarities and lead to stronger and more effective cooperation across the FDFA and with other relevant government departments. Drawing on good practices with already defined learning processes, the approach to learning and knowledge-sharing strategy will be updated as part of the policy framework.

**Measures:**

- Define learning themes and priorities for facilitating the joint learning process in close collaboration with the SDC thematic networks and the NGO platform.
- Strengthen the IPD's facilitator role in connecting NGO partners and competence centres with other SDC units and networks.
- Review the format of annual conferences for promoting more strategic learning processes across the portfolio together with the thematic networks, global programmes and bilateral cooperation.

**Recommendation 8:**

The SDC to formalise links between performance with regard to objectives on resource allocation decisions, either through a formal mechanism or by inclusion as a criterion in, for example, bi-annual negotiations.

**Management Response**

Fully agree	<b>Partially agree</b>	Disagree
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The SDC's management agrees that monitoring the performance of the SDC's institutional partners is crucial. Such monitoring is already formalised, firstly through consultations and negotiations, secondly through regular bi-annual meetings, and thirdly through the annual conferences. The current consultations and negotiation procedures during the admission period scrutinise institutional performance and the strategic coherence and relevance of the organisation's programme. The annual conferences concentrate on institutional development and overall performance in programme implementation, and review the results achieved as analysed in the partners' annual reports.

With these performance-monitoring procedures already in place, and together with updated and aligned admission procedures as part of the new policy framework to guide decisions on programme contributions, monitoring performance will continue to be a key element of fund allocation.

**Measures:**

Update institutional performance indicators (see measures under Recommendation 6)

<b>Recommendation 9:</b>		
The SDC to review what management options and ways of working for IPD would be most appropriate to ensure closer SDC-NGO contact and collaboration across the institution.		
<b>Management Response</b>		
<b>Fully agree</b>	Partially agree	Disagree
<p>The SDC's management is committed to further strengthening a mutual learning relationship and collaboration in generating synergies with Swiss NGOs across the entire the SDC. In addition, the overall Swiss commitment to the 2030 Agenda provides important momentum for fostering department-wide partnerships, in particular with partners from civil society, academia and the private sector.</p> <p>Synergies between various Swiss actors at national and regional level and close collaboration across the institution and the whole department will increase the effectiveness of Swiss international cooperation.</p>		
<b>Measures:</b>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- SDC global programmes and bilateral cooperation in countries/regions where programmes of interest for mutual learning exist will be systematically included in the joint learning process.</li> <li>- Relationship management and learning processes with Swiss NGOs at country level will be strengthened.</li> <li>- Collaboration between the IPD and the thematic networks will be strengthened.</li> </ul>		

<b>Recommendation 10:</b>		
The SDC/NGOs to introduce the use of SDGs for reporting on institutional partnerships and collaborate on identifying relevant SDGs and indicators appropriate to NGO programmes.		
<b>Management Response</b>		
Fully agree	<b>Partially agree</b>	Disagree
<p>The 2030 Agenda and in particular SDG17 stresses the importance of a renewed global partnership for promoting the goals and thus the need to engage with a broad range of governmental and non-governmental actors, such as the private sector, civil society organisations and the academic community, to drive the Agenda forward.</p> <p>As Switzerland promotes norms that are aligned with the vision of the 2030 Agenda and works towards accelerating the Agenda's implementation through partnerships, SDG targets will provide an overall reference for the new policy framework for the SDC's institutional partnerships. In addition, the principles as agreed in the Global Partnership for Effective Development Cooperation for focusing on results, enhancing country ownership, transparency and accountability and fostering inclusive partnerships will also be taken into account when working towards a new policy.</p>		
<b>Measures:</b>		
(see response to Recommendation 6).		

**Recommendation 11:**

The SDC to collaborate with Swiss NGOs to develop a joint communications strategy to ensure that the achievements of SDC-NGO institutional partnerships are effectively communicated to internal and external stakeholders.

**Management Response**

Fully agree

**Partially agree**

Disagree

The SDC's management agrees on the importance of comprehensive communication regarding the key achievements of SDC-NGO institutional partnerships. While proactive and easily accessible public communication is key for enhanced accountability towards the public, it is also important to emphasise the different roles and responsibilities with regard to communication and accountability of both the SDC as a governmental agency and the Swiss NGOs.

The SDC will therefore include communication guidelines in its new policy framework.

**Measures:**

- Ensure that key results of the NGO partners are also included in the Swiss Voluntary National Review of the 2030 Agenda, presented to the UN.
- Ensure that NGOs' own stories and communication materials on the effectiveness of their partnership feature prominently in SDC internal and external communication.

# III Evaluators' Final Report

Commissioned by the Evaluation and Corporate Controlling Division  
of the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC)

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## List of Abbreviations

AGUASAN	Community of Practice around Water and Sanitation
ARI	Aggregated Reference Indicators
CDE	Center for Development and Environment
CLP	Core Learning Partnership
CMES	Center for Mass Education in Science
CSO	Civil Society Organisation
CSPM	Conflict Sensitive Project Management
Danida	Danish International Development Agency
DFID	Department for International Development
EDA	Eidgenössisches Departement für auswärtige Angelegenheiten
ERG	External Reference Group
EU	European Union
HA	Humanitarian Aid
HAFL	Bern University of Applied Sciences: School of Agricultural, Forest and Food Science
ICT	Information and Communication Technology
IPD	Institutional Partnership Division
MFA	Ministry of Foreign Affairs
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
ODA	Official Development Assistance
OECD-DAC	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development Assistance Committee
PCM	Project Cycle Management
PEZA	Contributions to exchange of personnel programs
PPP	Public Private Partnership
QA	Quality Assurance
SCO	Swiss Cooperation Office
SDC	Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
SECO	State Secretariat for Economic Affairs
SEIS	Shared Environmental Information System
SET	SDC immediate-operation teams
SFRAS	Swiss Forum on Rural Advisory Services
SIDA	Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency
SRC	Swiss Red Cross
SRK	Schweizerisches Rotes Kreuz
SSCU	South-South Collaboration Unit
ToR	Terms of Reference

## Executive Summary

### *Background*

1. This report presents the findings of the independent evaluation on the relevance, effectiveness and efficiency of the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation's (SDC) institutional partnerships with Swiss Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) during the period 2009-2016. The evaluation drew upon five data sources – individual interviews; focus groups discussions; an online survey of partner NGOs; a document review; and a review of five similar donor partnerships schemes. An evaluation framework and draft intervention logic was used to gather and analyse data. Initial evaluation findings and a first draft evaluation report were discussed in Core Learning Partnership (CLP) workshops of key stakeholders before the delivery of this final report.

### *Headlines*

2. The evaluation confirms the relevance of the SDC/NGO model of institutional partnerships; the value of the strategic, flexible nature of programme contributions; and the quality of dialogue NGOs have with the SDC Institutional Partnership Division (IPD). The evaluation found numerous examples of NGOs working towards Swiss development and humanitarian goals. The ability to assess the overall effectiveness of the portfolio, however, is weakened by diverse reporting formats, and inconsistency in the use of results frameworks and in the quality of reporting. There is evidence that programme contributions have helped to strengthen NGO institutional development and competencies and raise public awareness of development and humanitarian issues in Switzerland. A more strategic approach to portfolio management would achieve greater synergy across the complementary roles of NGOs in the portfolio e.g. in shared learning. The evaluation recommends a three-stage process to ensure the relevance, efficiency and effectiveness of SDC/NGO institutional partnerships, and their contribution to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

## Findings

### *Relevance*

3. The evaluation confirms the relevance of the institutional partnership model. For NGOs, the flexibility and long-term nature of programme contributions enable them to develop and adapt programmes in line with their own missions and strategies, and to invest in their own institutional development. The nature of an institutional partnership is additionally relevant to smaller NGOs and Cantonal Federations as it enhances their credibility, increases their visibility and facilitates access to SDC and other networks. SDC respondents highlight the relevance of these partnerships in implementing Swiss development cooperation; consolidating Swiss development competencies; and raising public awareness in Switzerland on development and humanitarian issues.
4. The evaluation found that mandate sub-contracts are not relevant to the majority of institutional partners. Smaller NGOs, for example, either do not have the capacity to compete for mandates or are reluctant to become reliant on 'sub-contracted' programmes. Income for mandate contracts is, however, a very significant element of the business model of a handful of larger NGOs where it can be seen to have a complementary relationship with programme contributions enabling the NGO to further consolidate or develop its competence base.
5. The evaluation found that there is a good alignment between NGO programmes and Swiss development cooperation and humanitarian goals. While NGOs are expected broadly to contribute to the goals, they are not expected to align with SDC thematic or

geographic priorities. The evaluation found differing emphases among NGO and SDC staff with regard to the degree to which NGOs should align to the goals or play a complementary role to them. Institutional partners working in the humanitarian sector, for example, are primarily focused on health issues which are not an SDC humanitarian priority. Swiss NGOs are increasingly focusing on their contribution to the SDGs and IPD recently conducted an exercise which revealed a strong alignment of NGO programmes to the SDGs.

6. SDC and NGOs frequently cited that the current portfolio of institutional partners reflects the diversity of Swiss civil society in terms of religion, language and culture, thus ensuring its relevance. The evaluation notes that the larger part of the portfolio of institutional partners emerged from partnerships that existed prior to 2009 and that the portfolio has subsequently been expanded mostly by incorporating pre-existing NGO partnerships from other SDC domains or departments. While this reflects a strategic decision taken as part of the SDC reorganisation in 2009 to better coordinate such institutional partnerships, the composition of the portfolio bears little evidence of having been a series of strategic choices since then to adapt to changing trends and priorities. For example, the evaluation considers that the scheme has not adapted as agilely as other donors to aspects of the aid effectiveness agenda such as results-based management and aid transparency, although it can be seen to have partially adapted to recommendations of two SDC reviews in 2009 for a more systematic approach to managing its NGO partnerships.

#### *Efficiency*

7. A formal, portfolio-wide admissions and approval process took place only for the 2013-2016 Dispatch period. Category E NGOs were not part of this process as the admission criteria had not been adapted for them. The evaluation found a number of good practice elements in this admissions process – for example, the public announcement of the scheme; the development of clear criteria for admissions and approval processes; the use of an admissions panel with independent representation; and a formal report to SDC senior management on the findings of the process at portfolio level. IPD has reconstituted the admissions panel and is in the process of drafting a new five-step admissions process. There has not yet been a public invitation to an open process of admissions and approval for the 2017-2020 Dispatch period (although a current draft admissions process anticipates a similar process). The evaluation considers that the lack of an open, portfolio-wide admissions and approval process for the current Dispatch period has restricted the opportunity for IPD to review the composition of the portfolio and the distribution of programme contributions.
8. NGOs report high levels of satisfaction with the overall efficiency of the management of institutional partnership scheme. The current *modus operandi* is reliant on the quality of IPD bilateral discussions with NGOs, and on the annual conference with each NGO that reviews the NGO annual report and seeks to share NGO learning more broadly with SDC colleagues. The view of the evaluation is that there is scope for IPD to adopt a more systematic, pro-active approach to portfolio management in key areas such as resource allocation, knowledge-sharing, and reporting guidance.
9. For example, IPD offers limited guidance on NGO reporting and, as a result, NGO annual reports vary in format and in quality. Significantly, it is not always possible to discern which of the activities or results reported were directly supported by programme contributions. A significant number of survey respondents indicated that more corporate guidance on reporting would contribute to making the partnership more effective. The evaluation concludes that the current approach to NGO reporting weakens SDC's ability to monitor NGO performance to objectives and its ability to report robustly on the overall effectiveness of the institutional partnership portfolio.

Clearer SDC guidance on reporting would improve the consistency and quality of NGO reports and help to establish a stronger evidence base for the achievements of institutional partnerships.

10. There have been significant adjustments to the levels of individual programme contributions during the evaluation period. IPD determines the level of programme contribution through bilateral discussion on the Programme Document and the overall financial situation of the NGO, rather than through a more formal mechanism. This is popular with most NGOs but has two disadvantages. Firstly, there is currently no overt mechanism to review how effectively an individual NGO has used programme contributions to achieve intended results when deciding the level of programme contribution. Secondly, strategic decisions about the allocation of resources across the portfolio are inhibited by the lack of a portfolio-wide admissions and approval process linked to the budgetary cycle.

#### *Effectiveness*

11. The evaluation identified numerous examples of NGO programmes working towards Swiss development goals. However, a number of limitations regarding the way in which results, particularly at outcome level, were reported limited the degree to which it is possible to summarise NGO contribution to Swiss development goals across the portfolio. Only a few of the NGO programme documents for 2013-2016 had explicit results frameworks; most reporting was at output level; and reporting to outcomes tended to be in narrative form with limited evidence of the contribution of interventions to the results reported. On the positive side, a significantly increased number of results frameworks are included in NGO programme documents for 2017-2020.
12. The evaluation found clear evidence that institutional partnerships had strengthened the institutional development of NGOs by enabling them, for example, to transition from a project to a programmatic approach; invest in improved monitoring and evaluation systems and processes and knowledge management; develop and consolidate key thematic competencies; and make key changes in organisational strategy and programming. The 'common learning process' between SDC and individual NGOs is a useful vehicle for learning and the evaluation found good examples of joint learning on key issues. However, there is scope for IPD to facilitate broader-based learning processes between NGOs and between NGOs and SDC.
13. The evaluation found numerous examples of operational collaboration between NGOs, multi-sectoral collaboration and collaboration through networks although the role of programme contributions in fostering these is not clear. There were a few examples of operational collaboration between SDC and NGOs but the evaluation found that the status of being an SDC institutional partner has little influence at country level where Swiss Cooperation Office collaboration with NGOs focuses principally on the implementation of mandates.
14. Most NGOs work in a wide variety of ways in Switzerland to raise public awareness and understanding of development and humanitarian issues. There is evidence that public support for Swiss development cooperation and the work of Swiss NGOs has remained steady during the evaluation period. However, the evaluation found that NGOs tend to report at activity level in this area. NGOs will need to monitor the attitudinal and behaviour change arising out of their activities in order to demonstrate the link between their activities and broader changes in public attitudes.

## **The Way Forward**

15. SDC should develop a clear, compelling rationale for institutional partnerships in the form of a policy framework; adopt a more systematic approach to managing the complementarities and synergies of its NGO portfolio; and demonstrate and communicate the effectiveness of SDC/NGO institutional partnerships as a valuable, integral part of Swiss development cooperation.
16. SDC should collaborate with Swiss NGOs to develop a policy framework for its institutional partnerships to increase ownership and ensure its relevance. The policy framework should set out the purpose(s) and modus operandi of institutional partnerships consistent with Swiss development cooperation and Agenda 2030. It should include details of application and assessment procedures; narrative and financial reporting responsibilities; how partnerships will be reviewed and resources allocated. This may require separate rationales for different categories of NGOs partnerships if SDC decides to maintain a diverse portfolio of institutional partners. Each purpose or rationale may have implications for the type of financial and non-financial support offered; how this is implemented; and how success is defined and measured. The policy framework should also address how SDC will facilitate NGO links with a broader range of SDC stakeholders, and facilitate shared learning between NGOs and between NGOs and SDC.
17. A more systematic, strategic approach to portfolio management would deliver greater complementarity or synergy across the portfolio; and help to achieve the partnership goals such as shared learning and collaboration. In particular, the evaluation recommends that the good practice elements of the 2013-2016 admissions and approval process be continued. SDC guidance on minimum standards for NGO reporting would improve the consistency and quality of NGO reports, and a more coordinated approach to the independent evaluation of programme results would help to establish an evidence base of NGO achievements. A more systematic approach to linking performance to approving and reviewing partnerships, and setting the level of programme contribution for each NGO, would drive increased effectiveness and improved reporting.
18. SDC should take steps to ensure that the importance and achievements of SDC/NGO institutional partnerships are adequately documented in line with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs and effectively communicated partnerships) to internal and external audiences. This would involve identifying the target audiences; choosing the appropriate communications products and channels; and agreeing shared responsibilities in delivering these. At a minimum, SDC should ensure that the role and value of institutional partnerships is more fully communicated through SDC channels e.g. its website, and clearly described in Dispatches as an integral, effective element of Swiss development cooperation and humanitarian assistance.

## Summary of Recommendations

1. SDC to consult with Swiss NGOs to draft a comprehensive, publicly available policy framework for SDC/NGO institutional partnerships.
2. SDC, while maintaining the quality of bilateral dialogue, to adopt a more strategic approach to managing the whole portfolio of institutional partners to facilitate the achievement of development and partnership goals.
3. SDC to publicly announce invitations to apply for a programme contribution in coordination with the Dispatch and budgetary cycle, with eligibility criteria and admissions processes clearly defined.
4. SDC to conduct admission processes through an admissions panel with independent representation and report to SDC senior management on the reasons for successful and unsuccessful applications, and funds allocated.
5. SDC to streamline the admission/assessment/ approval process with the aim of conducting it within a 12 months period.
6. SDC to provide guidance on minimum standards of reporting for partner NGOs appropriate to their mission and approach, and to clarify whether NGOs must report directly to their own strategies and/or the programmes and investments that programme contributions have been allocated to.
7. SDC to consult with institutional partners and include a learning strategy in the Policy Document to actively promote shared learning between Swiss NGOs and SDC.
8. SDC to formalise links between performance to objectives to resource allocation decisions either through a formal mechanism or by inclusion as a criterion in, for example, bi-annual negotiations.
9. SDC to review what management options and ways of working for IPD would be most appropriate to ensure closer SDC/NGO contact and collaboration across the institution.
10. SDC/NGOs to introduce the use of SDGs for reporting on institutional partnerships and collaborate on identifying relevant SDGs and indicators appropriate to NGO programmes.
11. SDC to collaborate with Swiss NGOs to develop a joint communications strategy to ensure that the achievements of SDC/NGO institutional partnerships are effectively communicated to internal and external stakeholders.

# 1. Introduction

## 1.1. Background

This report will present the findings of the independent evaluation on the relevance, efficiency and effectiveness of the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation's (SDC) institutional partnerships with Swiss Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs). The evaluation has been conducted by a team of evaluators from the UK based consultancy firm IOD PARC.

SDC supports Swiss NGOs through institutional partnerships in the form of programme contributions i.e. funding support to NGOs' strategies and programmes that are expected to contribute broadly to the strategic goals of Swiss development cooperation. Programme contributions are for four years in line with the SDC strategy period and are limited to a maximum of 50% of NGO budgets (excluding other forms of SDC financing).

These strategic partnerships are managed by the Institutional Partnership Division (IPD) in SDC. Institutional partnerships between SDC and NGOs are quite distinct from SDC mandate sub-contracts. Swiss NGOs can also bid, through SDC competitive tenders, to implement specific projects / programmes in line with SDC geographical and thematic priorities. These mandates are managed by different SDC Divisions and decentralised country offices.

SDC's institutional partnership with Swiss NGOs enables NGOs to contribute to the strategic goals of Swiss development cooperation through their own development programmes. SDC sees these long term partnerships with Swiss NGOs as an investment in strengthening the competencies of NGOs and in their organisational development and accountability. SDC institutional NGO partners are expected to have a successful track record, proven skills, substantial knowledge, and financial and popular support in Swiss society.

IPD is responsible not only for negotiating and monitoring SDC programme contributions to Swiss NGOs but also for promoting education on sustainable development in the school system and exchanges with the cantons and municipalities on development cooperation issues. This mandate is reflected in the diverse portfolio of the 37 Swiss NGOs supported by programme contributions. These are divided into five categories:

- Cat A: Regular programme contributions (16 NGOs)
- Cat B: PEZA contributions (3 NGOs)
- Cat C: Focus contributions (5 NGOs)
- Cat D: Contributions to Cantonal Federations (7 Federations)
- Cat E: Sensitisation and Education contributions (5 NGOs)
- Cat F: Contribution to centre of competence (1 centre of competence)

The NGOs cinfo (Category F) and éducation<sup>21</sup> (Category E) were excluded from the evaluation as the nature of SDC collaboration with them is very different from that with other partners, leaving an evaluation portfolio of 35 NGOs.

## 1.2. Purpose of the evaluation

The overall purpose of this evaluation is *to “assess the performance of programme contributions as means of institutional partnerships between SDC and Swiss NGOs..... in order to render accountability, generate knowledge, learning and improve SDC's*

*performance in institutional partnerships with NGOs*<sup>1</sup>. The evaluation covers an eight-year period set by the 2009 – 2012 and 2013 – 2016 Dispatches on Switzerland's International Cooperation. The overall purpose of the evaluation is supplemented with three objectives, derived from the OECD/DAC evaluation criteria, i.e. to evaluate the:

- Relevance of programme contributions to Swiss NGOs;
- Effectiveness of programme contributions to Swiss development and partnership goals;
- Efficiency of the management processes and modalities of programme contributions

The Terms of Reference listed a number of evaluation questions to be addressed under each objective which can be found in Annex 1. These are further elaborated on in the Evaluation Framework in Annex 5.

The evaluation is managed by the Evaluation and Corporate Controlling Division in SDC. The evaluation combined a summative approach to identify the lessons of the past; a formative approach to inform SDC's future decision-making; and developmental approach to ensure that key stakeholders are fully engaged and own the evaluation process, findings and recommendations.

A key stakeholder group, the Core Learning Partnership (CLP), was established from the outset to involve Swiss NGOs and key SDC stakeholders throughout the evaluation process. The CLP consists of six SDC representatives and six NGO representatives. The CLP met on five occasions. The evaluation's initial findings and draft report was discussed at the last two of these. This final report will be presented to and discussed by the SDC Board of Directors and a specially established External Reference Group (ERG), before being presented to the Advisory Committee on International Cooperation. The team anticipates that the findings of the evaluation may feed into strategic decision-making regarding the future of SDC/NGO institutional partnerships and the final report includes options and recommendations for this purpose.

Key users of the evaluation are SDC senior management; IPD; other SDC Divisions; and Swiss NGOs. Consultation with Swiss NGO Southern partners was not included in the scope of the evaluation.

Finally, a note on terminology: the evaluation will use the terms 'institutional partnership' and 'programme contributions' to differentiate respectively between the broader concept of partnership and its funding component. As per the Terms of Reference, the term NGO will be used throughout to refer to institutional partners, with the exception of Cantonal Federations. The report uses the SDC 'categories' of NGO when disaggregating the analysis by NGO type.

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<sup>1</sup> SDC Approach Paper for Call to Offers p 9.

## 2. Evaluation Methodology

A more detailed description of the evaluation methodology, including a risk management matrix, can be found in Annex 4.

### 2.1. An Analytical Framework

The evaluation analytical framework is based on the development of an Evaluation Framework to gather and triangulate data on the evaluation questions; to develop an analysis; and to test and revise a draft intervention logic for SDC/NGO institutional partnerships.

SDC/NGO institutional partnerships are expected to contribute to Swiss development goals and to SDGs<sup>2</sup> although there are no clear guidelines as to how NGOs should demonstrate this. During the inception phase, the evaluation synthesised nine development goals and four 'partnership goals' from the Dispatches relevant to the evaluation period<sup>3</sup> to define a set of goals against which the effectiveness of NGO programmes could be assessed.

During the inception phase, the evaluation also developed a provisional intervention logic that made explicit the logical steps and assumptions behind the hypothesis that SDC/NGO institutional partnerships contribute to the strategic goals of Swiss development cooperation and its partnership goals. The intervention logic contained three key assumptions which were tested against the evaluation findings and were subsequently revised after a CLP workshop (see Section 7.2 and Annex 6).

The evaluation developed an Evaluation Framework<sup>4</sup> that was structured around the evaluation questions specified in the Terms of Reference under selected OECD/DAC criteria. The Framework identified the data sources and data collection methods for each evaluation question. This enabled the evaluation to gather, triangulate and analyse data in line with the evaluation questions. Relevant questions from the Framework were also aligned with the provisional intervention logic so that the evaluation could identify evidence-based learning to test the assumptions behind the provisional intervention logic. Each chapter and section of this report is prefaced with a short summary of the relevant evaluation questions it addresses.

### 2.2. Data Collection Methods

The evaluation team adopted a systematic, iterative approach to data gathering and analysis. Data gathering tools were designed in line with the Evaluation Framework to enable the data to be triangulated across different methodologies, and disaggregated by the different categories of NGOs, prior to the development of the evaluation analysis and findings. The team collected data for the evaluation from March to May 2017 through:

- *A systematic document review*

The team conducted a systematic review of key documents from 13 NGOs selected through a modified systematic random sampling approach<sup>5</sup>. The team chose two points towards the end of each Dispatch period - 2012 and 2015 - for the review. The team designed two templates based on the Evaluation Framework for the document review to

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<sup>2</sup> Manual for the Negotiation of SDC Programme and Focus contributions to Swiss NGOs for the period 2013-2016 p 6 Criterion 1

<sup>3</sup> See Annex 7

<sup>4</sup> See Annex 5

<sup>5</sup> See Annex 10 for the sampling matrix.

enable it to systematically and consistently screen both Swiss NGO and SDC documents<sup>6</sup>. Key points were summarised in English in templates to facilitate subsequent analysis.

The team also reviewed SDC documents including IPD annual reports; documents related to the admission, negotiation and contracting processes; relevant Dispatches and other policy documents; and relevant evaluations and audits. Additionally, each consultant prepared for NGO interviews by reviewing the key documentation available – for example, organisational strategy and report/s and evaluations.

- *Stakeholder Consultations*

The evaluation consulted with more than 100 stakeholders through individual interviews or focus group discussions including all Swiss NGO partners, SDC staff in Switzerland and overseas; and some key respondents<sup>7</sup>. All interviews were conducted in person with the exception of the Swiss Cooperation Offices (SCOs) and key respondent interviews which were conducted via Skype. All interviews and focus group interviews were based on a semi-structured format derived from the Evaluation Framework and adapted for each stakeholder group<sup>8</sup>. Key points were summarised in a similar template to the document review to facilitate triangulation.

- *An online survey*

The evaluation conducted an online survey of all partner Swiss NGOs<sup>9</sup> included in the evaluation in line with Evaluation Framework. The survey was distributed in German, French, and English. NGOs were encouraged to consult more broadly in their organisation when completing the survey and to provide a consolidated response. The survey had a 100% response rate. Anonymous quotes from survey respondents have been incorporated into the report to illustrate the analysis. A summary analysis of the survey findings was circulated to all NGOs in May 2017<sup>10</sup>.

- *A summary financial analysis*

The evaluation also conducted a simple financial analysis of programme contributions from 2012 until 2015 to identify any significant trends during this period (see Section 3.2.).

- *A background summary of institutional partnerships*

A CLP meeting in March 2017 expressed a concern that the evaluation team should understand the distinctive context and characteristics of SDC/NGO institutional partnerships. The evaluation developed, in consultation with IPD, a summary of the evolution of institutional partnerships during the evaluation period to ensure that it had an accurate understanding of its development and distinctive characteristics<sup>11</sup>.

- *Comparative review of donor practices*

The evaluation conducted a short review of how similar Donor/NGO partnership schemes compare with SDC's institutional partnerships. Four agencies – Danish International Development Agency (Danida / UK AID Connect), UK Department for International Development (DFID), Ministry of Foreign Affairs in the Netherlands, and the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA) – were initially included in the

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<sup>6</sup> See Inception Report Annex 12

<sup>7</sup> See Annex 8 for list of people consulted

<sup>8</sup> See Annex 9 for interview formats

<sup>9</sup> See Annex 12 for the NGO survey format

<sup>10</sup> See Annex 13 for a summary analysis of the survey findings

<sup>11</sup> See Annex 2

review, to which a fifth – the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) Finland – was added after consultation<sup>12</sup>.

### 2.3. Analysis and reporting

The team conducted an ongoing ‘analysis of the data at each point in the data gathering process. The team met in June 2017 to develop a more in-depth analysis of the evidence provided against the Evaluation Framework; identify initial findings; and draft possible implementation options for SDC institutional partnerships with Swiss NGOs. These were discussed at an additional CLP workshop on 4<sup>th</sup> July 2017. The team presented three implementation options, all derived from similar donor /NGO partnership schemes, for discussion purposes at the workshop. These were:

- a) *Status quo plus*: The current system of institutional partnerships administered more efficiently and transparently, and with improved communications.
- b) *Minor change*: A more strategic and results-oriented approach to institutional partnerships while retaining its core characteristics e.g. strategic funding. This is similar to Danida’s new approach to its strategic partners.
- c) *Major change*: A radical, more directive approach that would require a ‘systems’ change in SDC/NGO partnerships similar to that of DFID and MFA Netherlands.

A matrix illustrated how each might be implemented differently. The workshop concluded that ‘major’ change was neither a viable nor desirable option.

The evaluation team also presented a three-stage process entitled “The Way Forward”, outlining the key choices to be made to ensure the relevance, efficiency and effectiveness of programme contributions (See Chapter 8). It was agreed at the workshop that the final evaluation report should draw upon the first two options above to present the choices and recommendations in line with this three stage process.

NGOs also highlighted the need to disaggregate the evaluation findings by the different categories of NGO given the diversity of the portfolio. The evaluation provides a disaggregated analysis where possible although there were few marked variances in responses by category across the sources of evidence with the exception of Cantonal Federations.

A draft report was discussed at CLP workshop on 3<sup>rd</sup> August 2017. Written comments on the draft report were subsequently collated by SDC and NGOs. The evaluation has responded in written form to all the comments received and incorporated them in the report where appropriate.

### 2.4. Limitations of the Approach

The Inception Report identified a number of risks, limitations and mitigating actions with regard to the evaluation approach. In general, none of the risks identified have significantly affected the evaluation process. There remain two significant limitations to the evidence base of the evaluation with implications for the evaluation findings.

Firstly, although the evaluation drew upon five data sources, the evaluation Terms of Reference did not provide for field trips or a survey of Southern partners which may have offered a broader perspective. Swiss NGOs, therefore, provided the most significant body of evidence through interviews and survey responses though this was counterbalanced by extensive interviews with SDC stakeholders and some key, external respondents.

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<sup>12</sup> See Annex 14 for a summary of key points and Annex 15 for a comparative matrix

Secondly, the inconsistency in format and quality of NGO reports resulted in any attempt to summarise the overall effectiveness of the portfolio as implausible. This is explored in more detail in Section 6.1.

### **3. SDC Institutional Partnerships with Swiss NGOs**

This section will provide some background to the evolution of the SDC/NGO institutional partnerships during the evaluation period, followed by a brief factual and financial profile of NGO partners and programme contributions. A more detailed background to the institutional partnership scheme can be found in Annex 2.

#### **3.1. Background to SDC/NGO Institutional Partnerships**

The concept of an ‘institutional partnership’ centres around the partnership enabling an NGO to implement its own strategy and, in so doing, contribute to the strategic goals of Swiss development cooperation. The strategic relevance of SDC partnerships with NGOs is recognised in the 2017-20 Dispatch on Swiss International Cooperation. This acknowledges that SDC relies on NGOs’ knowledge, experience, capacities and networks to deliver its development mandate<sup>13</sup>. IPD<sup>14</sup> recently has further elaborated the rationale for its strategic partnerships with Swiss NGOs. The key elements of this rationale are:

- SDC’s institutional partnership with Swiss NGOs is a ‘valorisation<sup>15</sup>’ of the competencies of the NGO partner and the relevance of its programmes, and an investment in its organisational development and accountability.
- Swiss NGOs with strong competencies offer a distinctive contribution to, and add value to, Swiss development and humanitarian cooperation.
- Swiss NGO partners also contribute significantly to public understanding of development and humanitarian issues through their work on raising public awareness and education, and to strengthening the image and effectiveness of Swiss development cooperation.
- The role of Swiss NGOs in multi-sectoral partnerships or alliances, in the transfer of competencies and expertise, and in the replication of successful innovation will play an increasing part in tackling global challenges.

The Swiss federal government has supported Swiss NGO development projects in different ways since the 1960s. SDC began to centralise project contributions to Swiss NGOs with the establishment of an NGO Service around 1990 and later in 2000/1 when it was upgraded to a NGO Section in SDC’s department of bilateral development cooperation, which began to introduce the concept of programme funding to selected NGOs.

In 2009, a new Institutional Partnership Division (IPD) was created, reporting directly to the Director General, with the aim of enhancing the strategic nature of the partnerships. The integration of NGO funding support from the South, East and Humanitarian Frame Credits into a system of programme contributions managed by IPD took place over the

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<sup>13</sup> Dispatch on Switzerland’s International Cooperation 2017 – 2020 p 2510.

<sup>14</sup> Institutionelle Partnerschaften Jahresbericht 2016 Mit Planung für 2017, SDC

<sup>15</sup> “valoriser” is frequently used by SDC when describing the rationale for NGO partnerships. It does not translate easily into English and can mean to value, to increase the status or value of, and to develop. There are probably elements of all of these in its usage with reference to SDC/NGO partnerships.

next couple of years. This took place in parallel with the consolidation of competitive bidding procedures for SDC mandates managed by SDC geographic and thematic units and Swiss Cooperation Offices (SCOs). The mandate of IPD today is described<sup>16</sup> as being to negotiate and monitor SDC's programme contributions to Swiss NGOs; its contribution to the promotion of education on sustainable development in the Swiss school system; and to promote exchange with the cantons and municipalities on issues related to development cooperation.

IPD extended and consolidated the institutional partnerships by approving programme contributions to 28 NGOs at the beginning of the 2009-2012 Dispatch period<sup>17</sup>. Two reviews of SDC relevant to this evaluation took place in 2009 – the GPK-S Parliamentary audit and the OECD Peer Review. The reviews coincided considerably in their recommendations for a more systematic, transparent approach to Swiss support for Swiss NGOs. The GPK-S audit, for example, recommended that SDC establish transparent criteria for the selection of NGOs and allocation of resources. The OECD peer review<sup>18</sup> in October 2009 noted that the SDC approach to NGO partnerships was “*non-intrusive, pragmatic and individual*”. While this allowed for a flexible approach, it also noted that there were “*no clear, systematic criteria for engaging in strategic partnerships, nor clear links between financial allocations and performance*”. The review concluded that a more strategic approach to NGOs would require, among other recommendations, “*clear, transparent criteria for funding allocations and strategic partnerships*”.

IPD introduced a number of changes in the management of programme contributions for the 2009-2012 strategy period. These included the general application of an upper limit of 50% of the NGO's total budget, excluding SDC mandates, for programme contributions; and the development of eligibility and negotiations manuals to allow for a more systematic admission and approval procedure. In early 2011 it introduced a more systematic admission and approval process of institutional partners for the 2013-2016 Dispatch period, including the introduction of a three person Admissions Panel including two external assessors. All the measures undertaken in 2011 were submitted by the Federal Council to the Parliamentary audit body GPK-S and endorsed by it.

IPD approved contribution agreements for 37 NGOs for the 2013-2016 Dispatch period<sup>19</sup> adding eight new institutional partners to the portfolio – four in 2013 and four Category E NGOs working on sensitisation and education in Switzerland in 2014.

In 2013 the OECD-DAC Peer Review of SDC found that SDC had developed a more strategic, transparent and standardised approach to partnering with Swiss NGOs e.g. the establishment of pre-admission and admission criteria. It highlighted that the SDC policy for working with civil society organisations in developing countries was yet to be updated and suggested that SDC should monitor the impact of its new partnership approach with Swiss NGOs, and translate the Dispatch's vision for engaging with civil society into operational and results-oriented priorities<sup>20</sup>.

### **3.2. A Profile of Programme Contributions**

As outlined in Section 1.1., IPD devised five categories to describe the portfolio of institutional partners covered by the evaluation. Most of these NGOs are unitary organisations although some are umbrella organisations. In this respect, the role of the seven Cantonal Federations deserves a special mention in the context of Switzerland. All

<sup>16</sup> <https://www.eda.admin.ch/deza/en/home/sdc/organisation/departments/institutional-partnerships.html>

<sup>17</sup> Institutionelle Partnerschaften Jahresbericht 2010, Anhang 2

<sup>18</sup> OECD Development Co-operation Peer Review SWITZERLAND 2009 2009 p64,5

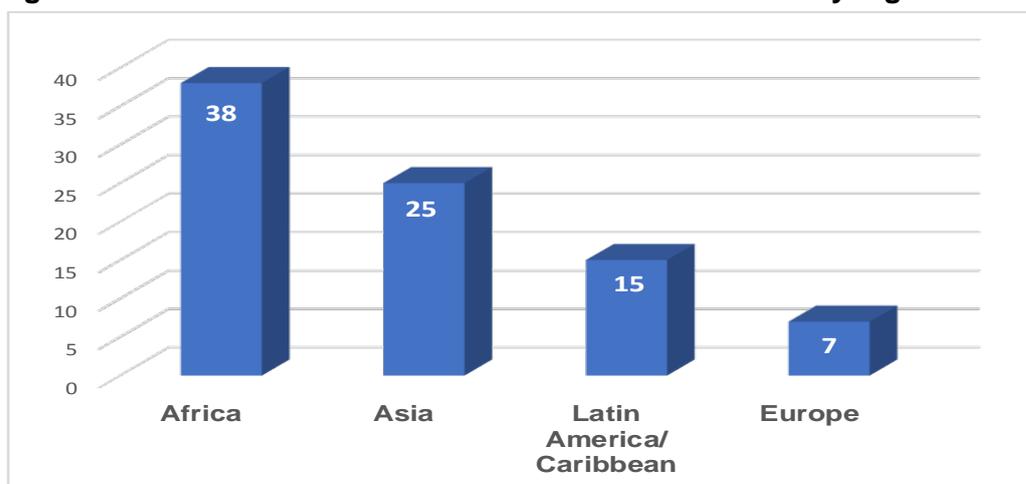
<sup>19</sup> Institutionelle Partnerschaften Jahresbericht 2014, Anhang 6

<sup>20</sup> OECD Development Co-operation Peer Review SWITZERLAND 2013 OECD 2014.

of the Cantonal Federations are in Latin Switzerland and emerged between 1966 and 2008. These Federations are associations of local NGOs at cantonal level. They distribute funds raised at Canton and Commune level to members for development and information projects in addition to distributing, subject to an approval process, programme contribution funding for members' proposals. Federations also seek to support the effectiveness of the work of their members; raise public awareness of development and humanitarian issues; and encourage the cantons and municipalities to support cooperation projects in developing countries. Since 2005, Federations have been part of a 'Fédéréseau', an informal network where Federations share information, tools, and practices.

NGO institutional partners work across a much wider range of countries than those prioritised by SDC, with programmes in 85 countries<sup>21</sup>. Nearly half of these (38) are in Africa, 25 in Asia, 15 in Latin America and 7 in Europe.

**Figure 1: Number of countries in which Swiss NGOs work by region.**



Not all institutional partners have an international presence e.g. in the form of country offices. None of the NGOs in categories D and E, for example, have country level staff.

Swiss NGOs also work with a wide range of partners – most commonly with other NGOs, followed by community-based organisations (CBOs) and governments. Perhaps unsurprisingly, Category A NGOs worked most frequently with multilateral organisations. Responses were mixed across the categories with regard to the private sector and academic institutions, with the exception of Category D NGOs for whom this was mostly non-applicable. Other types of partners mentioned by NGOs included trade unions, interest groups, national coalitions and networks, and religious leaders.

SDC institutional partners are very diverse, not only in terms of their missions and geographical spread, but also in terms of size. The majority of NGOs<sup>22</sup> (63%) have between 0-25 staff in Switzerland. This is the case for all Category B, C, D and E NGOs, with one exception. In contrast six NGOs have more than 100 staff in Switzerland.

This disparity in size is reflected also in the size of NGO budgets<sup>23</sup>, as illustrated in Figure 2. In 2015 seven NGOs had operational budgets in excess of CHF 60,000,000; the remaining 28 had operational budgets of a little over CHF 20,000,000 or less. In the same

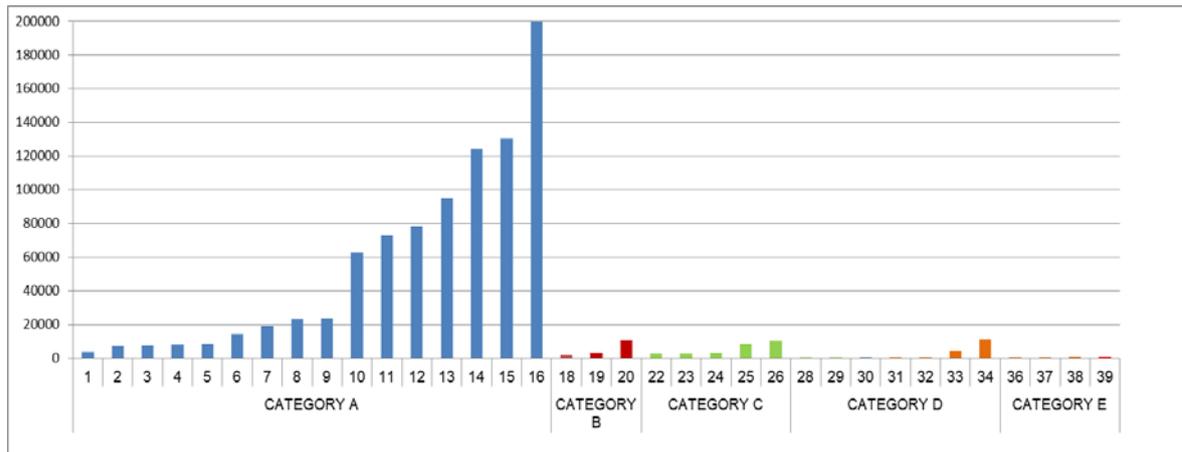
<sup>21</sup> Information derived from Jahresprogramm 2016 Institutionelle Partnerschaften.

<sup>22</sup> Information derived from Evaluation NGO survey.

<sup>23</sup> The following financial analysis is derived from data supplied by IPD to the evaluation on 16<sup>th</sup> March 2017 and reconciled with the SDC data base. For the purposes of comparison data was gathered from 2012 and 2015 towards the end of the two Dispatch periods with the scope of the evaluation. The possibility of direct comparison is limited since 15 new NGO began to receive contributions in 2013.

year, the ratio between the smallest and the largest budgets across the portfolio in 2015 was 1:222; and 1:28 among NGOs receiving regular programme contributions.

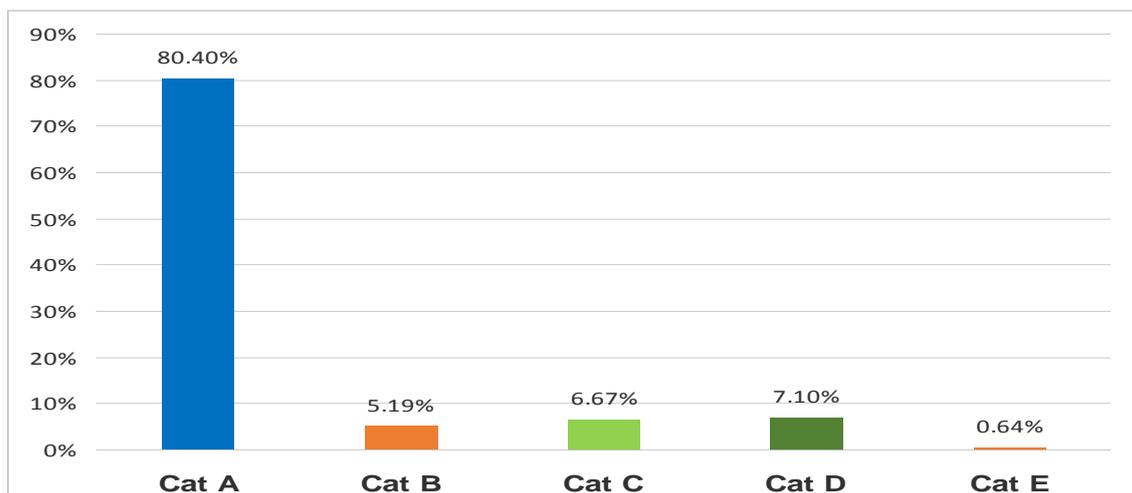
**Figure 2: Total Budgets of NGOs in Receipt of Programme Contribution 2015<sup>24</sup>**



The total programme contribution budget has grown considerably during the evaluation period. After a period of budgetary stability, the total funds available in programme contributions increased from CHF 72,602,000 to CHF 121,843,000 from 2012 to 2015 – a 68% increase of CHF 49,241,000. However, this should be put in the context that programme contributions as a percentage of SDC ODA increased only from 5.2% to 5.7% during the same period<sup>25</sup>.

The disparity in NGO budgets is reflected in the distribution of programme contributions. In 2015 the 16 Category A NGOs received 80.4% of the funds disbursed (see Figure 3). Programme contributions were further concentrated on the larger NGOs in Category A. Four Category A NGOs received approximately CHF 10,000,000 in contributions and accounted for 44% of the total funds allocated to the Category. Programme contributions were similarly concentrated among Category D NGOs. Two of the seven Cantonal federations received more than 85.2% of the funding for that Category in 2015.

**Figure 3: Distribution of Programme Contribution 2015 by NGO Category**



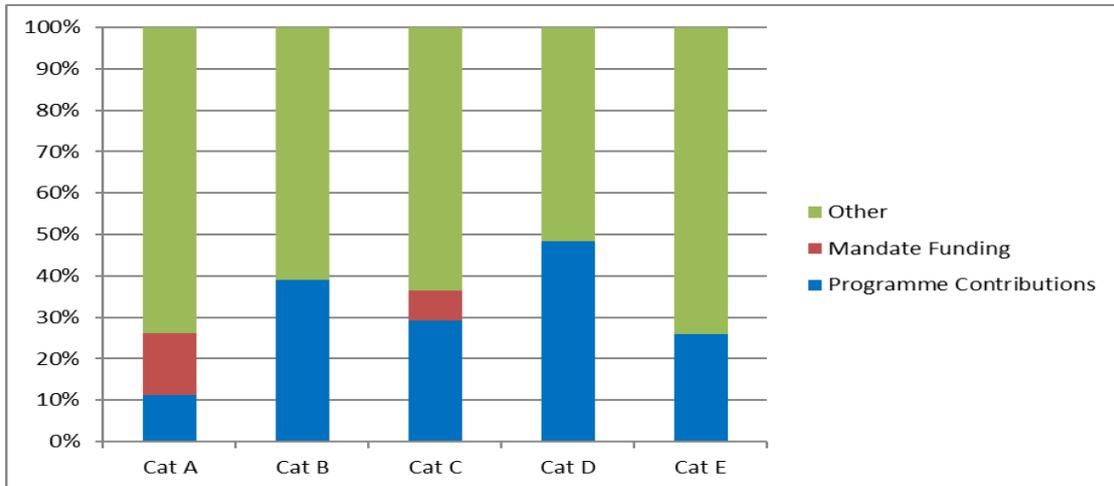
While Category A NGOs absorb the great majority of programme contributions, programme contributions represented an average of just over 10% of the total Category A NGO budgets in 2015 (although they represented more than 20% of total budget in six of the 13 NGOs). In contrast, programme contributions to Category D contributed nearly

<sup>24</sup> Figures are stated in CHF 1000

<sup>25</sup> From data supplied by SDC, 9/8/17

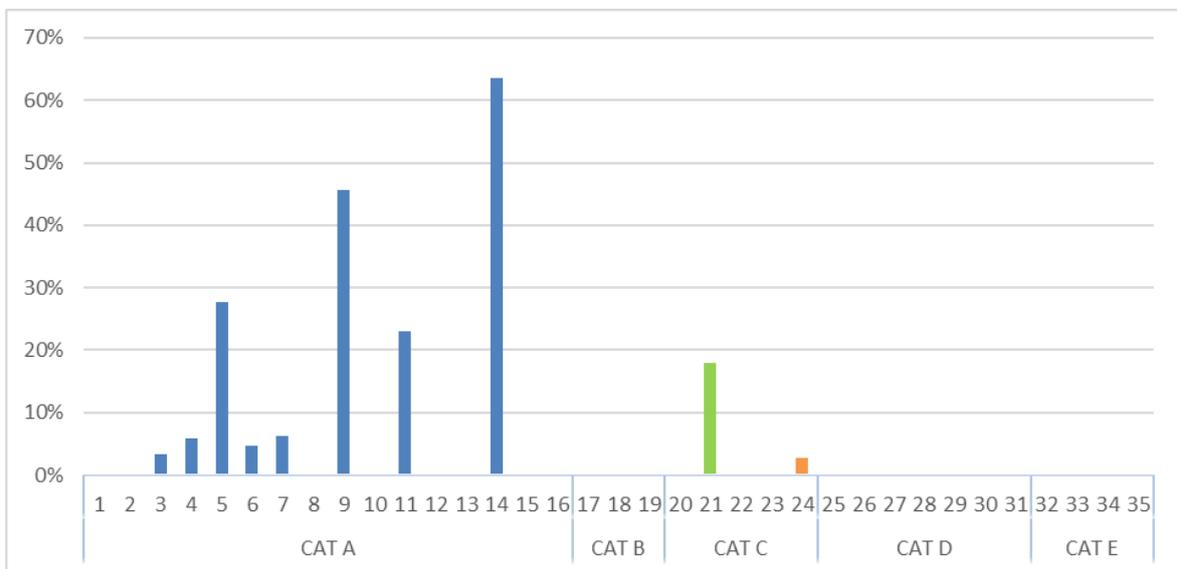
50% of their total operational budgets, and just under 40% of Category B total budgets, as illustrated in Figure 4.

**Figure 4: Composition of NGO Total Income 2015**



SDC mandates or subcontracts represent a significant source of income for a small number of NGOs in receipt of programme contributions. Ten institutional partners – eight Category A NGOs and two Category C NGOs – received a total of CHF 133,936,000 in mandate funding in 2015. Total mandate funding received by these ten NGOs in 2015 exceeded the total for the whole programme contributions portfolio in the same year. Two NGOs accounted for 79.1% of the total mandate funding received by institutional partners. Three institutional partners received more income from mandates than programme contributions. The percentage contribution of mandate contracts to NGO total budgets in 2015 is illustrated in Figure 5.

**Figure 5: SDC Mandates as Percentage of NGO Total Budget**



## 4. Relevance

This Chapter will review the evaluation's finding on the relevance of SDC/NGO institutional partnerships as an element of Swiss development cooperation; their relevance to Swiss development goals<sup>26</sup>; the relevance of the current portfolio and the adaptability of SDC/NGO institutional partnerships to changing trends.

### 4.1. Relevance of SDC/NGO institutional partnerships

The relevance of institutional partnerships as an integral element of Swiss development cooperation was affirmed by nearly all SDC and Swiss NGO stakeholders. NGOs particularly highlighted<sup>27</sup> the importance of SDC's financial support; the flexibility of the funds; the legitimacy associated with the partnership; and its contribution to their institutional strengthening. Swiss NGOs highly valued this model of partnership as it enables them to deliver their own programme or strategy, retained the ownership of their work, and allowed them to invest in technical or thematic competencies.

As NGOs are not restricted to working in SDC priority countries, they can work in countries they themselves identify as priorities e.g. 'forgotten crises', or in areas that donors have de-prioritised but where needs remain e.g. Latin America. In some cases, NGOs pave the way for SDC to later become engaged. For example, Swissaid were engaged in Myanmar before bilateral donors were able to be active there thus enabling SDC to start a dialogue in the country after political circumstances changed.

The flexibility of programme contributions was highly valued by interviewees and by survey respondents<sup>28</sup>. Category B, C and D NGOs in particular cited that the flexibility of programme contributions enables them to respond, adapt and innovate to changing circumstances e.g. in fragile contexts; and to invest in their own institutional development e.g. improved M&E systems. Both development and humanitarian NGOs in Category A commented that this flexibility enabled NGOs to invest in innovative approaches that could be scaled up.

*"The flexibility of the Programme contribution is an incentive for innovations. It also allows for negotiation and justifies changes according to the evolution of the needs and the environment".*

Source: NGO Survey respondent, Category A

The long-term nature of the funding was also highly valued by NGOs since it provided security for NGOs to invest and innovate over the long term.

*"Highly important is the flexibility of SDC's financial support, as it allows focusing on quality aspects, learning, piloting projects etc., which are difficult to fund otherwise. SDC's financial support has a high impact on the quality of programs".*

Source: NGO Survey respondent, Category A

In addition, NGOs emphasised the relevance of the non-financial aspects of the partnership in particular the quality of dialogue with IPD, the facilitation of learning processes; and the support for diversity.

<sup>26</sup> As derived and synthesised from across the Dispatches covered by the evaluation

<sup>27</sup> See Annex 13: Evaluation NGO survey.

<sup>28</sup> 74.3% strongly agreed or agreed that SDC allowed organisations to make changes when needed as to how funds were managed.

All NGOs appreciated the constructive dialogue they had with IPD and described it as a 'critical friend' challenging the organisation to reflect and develop. Several mentioned how this had led them to improve their overall efficiency and effectiveness e.g. by encouraging a move from a project to a more programmatic approach and invest in their M&E systems. This was strongly reinforced by the survey findings<sup>29</sup>.

*"We have a number of possibilities to carry out an appropriate strategic dialogue with SDC on our joint work. In addition to the annual program conferences, the presentation of the SDC annual programs ...); discussions with the Directorate within our alliances, as well as thematic events provide useful and efficient opportunities for these dialogues".*

Source: NGO survey respondent, Category A

Smaller NGOs in Categories B, C, D, and E emphasised additional aspects of the relevance of the partnership to them. For example:

- *Credibility*: By lending them credibility as centres of competence in Switzerland, enabling them, in some cases, to gain an increased profile as experts in a particular area, and/or to access other sources of funding. Cantonal Federations highlighted how their partnership with SDC increased their legitimacy and profile and enabled them to leverage further public funds from Cantons and Communes.
- *Visibility*: By heightening their visibility which helped their fundraising effort from the public and also being asked more frequently to take part in panels, media etc.
- *Access*: By providing access to SDC staff and relevant networks. For example, Cantonal Federations enable their member associations access to technical support and to SDC funding support for their proposals that otherwise they would have no access to.

*"SDC support is also in line with a seal of approval and helps us to raise and receive contributions from other major donors."*

Source: NGO Survey respondent, Category B

SDC and NGO interviewees coincided on the key elements of added value that make institutional partnerships particularly relevant to SDC. Key amongst these were:

- *Raising public awareness*: the role of all NGO partners in raising public awareness of, and support for, Swiss development cooperation. Cantonal Federations, for example, bring together public authorities in Switzerland at the commune, canton and the confederations levels to promote Switzerland's development cooperation policy with local institutions, the general public, NGOs and the media.
- *Implementation*: Both SDC and NGO staff highlighted the role of Swiss NGOs in implementing development and humanitarian programs on the ground to demonstrate the effectiveness and visibility of Swiss development cooperation.
- *Swiss competencies*: Programme contributions are a form of investment in development and humanitarian competencies in Switzerland e.g. the dual educational system. A minority of NGOs have used programme contributions over the years to invest in strengthening or extending their competencies to compete for SDC and other mandates and expand their impact. Some SDC staff referred to them

<sup>29</sup>100% of respondents said their partnership with SDC allows them to deliver their strategy; over 97% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that they were able to maintain a strategic dialogue with SDC; 94% agreed or strongly agreed that SDC understands their organisation's priorities and values.

as national centres of competence that can be contracted through mandates with low transaction costs since they are integral to norms and processes of Swiss development cooperation.

- *Volunteerism*: In particular Cantonal Federations highlighted the role of volunteers who engage with Federations and their member associations. Many of the projects co-financed by the Federations are run by small organisations operated on a voluntary basis and reach populations that do not benefit from bigger programmes.

Respondents mentioned only a few disadvantages associated with the system of institutional partnerships. A number of NGOs highlighted that their strategic partnership was more with IPD than with SDC as a whole, and that relating to a specialised Division separate from SDC operational domains brought some disadvantages – for example, limitations on their access to dialogue and influence on thematic departments. Interviews with NGO and Swiss Cooperation Office (SCO) staff indicated that the status of being an institutional partner did not enhance the dialogue between NGOs and SDC at country level, despite IPD efforts to encourage coordination. Cantonal Federations mentioned in the focus group that many SDC staff do not understand their distinctive role in contrast to that of other NGOs in the portfolio. SDC/NGO collaboration will be examined in more detail in Section 6.3.2.

Related to the above, several NGOs commented that the relevance of the concept of institutional partnership was not sufficiently understood by stakeholders in SDC i.e. in the operational domains and SCOs, and that the value and effectiveness of SDC/NGO institutional partnerships need to be better communicated if they are to be perceived more broadly as relevant.

The evaluation was asked to comment on any complementarities or conflicts between programme contributions and other potential SDC support modalities for NGOs. The evaluation understands that NGO institutional partners can bid for mandate contracts but are not allowed to receive further project funding from SDC. The evaluation found some confusion and contradictory statements about this and how rules were applied. Several SDC respondents and NGOs stated that the rules were unclear and they were unsure that there was a shared understanding of how they were applied. One SCO office noted that it has wanted but was unable to fund a successful pilot project of an institutional partner. The office observed that using project funds to help a Swiss NGO scale up an innovative project was a sensible use of development cooperation funds, and had some advantages over the typical approach to mandate contracting.

Ten institutional partners received income from mandate contracts in 2015 (Category D and E NGOs do not compete for mandates). The total number of income received by these ten exceeded the total programme contributions across the portfolio. Income from mandates for a minority of institutional partners played a very significant role in their organisational finances. Larger NGOs who are in possession of mandates cited the complementary role that programme contributions play in relation to them. Some Swiss NGOs have been able to draw upon programme contributions to develop and expand their skills and expertise to compete for mandate funding in Switzerland and elsewhere. Two or three SDC staff observed that this carried some risk in some NGOs of “mission drift” i.e. of developing new competencies to increase income. A small number of NGOs commented that tendering for mandates encouraged a competitive rather than a collaborative relationship between the larger NGOs which might undermine knowledge sharing in the sector.

## 4.2. Relevance to strategic goals of Swiss development cooperation.

This Section will assess the relevance of programme contributions to the strategic goals of Swiss development and humanitarian cooperation.

As outlined in section 3.1, the strategic relevance of SDC partnerships with NGOs is recognised in the 2017-20 Dispatch on Swiss International Cooperation. However, interviewees from both SDC and NGOs affirmed that the intention of the institutional partnerships was to support NGOs in delivering their own programmes, rather than to explicitly contribute to Swiss development goals. NGOs, nonetheless, almost universally report that they are aware of and contributing to the strategic goals of Swiss development cooperation<sup>30</sup>.

*XX is familiar with the SDC dispatches 2013-2016 and 2017-2020 and our programmes have been scrutinised by the SDC to check for conformity with the SDC dispatches, as a condition for approval by the SDC. We cooperate pro-actively and significantly with the SDC both at the HQ level and in the countries of common presence - Our own priorities match with several key SDC's priorities, such as in health, water, migration, humanitarian aid".*

Source: NGO survey respondent, Category A

The evaluation survey asked all NGOs to identify the development goals their organisation was contributing to in order to get a better picture of how NGO programmes are aligned to specific goals. Figure 6<sup>31</sup> illustrates the number of NGOs reporting their organisation contributing 'very significantly' or 'significantly' to each development goal.

**Figure 6: NGO alignment to Swiss development goals**

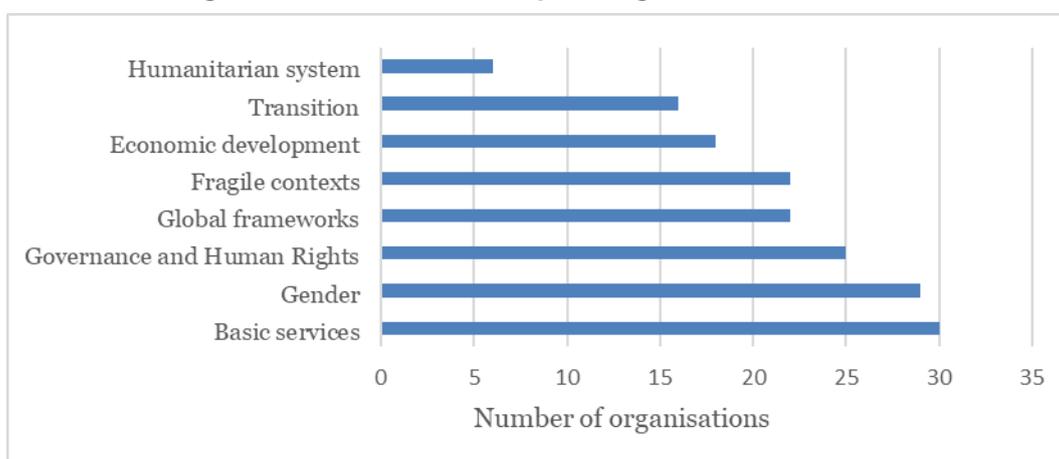


Figure 6 indicates that NGO programmes have a good level of alignment with Swiss development goals but less so with the humanitarian goal. (Although Category D organisations highlighted that they themselves did not directly contribute to the goals but the members they support do). The highest number of NGOs aligned themselves with the goal on Basic Services (30/35), followed by Gender (29/35). The goal to which the fewest NGOs were aligned was strengthening the humanitarian system (8/35), likely due to the fact that the majority of organisations in the Programme Contribution portfolio are development organisations rather than humanitarian ones.

<sup>30</sup> 97 % and 91% of survey respondents respectively stated that they were significantly or very significantly familiar with and contributing Swiss strategic goals.

<sup>31</sup> Data derived from Question 7 in evaluation survey. NGOs were able to select very significantly and significantly on as many goals as applicable.

The survey indicates which Swiss development goals NGOs identify themselves as contributing to but the evaluation found that programme documents and Annual Reports generally do not make direct reference to goals, with some exceptions. Nonetheless the document review also indicated that the programmatic objectives included in NGO programme documents are generally relevant to both Swiss development and partnership goals. A number of NGOs commented in interview that it would be helpful to have greater clarity on how they are expected to contribute to the strategic goals.

The evaluation found evidence that IPD is beginning to use the SDGs as the strategic orientation for the Programme Contribution scheme. In 2015, NGOs were asked in their 2017-20 programme documents to demonstrate how their programme objectives will contribute to the SDGs<sup>32</sup>. This exercise demonstrated a strong fit between NGO programmes and SDGs and a number of NGOs have begun to refer to the SDGs in their documentation – for example, AKTE in its 2015 Annual Report highlights the inclusion of tourism in SDG 12 and the FGC in its 2017-20 Programme Document outlines that the SDGs now constitute the context in which all development must take place and the need for organisations to better understand and reflect upon what this new global reference means going forward.

*“The partnership fosters dialogue, synergies and complementarities between government and NGO development approaches with the aim to contribute to global development goals.”*

Source: NGO survey respondent, Category A

The evaluation also reviewed the relevance of institutional partnerships to the partnership goals that were identified in the evaluation Inception Report – learning, distinctive competence, collaboration, and public awareness. The NGO survey found that approximately three quarters of respondents considered that their partnership with SDC either significantly or very significantly contributed to distinctive Swiss competencies, collaboration and complementarities within the sector, and their work on public awareness. A slightly higher percentage (86%) felt that their partnership with SDC either significantly or very significantly supported their ‘Knowledge sharing and adoption of learning within the sector’.

All NGOs identified in their programme documents and NGO survey the relevance of learning – for example, the ‘common learning process’ and the exchange of knowledge with other NGOs and SDC – to their partnership with SDC.

*“The partnership with the SDC includes several relevant aspects – the exchange and dialogue on relevant topics and content pursued in the program; mutual learning and further development of tools, methods and approaches in the context of implementing a coherent program; and better networking and coordination with relevant actors”.*

Source: NGO survey respondent, Category C

NGOs also provided evidence of adding value in terms of ‘distinctive Swiss competencies’ – for example, SolidarMed’s work in Lesotho using Swiss technology to address programmatic and clinical effects, and Enfants du Monde, through its support to bilingual education programmes.

The relevance of collaboration with SDC and between NGOs and other Swiss institutions such as other government departments, hospitals, and universities was also highlighted in the survey in programme documents and in survey responses.

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<sup>32</sup> See Jahresprogramm 2016 Institutionelle Partnerschaften

*“There is a very active health network, led by the SDC. We participate in this network and in this way, we can pass on our expert knowledge to the SDC audience. We are participating in the relevant SDC Health Conferences; the SDC participates in our major health events; as well as in events organized by the Swiss network of organizations working in health care. There is a very positive dynamic and a real added value.”*

Source: NGO survey respondent, Category C

Some NGOs commented that work on public awareness of development and humanitarian issues was increasingly relevant in light of the SDGs. The document review found that most NGOs outlined its importance in their programme documents although this was undertaken in a variety of ways and for a number of purposes. This was particularly highlighted in the survey by organisations in category E as a key component of their partnership with SDC.

### **4.3. Relevance of Institutional Partner Portfolio.**

This Section will discuss whether the current NGO partner portfolio is relevant to Swiss development and humanitarian goals, and how well the institutional partnership scheme has adjusted to a changing context.

The evaluation found that nearly all SDC and NGO respondents considered the current portfolio to be relevant to achieving the strategic goals of Swiss development cooperation. The most quoted explanation was the diversity of NGOs in the portfolio reflected the diverse nature of Swiss civil society in terms of religion, language and culture, thus ensuring its relevance. One SDC stakeholder referred to the portfolio being a mix of ‘implementing’ NGOs who could deliver large scale development results; NGOs with technical specialties; NGOs well-situated in the Swiss context to influence at a political level; and NGOs well-placed to raise public awareness and support grass-roots activities in developing countries. The introduction of NGO “categories”, however, was seen by many stakeholders as a *post hoc* exercise to make sense of an evolving portfolio rather than part of a strategy to support specific types of organisation to engage with development cooperation issues.

One issue noted in interviews was, despite an increasing focus for SDC and other donors on humanitarian work and fragility, relatively few institutional partner NGOs work in the humanitarian field (although SDC has humanitarian agreements with NGOs apart from programme contributions). Those NGO partners working on humanitarian issues work primarily on health issues, which is not an SDC priority in its humanitarian work. Some partners reported having been asked by SDC to undertake other kinds of humanitarian work i.e. WASH and shelter, but that this was outside of their organisational focus. Some SDC respondents noted that it would be positive for the portfolio to include a wider diversity of humanitarian actors.

The evaluation notes that the larger part of the portfolio of institutional partners emerged from partnerships that existed prior to 2009 and that the portfolio has subsequently been expanded mostly by assimilating pre-existing NGO partnerships from other SDC domains or departments. While this reflects a strategic decision taken as part of the SDC reorganisation in 2009 to better coordinate such institutional partnerships, the composition of the portfolio bears little evidence of being the result of a series of strategic choices made since then to adapt to changing trends and priorities.

For example, the review of similar donor partnership schemes suggests that SDC has not been as responsive to assimilating some aspects of the aid effectiveness agenda in its approach to strategic partnerships with NGOs as have some other donors. Similar NGO

partnership schemes have been reviewed during the evaluation period and, in some cases, have been explicitly and radically revised to promote new forms of engagement with the challenges of development cooperation e.g. innovative partnerships (DFID), and alliances for policy change (MFA Netherlands). In most cases, other donors have more systematically implemented key aspects of the Aid Effectiveness agenda such as results-based approach and application on international standards in transparency e.g. IATI.

In relation to the management of the portfolio, the introduction of more systematic eligibility and negotiations manuals in 2011 could be interpreted as having been influenced by the recommendations of the 2009 OECD/DAC peer review and GPK-S audit, although this is not formally acknowledged.

NGOs themselves show evidence of being able to adapt to changing circumstances. The programme documents and annual reports of individual NGOs contain good context analysis and the flexibility of programme contributions allows NGOs to act according to changes in context or newly emerging needs. This is most clearly illustrated in fragile contexts. For example, the Swiss Red Cross (SRC) responded to projects taking place increasingly in fragile contexts by introducing conflict sensitive project management and corresponding adaptations in the programmes. The insights from the SRC/SDC learning process for Health in Fragile Contexts in 2015 is expected to inform the 2017-2020 programme document. This sets out the scope of SRC activities in fragile contexts and is an example of how a joint learning process may contribute to adjustments in programme approaches.

#### **4.4. Relevance to donor trends**

The evaluation was asked to identify any relevant experiences of other donor agencies with similar modalities and conducted a short review<sup>33</sup> of similar partnership schemes of five other donors. The key trends relevant to the SDC/NGO institutional partnerships are summarised below.

This evaluation is taking place at a time when several donors are or have recently conducted reviews of their support to civil society or, more specifically, their strategic partnership with NGOs. As a result, DFID and the MFA Netherlands have radically changed their approach, moving away from strategic funding of national NGOs to more thematic support to a wider range of organisations and consortia. However, other donors such as Danida, Sida and MFA Finland have chosen to continue with a more traditional approach to bilateral partnerships by supporting NGO programmes linked to their strategies although this has resulted in some changes to their portfolios.

There are a number of additional issues with regard to current donor practice which are relevant to SDC/GO institutional partnerships in light of the evaluation findings:

- *Open Calls*: All donors nominally use Open Calls for strategic partnerships. Only the DFID and MFA Netherlands Calls are or will be open to foreign NGOs. De facto the use of eligibility criteria can restrict potential applicants through an Open Call. In the cases of MFA Finland and Sida, for example, the call was open to NGOs that passed the eligibility criteria which were mainly previous NGO partners.
- *Size of portfolio*: All donors have a smaller portfolio of strategic partners than SDC – ranging from 14 (Danida) to 25 (MFA Netherlands).
- *Cap on contribution*: Most other donors require a lower level of ‘counterpart funding’ from their partners (10-25%) than SDC (50%).

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<sup>33</sup> See Annex 14 for a summary of key issues and Annex 15 for a matrix comparing key elements.

- *Policy frameworks:* All donors have or plan to have either a public policy framework, strategy or intervention logic in some form to set out the rationale and/or modus operandi of their partnerships with NGOs.
- *Results reporting:* Most donors are moving towards the use of results frameworks and outcome reporting albeit in the form of outcome mapping or stories of change. All donors recognise that summarised reporting and aggregated data is difficult.
- *Transparency:* Most donors require or are considering their strategic partners to comply with the financial standards of the International Aid Transparency Initiative (IATI). SDC is the only donor out of six reviewed not to be a member of IATI.
- *Management:* A number of donors acknowledge the need to improve the links between their strategic partners and their own policy specialists. MFA Netherlands has taken the most radical steps in transferring management (including financial management) of NGO partnerships to relevant thematic departments who will be responsible for monitoring results (although overall results reporting is the responsibility of the Civil Society Unit). DFID partnerships will continue to be managed by the Inclusive Societies Unit, but the selection of thematic areas will be based on the extent to which the policy leads have the resources to engage with the NGO partners.

References will be made to the experiences of these issues of other donor partnership schemes, when relevant, throughout the report.

## 5. Efficiency

The evaluation was asked to review the efficiency of the overall management of programme contributions during the evaluation period. Drawing upon the evaluation findings, this Chapter<sup>34</sup> will evaluate the efficiency of the following implementation processes, as derived from the evaluation questions<sup>35</sup>:

- Planning and steering;
- Assessment and selection;
- Monitoring and reporting;
- Resource allocation; and
- Reviewing and terminating partnerships.

### 5.1. Planning and steering

IPD performs a planning and steering role at two levels – corporately in relation to the portfolio, and individually with NGO partners.

IPD guidance at individual level is much valued by NGO partners. IPD maintains a regular dialogue with NGO partners, meeting two or three times a year. In 2013, an internal revision of IPD by the EDA noted, in relation to the institutional memory of NGO partnerships, that “*a large and important part of the cooperation is not carried out in writing, but takes place within the framework of discussions*” and that “*documentation is limited primarily to administrative formal aspects*”<sup>36</sup>.

In addition, IPD holds a formal ‘annual conference’, for most but not all NGO partners, over the course of a day or half a day. (Category D and most of Category E partners do not have annual conferences in the same way). The agenda for the day normally takes the form of a presentation/discussion on the NGO annual report; key current and prospective issues; and a discussion on the common learning theme. Colleagues from other domains are invited to participate in relevant sessions. The Humanitarian Aid (HA) Division conducts separate regular dialogues with humanitarian NGOs, mainly through an annual day or half-day exchange on humanitarian issues, which are documented by the recently created HA NGO focal point. Some NGOs commented that the key SDC staff relevant to their work were not always present at their Annual Conferences; and that, although IPD had a strong understanding of their work, this was not necessarily the case more broadly across SDC.

The discussions at annual conferences are summarised by IPD in a *prise de position* note to the NGO which acts as a form of ‘steer’ for the following year. A review of three *prise de positions* written after the 2016 Annual Conferences illustrates the kind of feedback offered to NGOs.

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<sup>34</sup> Annex 2 provides a more detailed account (written in consultation with IPD, of the management and administration of institutional partnerships during the evaluation period.

<sup>35</sup> Approach paper p 13.

<sup>36</sup> Eidgenössisches Departement für auswärtige Angelegenheiten EDA/Interne Revision (2013): Bericht über die Prüfung DEZA Abteilung Institutionelle Partnerschaften (intern).

### Examples of IPD feedback on NGO 2016 Annual Reports

- *Information on SDC Dispatch and trends* e.g. on anticipated budget increases 2017-2020 geographically and in thematic areas e.g. vocational education;
- *Information of SDC resources* e.g. “Global issues for development” fund for financing long-term studies;
- *Advice on SDC relations* e.g. on coordination with SCOs.
- *Organisational strategy and development* e.g. on an NGO growth strategy and implications for its programme contribution; confirming that NGO should invest in countries that are not a SDC priority; professional development of junior (Swiss) staff by their inclusion in tenders.
- *Security*: integration of NGOs into SDC coordination
- *Reporting* e.g. a lack of analysis on synergies between programme contributions and mandates; comments on reporting being too activity-based; the need for both NGOs and SDC to look into ways of measuring the impact of awareness raising.
- *Budgeting*: i.e. increases in project-based funding, clarification of budget lines

Section 6.2. will explore in more detail how NGOs report that IPD guidance has shaped their institutional development.

At an institutional level, IPD provides limited guidance on the purpose, procedures and expectations of institutional partnerships with NGOs. The key documents are the 2011 eligibility criteria and negotiations manuals (which are currently being revised and updated). The programme contracts that form the basis of the partnerships offer some general guidance to individual NGOs on the objectives of programme contributions, programme dialogue, annual narrative and financial reporting and conferences; risk management, evaluation and payments. SDC does not have a policy framework for its NGO institutional partnerships as a number of donors have<sup>37</sup>. The information on the SDC website on institutional partnerships<sup>38</sup> is limited to a list of institutional partners with links to their websites.

The evaluation NGO survey findings indicate that a significant number of NGOs consider their partnership with SDC would be more effective with improved guidance, for example, on financial and narrative reporting. This finding was reinforced in several interviews, particularly with smaller NGOs who began to receive programme contributions during the 2013-2017 period. This is discussed further in Section 5.3.

## 5.2. Admission, assessment and approval

The evaluation period covers two admissions processes to the institutional partnership scheme in association with the two Dispatch periods 2009-2012 and 2013-2016. The evaluation is not aware of a formal admissions/approval procedure for programme contributions for the 2009-2012 Dispatch period; how NGOs were selected to apply for a programme contribution; and what the eligibility criteria were. IPD managed the entry of new NGO institutional partners most, if not all, of whom had received prior project or programme contributions from SDC. IPD at the time reported<sup>39</sup> that NGOs were generally positive about the process and that, for several of the smaller NGOs, the new scheme marked the introduction of a more programmatic rather project-based approach to their work.

Following the recommendations of the GPK-S Parliamentary audit and OECD Peer Review in 2009, IPD introduced a more systematic, detailed admission and approval

<sup>37</sup> See the policy frameworks, for example, of Danida [http://um.dk/~media/UM/Danish-site/Documents/Danida/Information%20Note%2029-03-](http://um.dk/~media/UM/Danish-site/Documents/Danida/Information%20Note%202029-03-) and MFA Netherlands

<https://www.government.nl/documents/regulations/2014/05/13/policy-framework-dialogue-and-dissent>

<sup>38</sup> <https://www.eda.admin.ch/deza/en/home/partnerships-mandates/partnerships-ngos.html>

<sup>39</sup> Jahresprogramm Institutionelle Partnerschaften, 2009 and 2011.

process for its institutional partners for the 2013-2016 Dispatch period. In 2011, it introduced eligibility and negotiation manuals to provide a framework to ensure some level of consistency in the assessment process. The manuals defined eligibility criteria, each of which was described with indicators and suggested sources of evidence NGOs could provide<sup>40</sup>. NGOs then had to submit an application form explaining their organisation's competencies against these criteria<sup>41</sup>. The three-stage process consisting of preliminary applications, clarifications and negotiations was lengthy and recognised by the Admissions Commission (see below) as resource-intensive, taking approximately two years to complete.

NGOs were informed of the process through the SDC website in early 2011. A three-person Commission, involving two external assessors, managed the admissions/approval procedure through document review and an assessment of the questionnaires completed by the applicants. The Commission did not manage the admissions of all NGOs in the 2013-16 period. Sensitisation and Education NGOs were absorbed from the Communications and Global Institutions Divisions separately from this process although they were subject to a partner risk assessment by IPD.

The Commission subsequently produced a report for SDC Senior Management including detailed comments on the applications of each NGO<sup>42</sup>. Three NGOs failed to pass the admissions phase for the 2013/16 period and one did not successfully pass the negotiations phase. The Commission made a number of useful recommendations regarding the programme contribution scheme, a number of which are echoed by the evaluation elsewhere in this report.

*Some recommendations from the 2013-16 Admissions Commission*

SDC should:

- *Share information from NGOs more widely in SDC.*
- *'Disaggregate' its approach to allow for the diversity in the size of its partners e.g. cantonal federations;*
- *Further institutionalise feedback from SCOs on the quality of NGO institutional partner programmes;*
- *Consider other quality assurance and evaluation mechanisms rather than be reliant only on ZEWO;*
- *Investigate how SDC could benefit from the practices of other donors;*
- *Be more involved in monitoring programmes in the field;*
- *Complement the resource-intensive assessment process with a more light-touch approach.*

NGOs in the 2013-2016 portfolio submitted their programme proposals for the 2017-20 period in 2016 and, with one exception, passed directly to the negotiations stage without an admissions process. Two admissions processes took place for the 2017-20 period and were conducted by a re-constituted Admissions Committee. IPD is currently working on a new five-stage admissions procedure, although it is not known how this might be applied during the 2017-2020 cycle since current partners have already had their programme documents approved.

<sup>40</sup> Table: Zulassungskriterien\_Programmbeitrag\_DE (in German).

<sup>41</sup> Form: 17920\_Kriterien\_Vorselektion\_de (in German). Filled forms („Zulassung“) available in each NGO folder.

<sup>42</sup> Rapport de la Commission d'Admission, 3 août 2011

The evaluation found that most current NGO partners were satisfied with the admissions/approval process to date and considered it a transparent process with clear criteria<sup>43</sup>.

*“The SDC has consulted with NGOs on the implementation of programme contribution criteria and processes. These are known and available to all”.*

Source: NGO survey respondent, Category A

However, this positive picture is not universally shared. Some qualitative comments in the survey support the perception of a process conducted through bilateral discussions without a sufficiently clear framework. One survey respondent commented on a lack of clearly defined guidelines for the admission process, especially in the case of NGO associations/networks. Another highlighted that the process was not transparent; the criteria surrounding their application were unclear; and the process seemed lengthy and arbitrary<sup>44</sup>.

In summary, a formal, cyclical admissions/approval process for the portfolio at large appears to have taken place only for the 2013-2016 period. The two NGO admissions for 2017-2020 cycle have been conducted bilaterally, albeit through an Admissions Commission. There has not been a public invitation to an open process and a portfolio-wide review of admissions/approvals as in the previous cycle, although a new admissions process and criteria are currently being drafted.

While bilateral negotiations may seem fair and transparent to individual NGOs, the evaluation considers that it has some disadvantages at portfolio level. In the absence of a coordinated, transparent approach to admissions in line with budgetary cycles, it is not clear how budgetary decisions are made strategically across the portfolio to allow for new entrants; and how applicants are able to apply for admission as institutional partners.

### 5.3. Monitoring and reporting

SDC/NGO programme contracts offers limited guidance in relation to narrative reporting, requiring *“a summary critical, qualitative and quantitative analysis of the progress made in the implementation of the program last year, the results achieved – programmatically and institutionally – as well as the effects. The report shows the changes in the environment and experiences, strengths, weaknesses, potentials, obstacles as well as stress areas in the implementation of the program, draws the most important lessons and points to corresponding implications in further program development”*<sup>45</sup>. NGOs are relatively free to devise their own reporting formats so that they are useful for their own monitoring and reporting purposes.

As a result, the evaluation found NGO reports to vary considerably in quality and formats (see Section 6.1). For example, some NGOs present the organisation’s programme strategy as their programme document and present an annual narrative report to that document, even though programme contributions may support a minority of the activities and achievements described. This makes it difficult to assess the contribution of programme contributions to the results described although NGOs point out that it may not be reasonable to expect separate reporting in such circumstances.

<sup>43</sup> 87% of survey respondents agreed or strongly agreed with the statement that “SDC’s selection process of organisations it funds is fair and transparent”.

<sup>44</sup> NGO evaluation survey.

<sup>45</sup> 2017-2018 contract template

In October 2016, SDC introduced Guidelines on the use of Aggregated Reference Indicators (ARI) in monitoring and reporting to the 2017-2020 Dispatch. These are described as mandatory throughout the Dispatch period. As such it is understood they apply to IPD institutional partners. The Guidelines recognise the “*growing importance of reporting comprehensively and convincingly on aggregated corporate results achieved through Swiss support, to sustain parliament and broad public support for international cooperation*”<sup>46</sup>. The primary purpose of the indicators is to enable SDC to communicate aggregated achievements at institutional level and indicators are at activity/output level to communicate the ‘reach’ of SDC-supported activities.

The evaluation found a mixed picture with regard to NGO perceptions of SDC reporting requirements. The vast majority<sup>47</sup> of survey respondents expressed a high level of satisfaction with current reporting arrangements. However, 23% of respondents identified that more guidance on reporting would contribute to making the partnership more effective – for example, by suggesting thematic indicators which NGOs might choose to or not to include in their results framework and enable SDC to attempt some summarisation across the portfolio. Similarly, several NGO interviewees (particularly but not exclusively, smaller NGOs or new entrants to the scheme) reported that they would have appreciated more guidance from IPD on reporting standards instead of time consuming bilateral discussions that did not always succeed in clarifying expectations.

*“Especially for small organizations, too rigid specifications (such as reporting) are of little use or difficult to use, especially when defined for large organizations.”*

Source: NGO survey respondent, Category E

IPD reports internally in two ways on its institutional partnerships. At the level of individual NGOs, it produces an annual credit proposal, produced by each NGO to a standard template that summarises each NGO’s programme and achievements during the year alongside an application for approval of the next year’s programme contribution. The evaluation reviewed 15 credit proposals and found that they varied considerably in quality, a reflection of the NGO annual reports from which they were derived. Most proposals included basic data on the number of beneficiaries / people reached but there were few examples of outcomes.

IPD Annual Reports typically outline the developments and achievements of the reporting year; provide an outlook on aims and challenges for the following year for IPD and its institutional partnerships; and outline cooperation with other relevant Swiss departments and authorities. Annexes provide an overview of financial planning; a list of portfolio partners and their thematic and regional focus; common learning processes with NGOs; planned annual conferences; and the minutes of discussion of the previous annual report with the directorate. While outlining strategic developments within IPD and its partnerships, the reports do not contain a systematic analysis of the achievements of the portfolio in relation to Swiss development goals or IPD partnership goals. The 2016 IPD Annual Report includes a rationale for institutional partnerships as a development cooperation ‘paradigm’.

<sup>46</sup> SDC Guidelines on the use of Aggregated Reference Indicators for Reporting and Monitoring the Dispatch 2017-2020, p.1. Oct. 2016.

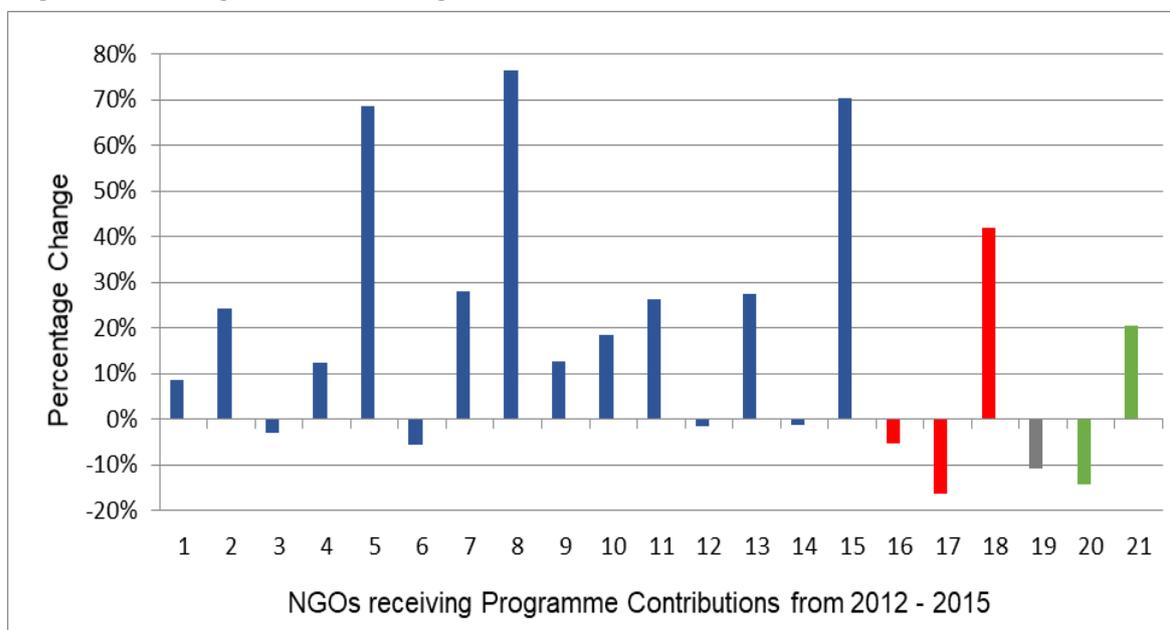
<sup>47</sup> 94% of survey respondents strongly agreed or agreed that IPD’s reporting processes allow them to demonstrate the impact of their work and 80% strongly agreed or agreed that IPD monitoring and reporting requirements are clear and useful.

IPD produced an internal report<sup>48</sup> at portfolio level in 2015 in relation to the relevance and contribution of the SDC NGOs to the partnership goals i.e. the four strategic objectives of the 2013-2016 Dispatch relating specifically to partnership with Swiss NGOs. The report makes general results statements such as “*In many countries due to Swiss NGOs, the access of the population to quality basic services .... has been improved for a large number of beneficiaries*” and “*A large number of people have been given access to water ..... through the work of Swiss NGOs*”. Some specific project examples were given and NGO results were collated by individual NGO examples by theme in an annex. However, the report was unable to provide further evidence to support the results reported and the challenges in undertaking this exercise were noted in interview. The exercise has not been repeated in recognition of the difficulty of summarising results across a very diverse portfolio.

#### 5.4. Resource allocation

NGOs are normally awarded programme contributions for a four-year period subject to review after two years (although there have been some exceptions to this). During the evaluation period, there have been very significant changes in the level of programme contributions for individual NGOs within the portfolio (see Figure 6). From 2012-2015 these ranged from a 35% cut to a 292% increase in programme contribution. Three of the 22 NGOs in the 2009-2012 portfolio have had their contributions reduced since 2012. Four of the larger NGOs have seen their contributions more than double during this period. A key factor in these large increases was the increase in the budget allocated for institutional partnerships for the 2103-16 period. IPD reports<sup>49</sup> that a significant proportion of these funds was allocated to ‘level up’ the contribution to larger NGOs to the maximum of CHF10 million since they had demonstrated the organisational capacity to absorb such an increase effectively.

**Figure 7: Changes in NGO Programme Contribution from 2012 to 2015<sup>50</sup>**



In some cases, annual contributions have exceeded the 50% cap. In 2015, three organisations received more than two-thirds of their budget from programme

<sup>48</sup> Monitoring stratégique des ONG au bénéfice d'une contribution programme 2014

<sup>49</sup> IPD correspondence with evaluation team

<sup>50</sup> This chart refers to the 21 NGOs that received programme contributions in both Dispatch periods.

contributions. In two cases, the cap was raised for the period 2013-2016 as a temporary measure as they had integrated organisations that had been in receipt of project contributions until 2012. In the third case, the institutional partner is an umbrella organisation and service provider that receives three different types of funding – programme, service agreement, and project – which is accounted for as a programme contribution. Most of the programme contribution is redistributed to four organisations. IPD reports that this arrangement will not be renewed after 2018.

In two instances programme contributions to individual organisations have been reduced during the evaluation period when the NGO has failed to meet the forecast income. In these circumstances, IPD can adjust the level of contribution or ask for funds to be reimbursed. In both cases the NGOs reported that the adjustments to the programme contribution to maintain the 50% cap was discussed and agreed with IPD.

IPD does not employ a formal mechanism to reallocate resources<sup>51</sup>. It stresses that it does not feel that the allocation of resources to NGOs should be based on an “arithmetic logic” but rather should be determined by the characteristics of the programme document and the overall financing structure of the NGO, and this was understood and appreciated by NGOs in the 2013-2017 negotiations<sup>52</sup>. IPD also confirms that the process of determining programme contributions through negotiations and within the prescribed percentage limits was described in the response of the Federal Council to the GPK-S audit in 2009 and endorsed by the GPK-S<sup>53</sup>.

The evaluation considers the current system of resource allocation to and among institutional partners to have some limitations. First, the current negotiations manual does not provide a sufficient framework upon which to determine the level of a programme contribution. A positive feature of the new draft admissions process is that it requires the admissions panel to assess whether NGOs have, for example, impact hypotheses and indicators to show change at beneficiary level, although the current negotiations manual makes no specific reference to resource allocation nor to performance-related criteria. It is not clear, therefore, if or how NGO performance to programme objectives might influence the level of contribution. In this regard, it is worth noting that IPD does not have a formalised mid-term or final evaluation process to review the efficacy of institutional partnerships. (Although IPD reported<sup>54</sup> carrying out a mid-term review prior to the 2011/2012 credit approval that resulted in the future support to three NGOs being dependent on their institutional and programme development). Furthermore, in the absence of a cyclical, portfolio-wide process of admissions and negotiations it is not clear how decisions might be taken to reallocate resources across the portfolio – for example, to admit new entrants or to reallocate resources between NGO categories – as the budget will be fully allocated.

## 5.5. Reviewing and terminating partnerships

The evaluation found no example during the evaluation period of an institutional partnership being terminated. All NGOs that have been successful in gaining admission to the scheme to date have remained in the scheme. Some NGOs reported in interviews that informally they had been led to believe that the expectation was that an institutional partnership would be long term e.g. the duration of three Dispatches. In the case of Category B NGOs, some NGOs have merged but remained within the portfolio.

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<sup>51</sup> Some other bilaterals have done, for example Danida developed a Resource Allocation Model (RAM) [um.dk/da/~media/UM/Danish-site/.../Danida/.../Civil.../Bilag%202%20RAM.pdf](http://um.dk/da/~media/UM/Danish-site/.../Danida/.../Civil.../Bilag%202%20RAM.pdf)

<sup>52</sup> IPD Jahresprogramm 2012 Institutionelle Partnerschaften

Note to the directorate on the negotiations, meeting 25 June 2012.

<sup>53</sup> IPD comments to early draft of Annex 2

<sup>54</sup> Jahresprogramm 2011 Institutionelle Partnerschaften, p.9

## 6. Effectiveness

The Chapter will review “to what extent and how the goals and objectives of the partnership between SDC and NGOs have been reached<sup>55</sup>” focusing on how programme contributions have contributed to Swiss development and humanitarian goals; partnership goals, and to NGO institutional development.

### 6.1. Contribution to Swiss development and humanitarian goals.

This Section outlines the challenges the evaluation has encountered in assessing the contribution of SDC/NGO partnerships to Swiss development goals; illustrates how NGO programmes currently align to and contribute to SDC strategic goals; reviews how the quality of NGO results frameworks and results reporting undermines the evidence base for these achievements; and analyses these issues in more depth in relation to the strategic goals of basic services and gender.

It is important to acknowledge at the outset that there are a number of challenges in evaluating the extent to which the goals of the partnership between SDC and NGOs have been reached. These are:

- *The status of Swiss development goals.* Swiss development and humanitarian goals are not well publicised and, in the case of the partnerships goals, are not clearly stated as such. The evaluation team synthesised a set of ‘common’ Swiss development and partnership goals across the two Dispatch periods and the current 2017-2020 Dispatch.<sup>56</sup>
- *Reporting to the goals.* NGOs have not been required in either Dispatch period to report explicitly against these goals, nor has guidance been provided to NGOs as to how to do this. (It should be noted that neither Swiss country programmes nor SDC thematic programmes are required to report against the goals.) Many NGOs report to their organisational strategy and it is often not possible to clearly differentiate what achievements have been supported directly by programme contributions as opposed to other kinds of sources of funding.
- *Results frameworks.* The use of results frameworks in NGOs is inconsistent and, where present, varies in quality. Results are reported at different levels, often without sufficient supporting evidence, making it difficult to summarise the results across the portfolio with any degree of rigour.

Nonetheless, the evaluation drew upon the evidence from the document review, the evaluation survey and NGO interviews to illustrate the contribution NGOs have made to each of the Swiss development goals. This identified numerous examples of the NGO programmes working towards Swiss development goals<sup>57</sup>. These are briefly summarised below but do not pretend to be a representative sample of NGO programmes.

#### - *Global Frameworks*

The evaluation identified a number of examples of NGOs working to strengthen global frameworks such as Agenda 2030. For example, AKTE and Bread for All have worked on a position paper for Switzerland for tourism and the SDGs, and the Swiss Red Cross contributed to a platform working to integrate disaster and risk reduction into the SDGs. In the humanitarian sector, MSF Switzerland contributed to debates at the World

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<sup>55</sup> Approach Paper p.11.

<sup>56</sup> See Annex 7

<sup>57</sup> All examples are drawn from NGO Annual Reports 2015.

Humanitarian Summit in 2016 on epidemic response, WHO reform, and humanitarian engagement in the Middle East.

- *Basic Services*

Swiss NGOs work mostly on the provision and improvement of health, education, and water and sanitation in basic services. For example, MSF Switzerland reported in 2015 that it had provided 29,236 primary health care consultations in South Sudan (including mobile clinics) and Terre des Hommes Foundation supported 120 community clinics in Bangladesh to develop and deliver an integrated health, nutrition, WASH and livelihoods approach. Also in Bangladesh, Enfants du Monde used a training of trainers approach to train 310 teachers and provide follow up support. Swiss NGOs have also been able to influence the enabling environment. In Honduras, Helvetas supported the Ministry of Education to sign a tripartite agreement together the Red ICT, its main implementing partner in its vocational educational programme. This has resulted in the government allocating a permanent budget for the educational centres where youth can benefit from educational programmes.

- *Governance and Human Rights*

Helvetas and its partners in 2015 trained more than 2,130 local government institutions in participatory planning and the delivery of responsive, accountable and inclusive services. 2,910 local development plans have been developed. In Kosovo the DEMOS programme facilitated the partnering of municipalities for joint planning. More than 52,260 people - around 11% belonging to disadvantaged groups - attended courses or events on governance, decentralisation or local administration. For example, in Kyrgyzstan, Water Use Association members and local governments were trained on governance self-assessments, governance improvement planning and public reviews on plan implementation.

- *Strengthening resilience in fragile contexts*

22 of the 35 institutional partners reported working to strengthen resilience in fragile contexts. In Bangladesh, Caritas supported the implementation of the Government's "National Disaster Management Act" to reduce vulnerability through working with local populations on plans at village level for preventive and preparatory measures with regard to future disasters. The project trained volunteer groups to provide first aid or care for the injured and the neediest in the event of a disaster. 90 help teams were trained, 48 community plans developed and 5,439 households covered by Disaster Risk Reduction plans. The Swiss Red Cross reported that the DRR interventions of their partner organisations reached approximately 550,000 people across the world working through local committees to DRR education and to raise awareness of DRR issues.

- *Gender*

Despite the high number of Swiss NGOs reporting working on this theme, there was limited reporting on gender-related outcomes. One example was Medecins de Monde's work in Benin using an emergency telephone line to combat gender-based violence and promote the sexual and reproductive health of girls under the age of 21 in the country's major cities. Medecins de Monde reports the people of Cotonou acquiring skills in preventing and dealing with gender-based violence through the increased use of an emergency telephone line; reducing the barriers to access to social, psychological and health care for adolescent mothers who have been victims of violence; and increased sexual and reproductive health knowledge among girls in care. Imaneh also focuses on sexual health and violence and has worked with its partner organisation on a programme concerning female genital circumcision in the Segou region of Mali. Imaneh reports that, as a result, 32 out of 55 project sites have put measures in place to sanction any violation

against the public agreement to end female circumcision. Imaneh has started to broaden its approach to include men and boys as target groups.

- *Economic development*

There were a number of examples of Swiss NGOs working to improve local livelihood systems. Fastenopfer reported significant increases in the number of women and men applying agrarian ecology and climate-adapted farming practices in its country programmes in Guatemala, Colombia, India and South Africa. Interteam reported improving local livelihoods of 130 families in Colombia by strengthening social organisations in productive initiatives such as vegetables, fruit, fish farming, livestock, cultural initiatives and local crafts.

- *Transition to democratic systems and social market economies*

The evaluation found limited evidence of results towards this goal since only a small number of NGOs work on these goals, social market economies in particular. One organisation was Solidar Suisse's work with local partners on new collective bargaining agreements in the construction sector and public utilities in Serbia. This has led to better working conditions and legal security for 100,000 workers. Moreover, Solidar Suisse's South African partner, the Casual Workers Advice Office, supported 220 collective labour disputes of 7,700 vulnerable workers which resulted in 3,900 workers being able to obtain permanent positions resulting in up to 40% higher wages and improved health and insurance benefits.<sup>58</sup>

- *Strengthened humanitarian system and delivering humanitarian aid*

In terms of achievements in strengthening the humanitarian system, a good example is that of MSF engaging with ICRC, WFP, UNHCR and the Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue for a strategic partnership that will lead to the creation of a Competence Center for Humanitarian Negotiation to develop capacity for effective humanitarian negotiation and foster a community of practice among humanitarian professionals engaged in frontline negotiations. In terms of results on the delivery of humanitarian aid, The Swiss Red Cross, for example, reported implementing 31 emergency aid projects in 20 countries serving more than 3,100,000 people affected by natural disasters and violent conflict, 45,500 of whom were refugees or internally displaced. This include work on epidemic preparedness for Ebola and Cholera in West Africa, and the deployment of 56 humanitarian experts on emergency response missions, including the deployment of the Logistics Emergency Response Unit in response to the Nepal earthquake, in collaboration with the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC).

The above examples serve to illustrate some of the ways in which Swiss NGOs are working in support of Swiss development and humanitarian goals although the strength of evidence in support of the reported results varies considerably and the extent to which programme contributions have directly contributed to the results reported is unknown. The evaluation team examined the 2013-2016 Programme Documents and the 2015 Annual Reports of 13 NGOs that formed the basis of the document review to look in more detail at the way in which results were formulated and reported<sup>59</sup>.

This highlighted a high level of inconsistency in the use of results frameworks and the quality of results reporting. Only three NGOs had an explicit results framework with clearly formulated objectives, expected outcomes, indicators, and targets in their 2013-2016 programme documents. One NGO provided a logic model linking activities and intended outcomes and associated indicators. Another neither provided a results framework nor made any reference to the reporting of results in the programme document. The

<sup>58</sup> Taken from data provided by Solidar Suisse to evaluators, May 2017.

<sup>59</sup> See Annex 18 for a summary of key points.

remaining eight NGOs all formulated strategic goals and expected outcomes in narrative or tabular form in their programme documents, generally at country or thematic level. The evaluation noted no significant difference in the quality of reporting between larger and smaller NGOs.

Of the three NGOs with explicit results frameworks, only two reported explicitly against these in their 2015 annual reports. Most partners reported at output level and reported to outcomes in narrative form through examples and case studies. The results chain was frequently unclear in terms of the connection between the activities and associated outcomes, and there were few examples of NGOs providing an evidence base for the results reported. In the case of the Federation reviewed, Association Members' results were mainly reported at activity and output level, and there was little evidence of results being summarised or case studies provided to demonstrate the overall impact of their activities.

The quality of Annual Reports was also highlighted to be a weakness in the 2013 EDA internal revision which assessed six Category A NGOs and concluded that *"in analysing the annual reports of some NGOs, the IR EDA has identified large differences in reporting. There are NGOs, for example, who report in their annual report only on the level of output and only carry out a few sentences on the effect (outcome) of their program in the supplement. However, these effectiveness statements are only of a general nature and are not subject to measurable indicators as well as to target / target comparisons"*<sup>60</sup>.

These findings were derived from examination of documents within the evaluation period 2009-2016. It should be noted that some advances towards a more results-based approach have been made in the most recent programme documents. An increased number<sup>61</sup> of organisations have included programmatic result frameworks or logframes in their 2017-2020 Programme Documents. The Fédération Genevoise de Cooperation (FGC) 2017-2020 Programme Document also sets out an intention to adapt its project database to provide aggregate data on the results obtained by the projects. It should be anticipated that the inclusion of results frameworks in programme documents will improve the overall quality of reporting although this cannot be confirmed until the first reports against these frameworks are received.

Assessing the contribution of NGO partners to Swiss development goals proved to be a challenge due to this variation in quality and content of reporting<sup>62</sup>. Consequently, the evaluation looked in more detail at NGO reporting on two specific themes to examine whether it was possible to assess the extent to which SDC/NGO partnerships have contributed to Swiss development goals. The themes chosen were Basic Services and Gender as these were the development goals that the highest number of NGOs stated they contributed to in the evaluation survey<sup>63</sup>.

The table shows the number of NGOs, from the sample of 13 in the systematic document review, working in different sub-themes of health, education and gender, and nature and level of results they reported on.

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<sup>60</sup> Eidgenössisches Departement für auswärtige Angelegenheiten EDA/Interne Revision (2013): Bericht über die Prüfung DEZA Abteilung Institutionelle Partnerschaften (intern).

<sup>61</sup> 9/13 of those included in the systemic document review

<sup>62</sup> Annex 16 contains some short illustrations of NGO projects/programmes aligned to Swiss development goals.

<sup>63</sup> 86% (basic services) and 83% (gender) of respondents said their organisation contributed to these goals 'very significantly or significantly'.

**Table 1: NGO reporting on health, education and gender in 2015 Annual Reports**

Focus	Number of NGOs	Number of NGOs reporting in these ways				
		Activities	Out-puts	Out-comes	Quantitative	Qualitative
Improved access to health services	6	6	6	6	5	5
Improved quality of health services	7	7	7	6	6	7
Access to basic education	5	5	5	4	3	4
Access to vocational education	4	4	4	2	4	4
Education quality	4	4	4	1	1	1
Building gender capacity	6	6	4	0	1	4
Gender mainstreaming in interventions	7	7	6	0	4	4
Gender specific programmes	7	7	7	2	4	3
Gender disaggregated data	5	5	4	0	5	0

The table illustrates that NGOs working in basic services tended to report at both output and outcome level, although the extent to which this was accompanied by outcome analysis was variable. NGOs reported on gender-related work in different ways. In some reports there was a section on gender as a cross-cutting theme including both programmatic and institutional results; in others there were only passing references, for example, to one-off gender-related events. NGOs reported more frequently at output level in gender programmes; few reported results at outcome level with quantitative or qualitative data to substantiate the results reported.

*Improved access to health services: a good practice example*

Solidarmed provides a good practice example of results-oriented reporting. Solidarmed country programmes tend to formulate specific outcomes; a set of key indicators; means of verification, baseline, target and result achieved. The data collected is relevant to the country context and are not necessarily standard for all country reports. For example, the Mozambique country programme outcome 1 aims to improve “physical access to adequate health services in emergency situations” in three districts setting out “annual numbers of out-patient consultations per district” as an indicator verifying progress against 2013/2014 baselines. The 2015 country report indicates considerable progress, namely in the Ancuabe district an increase of 80.5%; in the Chiure district an increase of 26.2% and in the Namuno district an increase of 22.5%. This is accompanied by a narrative description of the outcome and relevant results.

A selection of short examples of reporting to these different sub-themes can be found in Annex 17. These illustrate the diversity in quality in the way results are reported and the need for a more results-based approach to reporting the effectiveness of programme contributions. While one report provides a positive example of outcome level reporting, a number of other reports fail to set out the elements of a results framework. Outcomes are reported in narrative form and rarely accompanied by an evidence base to support the result or the NGO contribution to it. In the health and education sectors it should be more viable to establish the building blocks of a results framework – for example, establish a baseline; identify appropriate (sometimes standard) indicators and means of verification; and to gather quantitative data to measure progress. This allows for the possibility of aggregation and to demonstrate the ‘reach’ or number of direct or indirect beneficiaries.

Reporting on gender-related programmes was most frequently at output level e.g. the development of a gender policy or action plan, although there were examples of relevant outcomes such as the increased number of women in leadership roles, or changes in knowledge and behaviour in sexual and reproductive health. Reporting of outcomes in thematic areas such as gender may take time to deliver (which is an argument for the

longer-term support that programme contributions provide). Nonetheless, it is important to incorporate into the project design how these changes will be monitored and measured.

## 6.2. Contribution to institutional strengthening of Swiss NGOs.

This section will examine to what extent, and how, SDC/NGO institutional partnerships have fostered the institutional development of NGOs, and the financial importance of programme contributions to Swiss NGOs.

All NGOs reported in interview that their institutional partnership with SDC had strengthened their institutional development. This has been the result of two factors:

- *Institutional dialogue with IPD* i.e. the quality of guidance received from IPD.
- *Programme contributions* i.e. the flexible, long-term nature of programme contribution funding.

### 6.2.1. Institutional dialogue

Many NGOs report (see Section 4.1) that the quality of dialogue they have had with IPD during the evaluation period has contributed to some significant changes in their organisational and programmatic development<sup>64</sup>. NGOs most frequently referred to IPD encouraging and supporting a shift from a project to a more programmatic approach, particularly during the period 2009-2012. Although this was a challenge to many NGOs and partners, NGOs viewed this change as positive and as contributing to enabling them to achieve greater impact through larger, more coherent programmes.

Another area cited by several NGOs as a positive example of IPD support for their institutional development has been improved M&E and recently the encouragement to move from activity reporting to reporting to outcomes. Section 6.1. demonstrates that progress in this area has been inconsistent to date, although the increased number of results frameworks in 2017-2020 programme documents is encouraging. This is an important area where IPD could actively monitor progress across the portfolio.

*“The largest learning process is in the area of planning and reporting. The project inputs and annual activity reports help us to systematise, justify and evaluate our work.”*

Source: NGO survey respondent, Category E

A number of NGOs also commented on IPD offering guidance and advice on issues of organisation strategy. IPD takes an interest in the organisational development of institutional partners and this element features in bilateral discussions between IPD and partner NGOs. One NGO reported, for example, that IPD was influential in encouraging a merger initiative though IPD insists that partner NGOs are responsible for their decisions on such matters<sup>65</sup>.

*“The Programme Contribution requirements have strongly contributed to systematise monitoring, reporting and the strategy development. This has also motivated stronger engagement in downward accountability (social/public audits) in our programmes. The four-year Programme has become the basis for the organisational Strategy. The Programme Contribution constitutes a very significant source of funding and provides effective leverage to trigger private donations”.*

Source: NGO survey respondent, Category A

<sup>64</sup> See Section 6 for a summary of some of the ‘steers’ provided by IPD in the prise de position following an annual conference with a NGO.

<sup>65</sup> IPD comment on draft evaluation report

## 6.2.2. Programme contributions

There are a number of ways in which NGOs reported that the flexibility of programme contributions has enabled NGOs to invest in their institutional development. It has enabled some NGOs to strengthen their thematic competencies by creating specialist units, groups or focal points - for example, AKTE introduced an educational unit in 2012 with the support of its programme contribution; and both Caritas (2012) and Swiss Red Cross (2015) established specialist units/expert groups. A number of NGOs e.g. SolidarMed, Fastenopfer, and Swiss Red Cross, referred to establishing specific mechanisms to strengthen knowledge management and transfer.

Many NGOs, including Fastenopfer and SwissContact, referred to investing in improved M&E or management information systems. This was sometimes a shared learning process. Brot für Alle and Fastenopfer are working towards harmonising their monitoring frameworks. Terre des Hommes Basel selected M&E as a common learning process and received backstopping from the IFZC, University of Bern. Brot für Alle drew expertise from the learning events of the Swiss Evaluation Society (SEVAL). The possibility of using shared indicators to summarise results for SDC was mentioned in interview by some NGOs and has been discussed at the NGO platform. A number of NGOs are also testing different M&E methodological approaches such as contribution analysis (HEKS) and the application of a theory of change approach (Solidar Suisse).

NGO umbrella organisations use programme contributions to strengthen the institutional development of their members. Cantonal Federations, for example, quality check project proposals submitted by members. Technical Commissions, composed of voluntary experts, advise the Steering Committee of each Federation on which projects should be funded; provide feedback on the documents to applicants; and monitor the projects once they are underway. The Fédération Genevoise de Cooperation, for example, in 2014/2015<sup>66</sup> provided capacity development support to members on resource mobilisation, project co-financing; media engagement and web-editing. It also trained staff of the Geneva public authorities to raise the awareness of new municipal committees of the importance of development cooperation.

The SDC/NGO institutional partnership also aims to strengthen the contribution of NGO competencies to development cooperation. Swiss NGOs have been able to use programme contributions to strengthen competencies that are seen to reflect the Swiss context – for example, dual or vocational education and bilingual education, although they are not restricted to these. An interesting recent example is described below.

### ***Restorative Juvenile Justice: A distinctive Swiss competence***

*Terre des Hommes works in several countries on Restorative Juvenile Justice, seeking alternatives to child detention, managing rehabilitation centres for children in conflict with the law, providing legal support, facilitating professional exchanges, training professionals, and supporting national governments in reforming laws in accordance with international child rights standards.*

*In January 2015, the Swiss Government and Terre des hommes organized a World Congress on Juvenile Justice. The conference gathered more than 900 governmental and civil society delegates from over 90 countries to work together to improve responses to children in conflict with the law. The Congress was concluded with the adoption of a Final Declaration promoting the principles of a child-friendly and restorative justice. Following the Congress, Terre des hommes Foundation (Lausanne) and the Centre for Children's Rights Studies, University of Geneva + the Children's Rights Centre, Sion launched a new e certificate of advanced studies (CAS) on juvenile justice at the university level in several languages.*

Source: Evaluation interview and survey

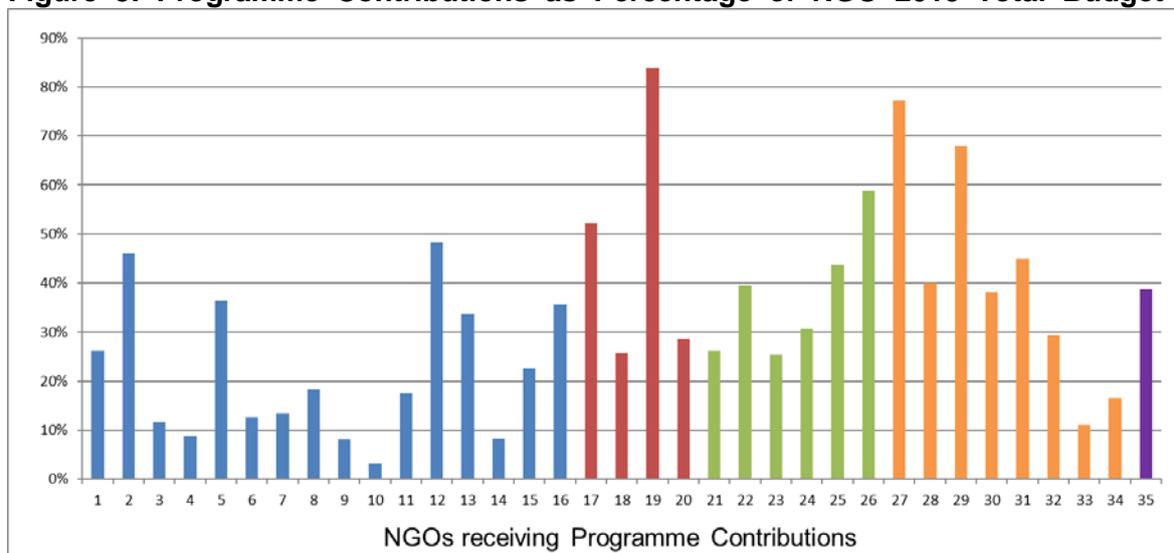
<sup>66</sup> Fédération Genevoise de Cooperation Annual Report 2015

These competencies are sometimes reinforced by SDC mandates. Helvetas, for example, reports on the successful application of result-oriented payments in vocational education and training in a programme supported by DFID, SDC and World Bank in Nepal. The evaluation also found multiple references to the reputation of Swiss neutrality as a “distinctive value” of Swiss NGOs. This is particularly relevant to humanitarian organisation like MSF Switzerland who receive limited funds from bilateral donors in order to protect this neutrality.

Institutional development should contribute to both organisational and financial sustainability. A number of NGOs (particularly the larger NGOs) have made progress in diversifying their income streams during the evaluation period. However, as a result mainly of the 2013 budget increases, programme contributions increased significantly from 2012 to 2015 as a percentage of the total combined budgets of partner NGOs - from approximately 11% of the combined total budgets to approximately 32% in 2015. However, this should be put in the context that SDC ODA increased by 39% from 2012 to 2015, while programme contributions as a percentage of SDC ODA increased only from 5.2% to 5.7% during the same period<sup>67</sup>.

At the level of individual NGOs, the percentage contribution of programme contributions to total budget for all NGOs in the 2012 portfolio had increased by 2015 with the exception of two NGOs. For example, 29.6% of the 2012 portfolio received 30% or more of their total operational budget in programme contributions in contrast to 48.6% in 2015. In five cases, programme contributions in 2015 exceeded the 50% cap in the same year and in one case they represented 83% of the total budget.

**Figure 8: Programme Contributions as Percentage of NGO 2015 Total Budget<sup>68</sup>**



However, the *average* level of dependency of individual NGO partners on programme contributions has remained relatively stable at just over 30% during the evaluation period. The relative stability of this average, despite a marked percentage increase in total programme contributions, can be explained by the majority of additional funds being allocated to larger Category A NGOs to ‘level up’ their funding. In other words, the percentage contribution of programme contributions to the total NGO portfolio budget significantly increased from 2012 -2015 while the average contribution to individual NGOs has remained stable.

<sup>67</sup> From data supplied by SDC, 9/8/17

<sup>68</sup> Colours in bar chart represent the different NGO Categories

### 6.3. Contribution to SDC partnership goals.

This section will review the contribution NGOs have made to the partnership goals identified in the Inception Report i.e. learning, distinctive competence, collaboration and raising public awareness in Switzerland, and what factors have contributed to or impeded these.

#### 6.3.1. Learning

The evaluation was asked to review how SDC/NGO partnerships generate and use learning and what processes are in place in order to assure joint learning. SDC/NGO institutional partnerships support learning process in three ways – between SDC and NGOs; more broadly in the sector in Switzerland; and through international platforms.

*“Capitalisation and sharing of experiences is an important part of our strategic agenda. We promote, organize and support these areas within our member NGOs and members of other federations. This is done in close partnership with SDC, the Learning and Networking team in particular, but also other institutional players such as the Universities....”*

*Source: NGO survey respondent, Category D*

Key to the SDC/NGO partnership relationship is the ‘common learning process’ that most NGOs agree with SDC for the programme contribution period<sup>69</sup>. The focus of these learning journeys is diverse. For the period 2013-2016 the themes identified by Category A, B and C NGOs included, for example, gender-based violence; monitoring peace-building; modernising the ‘volunteering’ approach; measuring the behaviour change as a result of awareness raising in Switzerland; child participation in migration processes; religion and development; access to land; and health in fragile contexts. Category E NGOs’ learning priorities tended to be more operational in nature e.g. improved reporting and improved financial management of projects. Cantonal Federations do not have a formal common learning process with IPD but focus their learning around the institutional development of the federations, and the needs of member associations.

#### **A Joint Learning Journey: Religion and development**

*“Our organization arranged two joint learning processes for each of the core topics of our organization in the area of "Religion and Development", - a field that has been given special attention by SDC - we made our knowledge from a large-scale thematic evaluation available, which was discussed with various stakeholders of other civil society organizations, thus providing a broad range of experience to the Swiss development cooperation landscape. These findings were used internationally by the SDC (in particular the German GIZ showed great interest in the subject) and led to a (renewed) awareness among civil society actors for the challenges of local religious contexts for development projects.”*

*Source: Evaluation NGO survey*

Most NGOs interviewed found the common learning process with IPD to have been positive. However, the responses from both the survey and interviews suggested that IPD could do more to facilitate broader learning with other SDC stakeholders or between the NGOs themselves. For example, several NGOs found the utility of annual conferences limited as a platform for shared learning since participation from relevant SDC stakeholders is inconsistent. The lengthy reports contain valuable learning but are not widely distributed. The absence of guidance on how to incorporate learning into reporting makes it more difficult to extract and share relevant learning. One suggestion was that annual conferences could be partly open to other partners. Another was that NGOs share their learning reports with other learning processes e.g. thematic events.

<sup>69</sup> These are compiled in an Annex in Jahresprogrammen der Institutionelle Partnerschaften.

### **A Joint Learning Journey: Health in Fragile Contexts**

*The Swiss Red Cross (SRC) identified with SDC a joint learning process for the 2013 to 2016 programme period on health care in fragile contexts and how Switzerland can contribute to peace building since SRC is increasingly operating in contexts of political fragility and/or ecological risk.*

*Two case studies in Haiti and South Sudan were carried out in 2015 to explore the effects of fragility on SRC's health programmes and SRC's strategy to engage in fragile contexts. From these two studies SRC concluded that it needs to adopt a conflict-sensitive approach to implementing its programmes although peace-building and conflict mediation have not been core areas their programmes. As a result, SRC has pressed ahead with the application of the conflict sensitive programme management (CSPM) approach and the development of appropriate tools and instruments. Particularly fragile context sound coordination in the field is viewed as essential by SRC to achieve systemic change at sectoral level. Here, the SDC policy dialogue approach is viewed as complementary enabling access to relevant governmental stakeholders.*

*The learning process led to knowledge-sharing with a broader range of actors through a conference jointly organized by SRC, SDC and Medicus Mundi Switzerland in 2016 on health in fragile contexts. The conference triggered further exchange between key actors including MSF and the IFRC to which SRC now seconds experts on basic health services in fragile contexts. It has also facilitated a closer exchange with the SDC health network and with the Humanitarian Department.*

Source: SRC website

Several NGOs suggested that IPD could be more proactive in facilitating learning by identifying and promoting synergies between NGO partners and SDC, including thematic networks and SCOs. A positive example of a broader learning exchange was a joint learning event on "An Enabling Environment". Another positive example quoted was the first meeting in May 2016 of all partner NGOs working in the East.

The two short case studies above provide good examples of how a shared learning can take different paths and successfully share learning between NGOs and SDC. Nonetheless, the evaluation observes that common learning processes are individually rather than jointly identified within the portfolio which may restrict the degree to which a learning journey is shared by other NGO and SDC stakeholders.

The evaluation considers that independent evaluations are under-utilised for the portfolio – for both learning and accountability purposes. There are no mandatory requirements for NGOs to commission, for example, mid-term reviews or final evaluations of the programmes supported by programme contributions<sup>70</sup> although some NGOs commission independent evaluations. IPD commissions evaluations of partner NGOs on a case-by-case basis. There is no evaluation framework for the portfolio – for example, as part of a broader learning strategy – that might focus or collate learning through NGO and SDC evaluations, for example, during each Dispatch period.

While there is clear evidence of how institutional partnerships contribute to shared learning through common learning processes, it is less clear how programme contributions facilitate broader learning processes in Switzerland. There are, for example, approximately 11 networks in SDC to promote and share learning on specific themes. Each has its own way of working. SDC thematic leads identified the primary target group for these networks as SDC staff although Swiss NGOs and other stakeholders participate also. The evaluation found that Swiss NGOs had mixed experiences with SDC thematic networks. Some NGOs have close ties to certain networks, perhaps reinforced with mandate contracts relevant to the theme, others have limited contact with networks of

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<sup>70</sup> The DFID PPA, for example, required partners to conduct a mid-term review of the work supported as a condition of the grant.

potential relevance to their programmes. Cantonal Federations, for example, reported that they had to take the initiative to engage with SDC technical staff and that they would benefit from more dialogue.

However, most Swiss NGOs are members of one or more broader knowledge-sharing platforms in Switzerland. A number of NGOs, for example, participate in the Swiss Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) platform which hosts learning events, has close contact with the relevant SDC thematic networks; and provides an opportunity for policy dialogue with SDC. AGUASAN, a long-established Swiss "community of practice" for water and sanitation, is another example of a knowledge-sharing network that brings NGOs and SDC together. Again, it is difficult to identify any specific connection between programme contributions and NGO involvement in these networks.

Swiss NGOs are also involved in knowledge sharing initiatives and platforms at an international level. In some cases, these initiatives are supported by programme contributions. For example, a number of NGOs e.g. Fastenopfer, Caritas, and Helvetas, facilitate South/South exchanges or learning events. Fastenopfer has facilitated shared learning between its Colombian and Haitian partners in organisational development and organic farming. Others, such as Solidarmed, participate in international conferences and fora such as the Global Health Forum.

### **6.3.2. Collaboration**

This Section will assess to what extent SDC/NGO partnerships foster or enhance collaboration between SDC and NGOs at different levels, and between NGOs themselves.

The Swiss NGO Platform was established as a conduit between Swiss NGOs in receipt of programme contributions and SDC. Alliance Sud acts as Secretariat for the Platform and facilitates four or five meetings a year to share information which SDC attends when invited. The Platform has established a number of working groups on, for example, working in fragile contexts; enabling environment; and the SDGs. The evaluation anticipated that the Platform might play a key role in NGO collaboration but it was rarely mentioned in interviews and would appear to have no web presence.

Alliance Sud was more frequently mentioned as a high profile advocacy platform that has worked, for example, on a campaign to prevent a further reduction in Swiss development cooperation. Alliance Sud is a network of six member NGOs and four partner NGOs. All are SDC institutional partners though programme contributions cannot be used directly to support its work on advocacy. Alliance Sud is in the process of establishing a broader NGO platform with the objective of raising awareness of Agenda 2030 and sharing learning about how to adapt their strategies to SDGs.

*“Several workshops have allowed us to discuss and learn together with other Swiss organisations topics including fraud, the migrant crisis. The SDC contribution has also put us into better contact with other Swiss NGOs”*

Source: NGO survey respondent, Category C

A number of other Swiss networks were highlighted by NGOs as examples of constructive collaboration. These include the Swiss Forum on Rural Advisory Services (SFRAS), the Clean Water Foundation, Swiss Water Partnership; and Swiss Malaria Group and others. In addition, there are numerous examples of NGOs collaborating to co-finance and implement projects e.g. Fastenopfer with Caritas Switzerland. NGOs reported that such types of collaboration can reduce the administrative burden for NGOs and partners. There are also a number of examples of Swiss NGOs involved in multi-sector collaboration with Swiss academic institutions and, to a lesser extent, the private sector. For example, Akte

collaborates with the academic and private sectors e.g. the Swiss Federation of Travel Agents, and is one of the initiators of the international multi-stakeholder "Roundtable on Tourism and Human Rights". Caritas collaborates with the Center for Development and Environment (CDE) of the University of Bern in Central Asia. The role of programme contributions in fostering these examples of operational collaboration is not clear and they are more likely driven by programming opportunities.

*"XX is engaged in the International Forum for volunteering in development. We operate a horizontal cooperation between North and South, based on the strengthening of the partner organizations of the South and the sensitization in Switzerland".*

Source: NGO survey respondent, Category B

There are few examples of NGO operational collaboration with SDC. The Swiss Red Cross coordinates a yearly exchange between NGOs involved in the humanitarian sector and SDC. This has led, for example, to the SRC and SDC expanding exchange on cash transfer programming. In the humanitarian sector, the Swiss Red Cross also collaborates with the Swiss rescue chain and with the SDC immediate-operation teams (SET).

The Water Consortium provides an interesting example of a 'one-off' SDC initiative through a second "additional contribution" to support consortia building in line with potential synergies with SDC thematic priorities<sup>71</sup>.

***An exercise in collaboration: The Water Consortium***

*The Water Consortium was initiated in 2011 to improve water and sanitation coverage and to facilitate knowledge sharing and innovation. The consortium was established as a pilot model of programme contributions that would include a second "additional contribution", approved on the basis of a Call for proposals", in support of potential synergies with SDC thematic priorities and to support consortia building. The Consortium is comprised of eight SDC institutional partners who are represented in the Steering Committee, and focal points meet on a quarterly basis to discuss operational issues. The establishment of the Consortium had been a time-consuming process.*

*Innovation and exchange of experience started to materialize during the second phase of the Consortium from 2014 onwards. NGOs participating in the Consortium highlighted that the Consortium triggered strengthened collaboration in different forms in water projects in Madagascar, Togo and Nepal. Moreover, particularly the peer review approach proved to be useful and contributed to generation of knowledge. In addition, joint representation on the occasion of external events such as e.g. the Stockholm Water Week had been valuable. SDC financing will be discontinued by the end of September 2017 and Consortium members are discussing how collaboration might be continued and what activities might be sustained.*

Source: NGO interviews

SDC views NGO collaboration with SCOs at country level as an important aspect of SDC/NGO collaboration. The SDC Field Handbook contains a normative letter dated 2010 from IPD on cooperation between SCOs and Swiss NGOs. SDC also issued a letter to SCOs in May 2013 on "Cooperation between the Cooperation Offices of the SDC and Swiss NGOs"<sup>72</sup>. SCOs, for example, are expected to host an annual meeting with Swiss NGOs to exchange information although Swiss NGOs, for example, are not expected to contribute directly to the Swiss country strategy locally.

<sup>71</sup> IPD describes this as an initiative arising out of a specific funding opportunity and not linked to programme contributions. However, it is not unlike the approach taken by DFID in its new modality UK Connect.

<sup>72</sup> Eidgenössisches Departement für auswärtige Angelegenheiten EDA/Interne Revision (2013): Bericht über die Prüfung DEZA Abteilung Institutionelle Partnerschaften (intern).

NGOs cited, in interviews and in the survey, some challenges in communicating with and working with SCOs<sup>73</sup>. NGOs reported a number of factors that influence the quality and frequency of NGO engagement with SCOs – for example, the level of interest of SCO staff; whether there is sectoral/geographic overlap in programmes; and whether the NGO held a mandate. Interviews with SCOs indicate that most but not all hold an annual meeting with NGOs. The scope of these discussions varies and the meetings are usually opened to other civil society partners. In a number of cases the SCO was largely unaware of Swiss NGO programmes other than those implemented under a mandate. In others, Swiss NGOs had been consulted in the development of Swiss country strategy.

*“The Swiss Cooperation Offices in the countries do not know much about the partnership. Therefore, there is no dialogue / cooperation / coordination between SDC offices and SRC Delegations in the countries. Also, SDC-internally, the link between IP and the regional divisions and global programmes is weak”.*

Source: NGO survey respondent, Category A

Both SCO and NGO staff reported that being a SDC institutional partner provided no advantages in terms of their relationship at country level. Contact between SCOs and Swiss NGOs focused principally on the implementation of mandates. One SCO commented on the bar to institutional partners receiving project funding, and that it should be appropriate, for example, for a SCO to provide project funding to scale up a successful NGO innovation rather than independently draft a mandate.

HELVETAS worked in 2016 to raise awareness of the Swiss public about development issues in a variety of ways:

- The HELVETAS exhibition on "nutrition" has been visited by more than 100'000 people and 170 school classes.
- A photo exhibition on "destins en main" has been seen by 29'000 people.
- 8'300 pupils participated in development education sessions in school for which Helvetas developed the materials e.g. a module on drinking water was used by 5'500 teachers.
- A mobile solar cinema is run by HELVETAS showing movies from the South (2016: 82 events with more than 5'800 visitors).
- Several street campaigns and events (supported by panels, TV, media coverage) are conducted each year.
- HELVETAS' regional groups of voluntary members conducted 25 events in 2016.
- The HELVETAS magazine ("Partnerschaft") is sent out to 75'000 households four times a year.
- HELVETAS runs video competitions, social media activities, offers course in Swiss universities, and participates in panel discussions at numerous events each year.

Source: Helvetas materials supplied to the evaluation

### 6.3.3. Public awareness

SDC and IPD documents emphasise the role of Swiss NGOs in helping to raise public awareness and understanding of development cooperation issues in Switzerland. The evaluation found that reports of most NGOs included sensitisation and education work on development issues. A number of NGOs included public awareness work as a distinctive component in their programme documents – for example, ‘sensitisation and education’ NGOs such as AKTE where it represents a core aim of its strategy. Faith-based organisations, such as Fastenopfer, target their public awareness activities among their churches and parishioners.

<sup>73</sup> 31.4% of survey respondents only occasionally had interaction with the SCOs and 2.9% answered never

IPD expects and encourages institutional partners to 'sensitise and educate' the Swiss public on development and humanitarian issues but they are not permitted to use programme contributions to lobby politically on these issues or to support their fundraising activities. In practice, it can be difficult to differentiate when public awareness activities do or do not perform a secondary advocacy or fundraising purpose – for example, using project stories to support a Right to Food campaign in churches may provide an indirect fundraising benefit. However, the evaluation found that NGOs were diligent in separating programme contributions from their fundraising and advocacy activities.

Swiss NGOs use a variety of channels to raise public awareness on development and humanitarian issues. This may involve the Swiss Red Cross organising press trips covering the Syria crisis; Solidarmed distributing its supporter magazines; Caritas' youth programme and activities in schools; or Fastenopfer/ Brot für Alle's ecumenical campaign in 2013 calling for Swiss Official Development Assistance (ODA) funds not to be invested in land grabbing through multilateral financing.

There is evidence that public support for Swiss development cooperation and the work of Swiss NGOs has remained steady at a high level during the evaluation period. A study<sup>74</sup> of public perceptions of Swiss International Cooperation from 1999-2014 indicates that there has been a moderate but steady increase in public approval of Swiss development cooperation efforts and a marked increase (from 20% to 30%) in public support for an increase of development cooperation during this period. It should be noted, however, that this pre-dates the results of the 2015 parliamentary elections and the European migration crisis which may subsequently have had an influence on public attitudes towards development cooperation. It is interesting to note that the study revealed that the percentage of people who thought received too little information from SDC on the problems of development countries rose from 27% to 34% during the period.

There is also evidence that the Swiss public continue to view the work of Swiss NGOs as important and complementary to the role of government in development cooperation. A 2016 survey<sup>75</sup> found that 92% of respondents completely or tended to agree with the statement that the work of non-profit organisations is important and 84% completely or tended to agree that non-profit organisations are needed as the engagement of the state is not sufficient<sup>76</sup>.

However, it is difficult to attribute any changes in public perceptions on Swiss development cooperation directly to the work of NGOs. NGOs tend to report on their work at sensitisation and education at activity level and the evaluation found few examples of monitoring of attitudinal and behaviour change arising out of the activities conducted.

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<sup>74</sup> Internal SDC document.

<sup>75</sup> swissfundraising ImageBarometer 2016. the findings of this survey have to be qualified as they do not exclusively focus on development cooperation and sensitization work of NGOs but include social and medical work within Switzerland.

<sup>76</sup> swissfundraising ImageBarometer 2016, PPT, slide 6.

## 7. Conclusions and Lessons

This Chapter will summarise the key findings under each of the relevant DAC criteria; identify lessons emerging from these; and examine the implications for the assumptions of the draft intervention logic.

### 7.1. Relevance

#### **Relevance: Key lessons**

- The model of institutional partnerships, in particular the strategic and flexible nature of programme contributions, remains relevant;
- NGO programmes are broadly aligned to Swiss development cooperation goals but do not report directly to them;
- The NGO portfolio reflects a decision to take a more strategic approach to existing partnerships rather than a process of critical reflection on the role of SDC/NGO partnerships in a changing development landscape.;
- *The management of institutional partnerships has not adapted as agilely as other donors to key elements of the aid effectiveness agenda;*

The evaluation confirms the relevance of the institutional partnership model. The flexibility and long-term nature of programme contributions enable NGOs to develop and adapt their programmes in line with their own strategies, and to invest in their own institutional development. For smaller NGOs, institutional partnerships are additionally relevant by enhancing their credibility and increasing their visibility (both facilitating fundraising) and facilitating access to SDC and other networks. SDC sub-contracting of mandates is neither a relevant nor significant source of income for a majority of institutional partners although it is a key element of the business model of a small number of NGOs.

SDC particularly recognises the relevance of its NGO institutional partners in implementing Swiss development cooperation; in consolidating competencies relevant to Swiss development cooperation; and in raising public awareness in Switzerland on development and humanitarian issues. However, many NGOs commented that the institutional partnership is more with IPD than SDC as a whole and that its relevance would be enhanced by better dialogue and coordination with other SDC stakeholders.

The evaluation found NGO programmes to be generally aligned to Swiss development and humanitarian goals although programme documents rarely refer directly to them. The evaluation found some ambiguity among NGO and SDC staff as to whether the role of institutional partnerships is to contribute directly to the strategic goals of Swiss development cooperation or to play a distinctive, complementary role.

SDC and NGOs consider the current portfolio of institutional partners to be relevant as it reflects the diversity of Swiss society in terms of culture, religion and geography. The evaluation notes that the composition of the portfolio largely reflects a decision taken as part of SDC's reorganization in 2009 to coordinate and take a new approach to existing SDC/NGO partnerships. Although the IPD Annual Report in 2016 updates the rationale for institutional partnerships, SDC has not undertaken a broader process of critical reflection and choice-making to ensure the relevance of SDC/NGO partnerships in meeting the challenges of a changing development and humanitarian landscape. The view of the evaluation is that SDC has not adapted as agilely as other donors to some aspects of aid

effectiveness agenda e.g. results-based management and transparency<sup>77</sup> in the management of institutional partnerships with NGOs although it has SDC partially adapted to recommendations of a number of reviews for a more systematic, transparent approach to managing these partnerships.

## 7.2. Efficiency

### **Efficiency: Key lessons**

- *The 2013-2016 admissions and approval process across most of the portfolio was well managed but not repeated for the 2017-2020 Dispatch period.*
- *While NGOs consider the institutional partnerships to be efficiently managed at a bilateral level, a more systematic approach to portfolio management would help to ensure the whole is more than the sum of its parts;*
- *The current approach to, and quality of, NGO reporting undermines SDC's ability to monitor NGO performance and report on the effectiveness of institutional partnerships;*
- *There is not an adequate formal mechanism to link NGO performance to the level of programme contribution.*

A formal admissions/approval process for the portfolio at large linked to the Dispatch took place only for the 2013-2016 period. The evaluation found good practice elements in this admissions process – for example, the public announcement of the scheme; the development of clear criteria for admissions and approval processes; the use of an admissions panel with independent representation; and a formal report to SDC senior management at portfolio level. IPD has reconstituted the admissions panel and is in the process of drafting a new five-step admissions process. However, there has not been a public invitation to an open process and a portfolio-wide review of admissions/approvals for the 2017-2020 Dispatch period, as in the previous cycle. The evaluation considers that this has restricted the opportunity for IPD to make strategic choices regarding the composition of the institutional partnership portfolio and distribution of programme contributions.

NGOs report high levels of satisfaction with the overall efficiency of the management of institutional partnership scheme. The current *modus operandi* is reliant on the quality of IPD bilateral discussions with NGOs, and on the annual conference with each NGO that reviews the NGO annual report and seeks to share NGO learning more broadly with SDC colleagues. The view of the evaluation is that there is scope for IPD to adopt a more systematic, proactive approach to portfolio management in key areas such as resource allocation, knowledge sharing, and reporting guidance.

For example, IPD offers limited guidance on NGO reporting and, as a result, NGO annual reports vary in format and in quality. Significantly, it is not always possible to discern which of the activities or results reported were directly supported by programme contributions. The evaluation concludes that the current approach to NGO reporting undermines SDC's ability to monitor NGO performance and to report robustly on the overall effectiveness of the institutional partnership portfolio.

Significant resource allocation decisions were taken during the evaluation period in association with the budget increase of 2013. IPD determines the level of a programme contribution to a NGO with reference to the its programme documents and overall financing structure. While NGOs are satisfied with the current approach, the view of the

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<sup>77</sup> SDC, unlike most other donors, is not listed as a member of the International Aid Transparency Initiative (IATI) in its 2016 Annual Report.

evaluation is that there is not currently an adequate, formal mechanism to assess whether an NGO has made effective use of programme contributions when determining the level of a programme contribution.

### 7.3. Effectiveness

#### **Effectiveness: Key lessons**

- *Numerous examples of NGO working towards Swiss development goals but weak evidence base undermines ability to summarise results;*
- *Evidence that institutional partnerships contribute to partnership goals – for example, the institutional development of NGOs in key areas;*
- *Common learning process is a useful vehicle for learning but there is scope to facilitate broader, shared learning;*
- *Wide range of public awareness raising activities but need to monitor impact on knowledge and behaviour to link to broader changes in public attitudes.*

The evaluation identified numerous examples of the NGO programmes working towards Swiss development goals. However, a number of limitations regarding the way in which results, particularly at outcome level, were reported limited the degree to which it is possible to summarise NGO contribution to Swiss development goals across the portfolio<sup>78</sup>. Only a few organisations had explicit results frameworks; most reporting was at output level; and reporting to outcomes tended to be in narrative form with limited evidence of the contribution of interventions to the results reported. On the positive side, a significantly increased number of results frameworks are included in NGO programme documents for 2017-2020.

The evaluation found clear evidence that institutional partnerships had strengthened the institutional development of NGOs by enabling them, for example, to transition from a project to a programmatic approach; invest in improved M&E and knowledge management; develop and consolidate key thematic competencies; and make key changes in organisational strategy and programming.

The 'common learning process' between SDC and individual NGOs is a useful vehicle for learning and the evaluation found good examples of joint learning in key issues. However, there is scope for IPD to facilitate broader-based learning processes between NGOs and between NGOs and SDC. SDC thematic networks were of limited utility for many NGOs although there was a high level of participation in relevant thematic networks outside SDC.

The evaluation found numerous examples of operational collaboration between NGOs, multi-sectoral collaboration and collaboration through networks although the role of programme contributions in fostering these is not clear. There were a few examples of operational collaboration between SDC and NGOs but the evaluation found that the status of being an SDC institutional partner has little influence at country level where SCO collaboration with NGOs focused principally on the implementation of mandates.

Most NGOs work in a wide variety of ways in Switzerland to raise public awareness and understanding of development and humanitarian issues. There is evidence that public support for Swiss development cooperation and the work of Swiss NGOs has remained steady during the evaluation period. However, the evaluation found that NGOs tend to report at activity level in this area. NGOs will need to monitor the attitudinal and behaviour

<sup>78</sup> This has been recognised by IPD in Institutionelle Partnerschaften Jahresbericht 2016

change arising out of their activities in order to link their activities to broader changes in public attitudes.

#### **7.4. Lessons for the Intervention Logic**

During the inception phase the evaluation developed, in consultation with the CLP, a draft intervention logic for SDC/NGO institutional partnerships. The intervention logic was underpinned by three provisional assumptions whose viability was to be tested in the course of the evaluation. In this section, we will examine the viability of these assumptions and present a revised intervention logic.

*Assumption 1: Effective and efficient management of institutional partnerships with NGOs leads to SDC partnership goals – learning, distinctive competence, collaboration and raising public awareness.*

The NGO survey indicates that NGOs generally consider the system of programme contributions to be well managed and to contribute to the achievement of the partnership goals. There is a clear case that programme contributions i.e. funding support that is not earmarked or restricted to specific programme objectives, enables NGOs to use the funds strategically. Some NGOs allocate programme contributions exclusively to their programmes. Most use the funds also in support of the partnership goals. However, the evaluation concludes that a more strategic approach to managing the portfolio of institutional partnerships will help to ensure that partnership goals – such as shared learning and collaboration across and beyond the portfolio – are achieved. This has been included in the first assumption of the revised theory of change to emphasise that partnership goals will be achieved only if these synergies are actively facilitated.

*Revised assumption: Strategic and efficient management of institutional partnerships with NGOs contributes to SDC partnership goals – e.g. learning, distinctive competences, collaboration.*

The concept of these intermediate or partnership goals is an important element in the rationale and justification for SDC support to Swiss NGOs through institutional partnerships and distinguishes it from other support modalities e.g. mandate funding. The assumption is that these important elements of partnership contribute to the effective implementation of NGO programmes as a result of improved learning, strengthened competencies and greater collaboration. This assumption can only be tested if NGOs provide evidence e.g. in their annual reports, of partnership goals being met.

*Assumption 2: Swiss NGOs effectively implement programmes and help to raise public awareness of and support for development and humanitarian issues.*

The evaluation has indicated two areas for further improvement in order to test this assumption:

- A more systematic approach to results reporting will be necessary to make an assessment of the overall effectiveness of NGO programmes; and
- More research on the impact of NGO public awareness-raising activities in changing the knowledge and behaviour of target groups in order to link these activities to broader public perceptions as captured by national surveys.

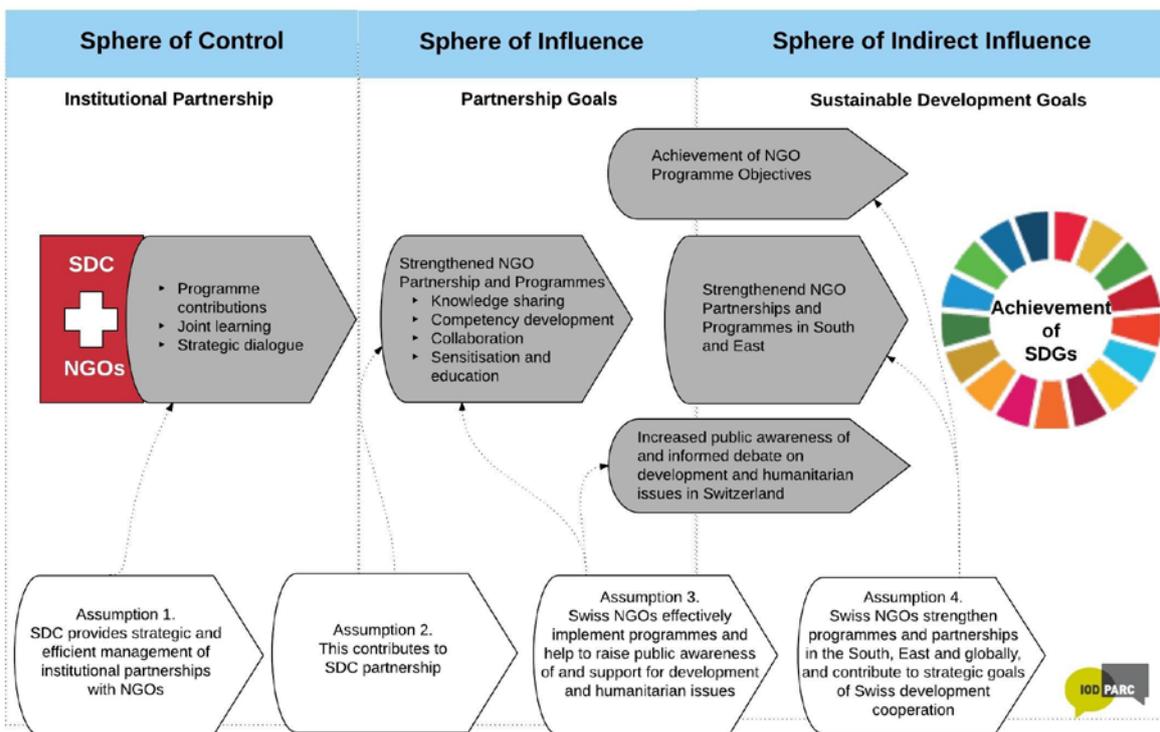
*Assumption 3: Swiss NGOs strengthen programmes and partnerships in the South and East, and contribute to the strategic goals of Swiss development cooperation.*

The evaluation has observed that NGOs are not currently expected to report directly to Swiss development and humanitarian goals, although they have recently been asked to match their programmes against the SDGs. The evaluation found support in the CLP for reporting directly to the SDGs. As the Swiss Government is committed to reporting to the SDGs, this would provide a stable template for more than a decade. The SDGs themselves are only broadly defined and many of the suggested targets and indicators are not well suited to NGO programmes. Nonetheless, a useful collaborative exercise would be for SDC and NGOs to review which SDGs are most appropriate to the portfolio and agree on a set of appropriate indicators for reporting purposes.

*Revised assumption: Swiss NGOs strengthen programmes and partnerships in the South and East, and contribute to the Sustainable Development Goals.*

Diagram 1 represents a revised version of an intervention logic for SDC/NGO institutional partnerships, a larger version of which can be found in Annex 6.

**Diagram 1: Revised intervention logic for institutional partnerships**



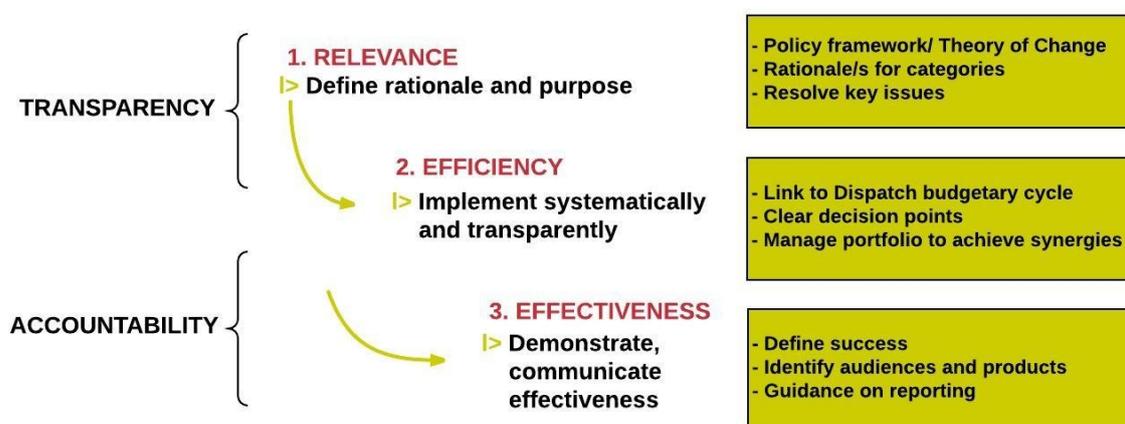
## 8. The Way Forward: Options and Recommendations

This Chapter will draw upon the evaluation findings to describe a three-step process to ensure the relevance, efficiency and effectiveness of SDC/NGO institutional partnerships. Initial options for the way forward were discussed with the CLP in July 2017 and the proposals presented have been revised in light of those discussions. The three steps are:

1. *Relevance*: Define the rationale purpose of the partnership/s;
2. *Efficiency*: Implement systematically and transparently;
3. *Effectiveness*: Demonstrate and communicate the results of the partnership/s.

This Chapter will describe each step in more detail outlining the key choices to be made and will include a number of recommendations with regard to how institutional partnerships might be implemented.

**Diagram 2: SDC/NGO Institutional Partnerships: The Way Forward**



This Chapter is written with the principle in mind that development cooperation must be transparent and accountable to all citizens – one of the four principles of effective development cooperation committed to at high-level fora on aid effectiveness since 2005, and most recently at the second High-Level Meeting of the Global Partnership for Effective Development Co-operation in Nairobi, 2016.

### 8.1. Relevance: Define the rationale and purpose

A large number of NGO and SDC respondents acknowledged that the rationale and purpose of SDC/NGO partnership should be more clearly and publicly stated and better reflected in the Dispatches. There is no comprehensive public statement on why SDC/NGO Institutional Partnerships are an effective, integral part of Swiss development cooperation. The IPD 2016 Annual Report<sup>79</sup> sets out a general rationale for institutional partnerships but is not a public document. The rationale for the partnerships is described in different parts of the Dispatches and only briefly on the SDC website. The 2007 NGO Policy is out of date and was not referenced by stakeholders.

This is in contrast to similar donor strategic partnership schemes reviewed by the evaluation<sup>80</sup> where the relevance of support to civil society and, in particular, NGO strategic partnerships is explained in one or more of three ways:

<sup>79</sup> Institutionelle Partnerschaften Jahresbericht 2016 Mit Planung für 2017, SDC pp 5-7

<sup>80</sup> see Annex 11 for selected bibliography of relevant documents.

- *A Civil Society Policy or Strategy*, for example, Finland (2010), Denmark (2013) and Sida (2017). Civil Society Policies or are tending not to be renovated and to being subsumed under corporate development cooperation strategies.
- *Theory of change*: a number of donors have a theory of change for their support to civil society e.g. Denmark, MFA Netherlands.
- *Policy Frameworks for strategic partnerships*: Recently MFA Netherlands (2014), DFID (2016) and Danida (2017) have issued policy frameworks that set out the rationale and procedures for their revised approaches to strategic partnerships.

The first step towards a more strategic, transparent approach to institutional partnerships would be to set out the purpose/s and modus operandi of such partnerships in public policy framework consistent with Swiss development cooperation<sup>81</sup>. Such a policy framework needs not be at the expense of the quality of dialogue that has characterised the partnerships to date. The evaluation considers that it will be difficult for SDC to establish a clear rationale for all the current institutional partners given the diversity of the current portfolio. If SDC decides to maintain a diverse portfolio of institutional partners, one option for the policy framework is to more clearly establish the rationale and modus operandi for different types of NGO and partnerships, as illustrated below with the current categories:

**Possible rationales for current NGO categories**

- *Category A*: To contribute effectively to SDGs.
- *Category B*: To support the development and application of technical competences in support of SDGs.
- *Category C*: To enable Swiss citizens to share their skills and expertise in support of SDGs
- *Category D*: To build awareness and capacity of local government bodies and their constituencies, and improve the effectiveness of local initiatives in support of SDGs.
- *Category E*: To contribute to increased awareness of, and participation in, development and humanitarian issues by Swiss citizens at grass roots level.

Each purpose or rationale may have implications for the type of financial and non-financial support offered; how this is implemented; and how success is defined and measured<sup>82</sup>.

The evaluation recommends that IPD work collaboratively with Swiss NGOs to clarify the purpose, objectives, target group and modus operandi of its institutional partnerships with NGOs through one or more of the above frameworks. A collaborative exercise is likely to help to build a shared understanding and sense of ownership of the policy framework. Such a policy framework might contain, at minimum, the following elements<sup>83</sup>:

<sup>81</sup> This is in line with the observation of the 2013 OECD-DAC Peer Review that the SDC policy for working with civil society organisations was yet to be updated.

<sup>82</sup> MFA Finland, for example, describes similar categories of support to NGOs e.g. programme support for partnerships; foundations and umbrella organisations; communication and global education. It also has a separate budget for partnerships with INGOs.

<http://formin.finland.fi/public/default.aspx?nodeid=49362&contentlan=1&culture=fi-FI>

<sup>83</sup> All elements drawn from existing donor policy frameworks for NGO partnerships

### **Elements of a SDC/NGO Policy Framework for Institutional Partnerships**

- Purpose and role of NGO institutional partnership in Swiss development cooperation including different types of partnership (if applicable);
- Application and Selection process;
- Eligibility criteria;
- Criteria for Assessment;
- Assessment procedure;
- Programme cycle and timeline;
- Narrative and financial reporting responsibilities and results framework (if applicable);
- How partnerships will be reviewed;
- How funding will be allocated and adjusted; including how reductions in programme contributions will be managed;
- How exit from the scheme will be managed.

In addition, the evaluation recommends that the policy framework addresses two key issues that respondents identified as areas of further improvement in the partnership. Firstly, how IPD will promote the broader relationship of partners with other stakeholders, including SCOs. Secondly, how SDC and NGO partners will collaborate to share learning; encourage innovation; strengthen competencies across the sector; and thus add value more broadly to Swiss development cooperation.

*Recommendation 1: SDC to consult with Swiss NGOs to draft a comprehensive, publicly available policy framework for SDC/NGO institutional partnerships.*

The exercise of collaboratively developing a policy framework could address a number of ambiguities that the evaluation found regarding stakeholders' understanding of the purpose of programme contributions. For example, to what extent:

- NGO programme documents should be aligned specifically to SDGs or to the strategic goals of Swiss development cooperation or can play a complementary role to these; and
- NGO programme documents and reports should be aligned to their own general strategies or should focus on the programmes/ investments directly supported by programme contributions;

The resolution of such issues will help to identify also the type of strategic partner that IPD wants to prioritise. Current institutional partners differ enormously in organisational size, maturity and levels of competency. More generally, clarity on purpose/s and target group/s of institutional partnership will help to clarify some key implementation issues such as the eligibility criteria for admission; how open or closed the process of selection should be; what results framework might be appropriate for the scheme. These and other implementation issues will be examined in more detail in Section 8.2.

## **8.2. Efficiency: Implement systematically and transparently**

The evaluation concludes that a more strategic, systematic approach to the management of institutional partnerships would contribute to the overall efficiency and accountability of the scheme; achieve greater synergy across the portfolio; and help to deliver the partnership goals.

*Recommendation 2: SDC, while maintaining the quality of bilateral dialogue, to adopt a more strategic approach to managing the whole portfolio of institutional partners to facilitate the achievement of partnership goals.*

**Elements of a strategic approach to portfolio management.**

- Manage admissions/approval process in line with Dispatch period and budgetary cycle.
- Review composition of portfolio and allocation of resources across portfolio for each budgetary cycle in the light of changing needs and trends.
- Consult on and develop guidance on NGO partner reporting to SDGs to help develop an evidence base for achievements across the portfolio.
- Consult on and develop an approach to shared learning on NGO learning priorities.
- Coordinate with NGO partners to produce a strategy to better communicate portfolio achievements within and beyond SDC.
- Create supplementary fund/s to support priority initiatives e.g. to promote innovation.

This section will discuss some options and make some recommendations with regard to how such an approach might be implemented.

- *Admissions and approval process*

The evaluation recommends that a formal, public admissions/approval procedure at portfolio level be re-introduced in line with the Dispatch period and its budgetary cycle. This would give SDC the option to review and make strategic choices across its institutional partner portfolio at the beginning, end and mid-point of the budgetary cycle, if so desired. This may prove to be challenging if managing separate processes for different categories. Alternatively, NGOs could apply for admission throughout the cycle while the approval process is synchronised with the beginning of the budgetary cycle.

*Recommendation 3: SDC to publicly announce invitations to apply for a programme contribution in coordination with the Dispatch and budgetary cycle, with eligibility criteria and admissions processes clearly defined.*

SDC has the choice in its policy document to continue with the current or similar portfolio or to more precisely define its target group of preferred partners. In the case of retaining a similar portfolio, invitations to apply for an institutional partnership could be divided into different NGO or partnership categories each with separate eligibility criteria and timelines. Alternatively, SDC has the choice of further defining its target group and controlling the openness of the admissions procedure through the use of eligibility criteria. For example, it may target NGOs with a proven track record of programme impact or up-and-coming NGOs who could use strategic funding to make a 'step-change' in further developing and applying their competencies.

In either case, the evaluation recommends that the good practice of the admissions practice for the 2013-2016 cycle be reinstated i.e. an open announcement; a portfolio-wide process; the use of an admissions panel including external, representatives<sup>84</sup>; and portfolio report to SDC senior management. Some of these elements are incorporated in the admissions process and criteria currently being drafted by IPD.

*Recommendation 4: SDC to conduct admissions process through an admissions panel and report to SDC senior management on the reasons for successful and unsuccessful applications, and funds allocated.*

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<sup>84</sup> A draft Admissions process being developed by IPD would seem to anticipate this.

The draft admissions procedure by IPD anticipates a five-stage process. The three-stage process of admissions and approval introduced in 2011 took nearly two years to implement. Other donor partnership schemes reviewed have shorter application, assessment and approval procedures<sup>85</sup>.

*Recommendation 5: SDC to streamline the admissions/assessment/ approval process with the aim of conducting it within a 12-month period.*

- *Monitoring and reporting*

The evaluation has noted that the inconsistency in the quality of NGO reporting undermines the individual and collective accountability of institutional partnerships. This raises the issue of how directive SDC wishes to be with regard to reporting guidance to NGOs. The evaluation has already recommended that SDC adopt the SDGs as a potential framework for NGO reporting. This will influence how prescriptive SDC may need to be. Currently, for example, the use of ARI is described as mandatory for country strategies and global programmes for the 2017-2020 Dispatch period<sup>86</sup> although it is not clear whether this applies to SDC institutional partners. The evaluation recommends that SDC offers guidance to NGO partners on minimum standards of reporting that are appropriate to the mission and approach of the NGOs concerned<sup>87</sup>. This allows for a number of possibilities – for example, SDC could collaborate with NGOs to identify appropriate outcome indicators at thematic level or for capacity development. This could be combined with a more systematic approach to case study development that could be incorporated into annual reporting at portfolio level. The aim should be to introduce certain minimum standards of reporting to improve the overall quality of NGO reporting and enable some degree of summarisation, while respecting the integrity of NGO planning and reporting systems. This is a challenge other donors are also trying to meet.

A critical decision will be if and/or how SDC wants to report at portfolio level. The evaluation considers that it would be difficult, if not inappropriate, to create a results framework appropriate to the current, diverse portfolio. It should, however, be possible to develop results frameworks for NGOs that share similar missions and approaches e.g. PEZA or Cantonal Federations.

*Recommendation 6: SDC to provide guidance on minimum standards of reporting for partner NGO appropriate their mission and approach, and to clarify whether NGOs must report directly to their own strategies and/or programmes and investments that programme contributions have been allocated to.*

- *Knowledge sharing*

SDC institutional partners have a wide range of competencies and 'practical wisdom' from their programmes relevant to Swiss development cooperation and humanitarian programmes. The challenge is how best to facilitate joint learning and knowledge-sharing across the portfolio and with SDC to improve overall effectiveness. The current approach to 'common learning processes' has worked well in some cases but NGOs recognise that there is room to improve knowledge exchange between themselves and SDC. There are two ways of doing this – by making the common learning process work better or by adopting a new approach to facilitating shared learning.

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<sup>85</sup> Danida's revised partnership scheme, for example, took 11 months to complete from public announcement to the signing of contracts.

<sup>86</sup> SDC Guidelines on the Use of Aggregated Reference Indicators for Reporting and Monitoring the Dispatch 2017-2020.

<sup>87</sup> No donor partnership scheme reviewed requires partners to report to a standard template.

The advantage of the current approach is that it enables NGOs to identify a learning theme that is an immediate priority for them. The disadvantage is that other stakeholders may or may not share a similar level of interest in the theme and opportunities for shared learning might therefore be limited. SDC could review the experience to date of annual conferences to build on current good practice to more closely connect individually-defined learning processes to a broader range of interested stakeholders e.g. the thematic networks. Alternatively, SDC could facilitate a process of shared learning priorities among institutional partners. This would be similar to the DFID PPA Learning Partnership where NGOs collectively defined their own learning priorities and which was very successful in sharing learning among smaller and larger NGOs. There could be a more active role perhaps for the NGO Platform in facilitating and supporting such a process.

The two approaches are not mutually exclusive. Facilitating shared learning among knowledge-rich NGOs and a wider range of stakeholders is a significant potential added value of the institutional partnership scheme to improve the effectiveness of Swiss development cooperation.

*Recommendation 7: SDC consults with institutional partners and includes a learning strategy in the Policy Document to actively promote shared learning between Swiss NGOs and SDC.*

The evaluation noted that a stronger evidence base is required to sustain Assumption 2 in the theory of change for institutional partnerships i.e. that NGOs contribute to raising public awareness and understanding on development and humanitarian issues. The monitoring and measuring of knowledge and behaviour change as a result of sensitisation and education activities could be a fruitful area of ongoing shared learning within the learning strategy.

- *Resource allocation*

SDC currently does not employ an explicit framework (other than the 50% cap) to decide on the level of a programme contribution nor, for example, does it have an explicit mechanism to link the effectiveness of the use of programme contribution by an NGO to the level of programme contribution awarded. The evaluation considers that it is good practice, and in line with the aid effectiveness agenda, for SDC to be able to account for how programme contributions are allocated across the portfolio with reference to the effectiveness of their contribution to Swiss development cooperation.

This leaves open two options. At a minimum SDC should include performance to objectives as a negotiations criterion. SDC can continue to rely on bilateral discussions-based on current or future negotiations manuals - to determine the level of a programme contribution. If so, SDC should include performance-related criteria in its negotiations manual and, for example, grade the performance of NGOs on the basis of their reported achievements to programme objectives/outcomes in their annual reports<sup>88</sup>. Alternatively, SDC could develop a more detailed resource allocation mechanism<sup>89</sup> which specifies the criteria by which resources will be allocated. It should be pointed out that performance to objectives is only one of several criteria that may be taken into account when making resource allocation decisions according to such a framework. For example, the quality of NGO learning or innovation can also be important factors. 'Safety net mechanisms' e.g. such as a cap on the percentage of programme contribution that can be increased or decreased within any Dispatch period, can be built into such a mechanism<sup>90</sup>.

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<sup>88</sup> The DFID Civil Society Challenge Fund operated in this way using external assessors.

<sup>89</sup> See the former Danida model [um.dk/da/~media/UM/Danish-site/.../Danida/.../Civil.../Bilag%202%20RAM.pdf](http://um.dk/da/~media/UM/Danish-site/.../Danida/.../Civil.../Bilag%202%20RAM.pdf)

<sup>90</sup> As in an earlier Danida Resource Allocation Mechanism(RAM) referenced earlier.

*Recommendation 8: SDC formalises performance to objectives to resource allocation decisions either through a formal mechanism or by inclusion as a criterion in, for example, bi-annual negotiations.*

- *Management*

The evaluation found a strong preference for institutional partnerships to be continued to be managed by a specialised unit. However, a number of NGO and SDC respondents commented that IPD's current place in the SDC management structure does not facilitate links with the operational domains and the ongoing issues they face, and reduces the broader profile of the institutional partnership scheme within SDC.

IPD currently reports to the SDC Director but does not form part of senior management. The evaluation understands that the rationale for this was to consolidate a strategic approach to SDC institutional partnerships more broadly, and not only those with NGOs. To ensure that the institutional partnership scheme is more closely associated with the operational domains IPD could continue to report to the Director but participate by invitation in senior management meetings for the purposes of information exchange, or form part of senior management. Alternatively, IPD could be integrated within an operational domain, in which case the South domain would be the most obvious choice since the South Frame Credit (which covers both the South and Global Cooperation domains) is the principal source of programme contributions. This option could be combined by having a number of NGO focal points identified within the South and other domains to facilitate collaboration and learning with institutional partners.

While there is a clear NGO preference for partnerships being managed by a specialised unit (rather than delegating partnership responsibilities to policy or operational divisions as in the cases of MFA Netherlands) the only *prima facie* advantage from the unit reporting to the SDC Director would seem to be to maintain a degree of independence of the partnerships from 'mainstream' SDC operational programmes. Locating IPD in, for example, the South domain might compromise that independence but would offer the possibility of closer NGO partner contact and collaboration with relevant SDC staff.

The evaluation identified a number of suggestions from respondents with regard to ways of working to improve the linkages between SDC and NGO partners. These included the identification of NGO focal points in each domain or thematic network; changes to how IPD annual conferences and learning events are profiled; and improved internal communication on institutional partnerships and their achievement, and learning e.g. through email newsletters and/or Shareweb.

*Recommendation 9: SDC to review what management options and ways of working for IPD would be most appropriate to ensure closer SDC/NGO contact and collaboration across the institution.*

If SDC decides to more clearly differentiate its partnerships by type of NGO and manage different categories of partners there are a number of options with regard to the management of the portfolio. IPD could continue to manage different categories of partner with a clear internal division of responsibility within the team. This is similar to the current situation but each partner category would have more clearly differentiated administration and reporting processes.

If SDC reduces the overall size of its strategic partnerships, or at least those it manages directly, it will have to consider whether and how to continue supporting former institutional partners through other mechanisms. This might involve outsourcing the management of programme contributions to a third-party organisation such as an NGO or

consultancy firm, or delegating the management and administration of some programme contributions to NGO umbrella organisations or networks. There are some precedents for this type of arrangement. For example, Civil Society in Development (CISU) an network of more than 280 Danish small and medium sized CSOs, manages the Civil Society Fund for Danish CSOs, which includes ex-partners of its recently revised strategic partnership scheme, on behalf of Danida. There is no equivalent national level umbrella association of development CSOs in Switzerland. PEZA NGOs and the Cantonal Federations are associated with different types of umbrella organisations. SDC would need to ensure that they have both the management competencies and credibility with their members and SDC to exercise this function effectively.

### **8.3. Effectiveness: Demonstrate and communicate the results of the partnership/s.**

Many NGOs emphasised the importance of adequately communicating the importance and achievements of SDC/NGO institutional partnerships internally within SDC and externally to the Swiss public and Parliament. The evaluation recommends that SDC resolve the following to demonstrate i.e. provide the evidence for, and communicate the effectiveness SDC/NGO institutional partnerships.

- *Agree what success for SDC/NGO partnerships would like.*

The evaluation recommends that SDC consider using the SDGs as part of a reporting framework for its institutional partnerships. The Swiss government is committed to reporting to the SDGs. IPD has taken some initial steps in aligning the strategies of its institutional partners to SDGs.<sup>91</sup> A number of NGOs suggested that SDGs offer a long-term, universally accepted framework for reporting on progress towards development and humanitarian goals. The SDGs are very broadly defined goals and the evaluation recommends that SDC/NGOs collaborate in defining relevant indicators for the goals that NGOs might use, where appropriate, to report on programme achievements. The evaluation also recommends that partnership goals such as enhanced learning, public awareness raising are also legitimate measures of success for institutional partnerships and should form part of a reporting framework.

*Recommendation 10: SDC/NGOs to introduce the use of SDGs for reporting on institutional partnerships and collaborate on identifying relevant SDGs and indicators appropriate to NGO programmes.*

- *Agree what guidance is appropriate to report on success*

Once the goals are clear, SDC, as recommended, should provide more detailed guidance to NGOs on the minimum standards of reporting – for learning and accountability purposes – required of an institutional partnership. As a strategic partnership, the aim should be to minimise the risk of dual reporting. Nonetheless, NGO narrative reporting must clearly differentiate results achieved through programme contributions if SDC wishes to demonstrate the effectiveness of this modality. Minimum standards might include, for example, guidance on how to include and refine the use of ARI to describe the overall ‘reach’ of activities and outputs; appropriate outcome indicators for SDGs that have been discussed and agreed with NGOs; and how to gather and present case study material systematically as evidence of results.

- *Identify target groups with whom it is important to communicate*

The nature of results reporting can vary according to how learning and accountability purposes are prioritised, and the audience for which it is intended. The key stakeholders are potentially SDC senior management and staff, the NGO partners, Swiss parliamentary

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<sup>91</sup> Institutionelle Partnerschaften Jahresbericht 2016, Anhang 5.

institutions and the general public. It will be necessary to priorities stakeholders in order to define how best to report and communicate with limited resources.

- *Choose the appropriate communications products and channels*

The choice of target group will help SDC decide, for example, whether improved internal reporting or targeted communications materials is the most effective way of demonstrating and communicating results.

- *Agree shared responsibilities and how resources will be found.*

Improved reporting and communications is in the mutual interest of both SDC and its NGO partners. It also has resource implications. SDC should discuss with its institutional partners how they both can collaborate to deliver more effective reports and communications on the effectiveness of their partnership. This might involve, for example a more coordinated approach to ensuring NGOs' own stories and communications materials feature prominently in SDC internal and external communications.

*Recommendation 11: SDC to collaborate with Swiss NGOs to develop a joint communications strategy to ensure that the achievements of SDC/NGO institutional partnerships are effectively communicated to internal and external stakeholders.*

## Annexes

### Annex 1 - Terms of References (edited)

#### 1.1 Purpose, Focus and Objectives of the Evaluation Purpose

The overall purpose of this evaluation is to assess the performance of programme contributions as means of institutional partnerships between SDC and Swiss NGOs for the 8-year period 2009 - 2016. The relevance, effectiveness and efficiency of programme contributions shall be reviewed, in order to render accountability, generate knowledge, learning and improve SDC's performance in institutional partnerships with NGOs.

This evaluation is mandated by SDC's Board of Directors and commissioned by the Evaluation and Corporate Controlling Division, which is outside the operational line and reports to SDC's Director General. The contracted evaluation team will be independent of SDC and their independence will be safeguarded throughout the evaluation.

The framework for this evaluation is set by the Dispatch on Switzerland's International Cooperation 2009 - 2012 and 2013 - 2016, in which Swiss NGOs are stated as important partners for implementing the tasks of international cooperation.

#### Focus and Scope

The evaluation emphasises the institutional partnership with specific focus on learning, fostering complementarities and valuing competencies, know-how and expertise of NGOs that are currently supported with SDC programme contributions.

The evaluation shall also generate insights with respect to synergies, complementarities or conflicts with other collaboration tools, such as mandates for project implementation however the performance of mandates shall not be included in this evaluation.

The evaluation encompasses the collaboration between SDC and NGOs receiving programme contributions within the categories a-e mentioned in the approach paper.

Based on OECD DAC evaluation criteria, the evaluation encompasses the relevance of programme contributions (i.e. what is the importance of programme contributions within the partnership relation? Are programme contributions consistent with the intended goals and objectives?), their effectiveness (i.e. to what extent were the goals and objectives achieved or are likely to be achieved?), as well as the efficiency of the collaboration management (i.e. from the pre-admission and admission process, to planning, monitoring, learning and overall partnership management).

When relevant, the evaluation shall produce results differentiated for following contribution categories:

- a. Regular programme contribution (16 NGOs)
- b. PEZA contribution (3 NGOs)
- c. Focus contribution (5 NGOs)
- d. Contributions to cantonal federations (7 NGOs)
- e. Sensitisation and Education contribution (6 NGOs)

The evaluation team shall also consider other criteria for differentiated results analysis, such as the amount or percentage of programme support, or others.

The evaluation covers an 8-year period, from 2009 to 2016 (in coherence with the Dispatch on Switzerland's International Cooperation 2009 - 2012 and 2013 - 2016); also taking into consideration key elements of the planning procedures for contributions 2017 - 2018/2020.

## Objectives

The evaluation will assess SDC's institutional partnership with all NGOs receiving programme contributions. It will provide findings, conclusions and recommendations on whether and how SDC can strengthen approaches, strategies and instruments as well as improve the relevance, effectiveness and efficiency of its partnerships with NGOs. The evaluation will take into consideration other collaboration mechanisms (such as the implementation of mandates, amongst others), in order to assess synergies, complementarities or contradictions; however, without evaluating these other collaboration mechanisms.

It will analyse the value of programme contributions to NGOs in the light of coherent focus on strategic development cooperation goals, the leverage of additional potentials within the international cooperation system, as well as the support to the public (policy) debate in Switzerland. The evaluation will further evaluate the current nature of partnership between SDC and NGOs and on how this influences transparency, trust, equality, respect, reciprocity and ownership.

The evaluation shall also allow the comparison of the *programme contribution modality to NGOs* with experiences from other bilateral donor agencies.

The evaluation will target following three objectives:

**Relevance of programme contributions to Swiss NGOs.** The evaluation will assess the relevance of programme contributions to Swiss NGOs on three distinct levels:

- i. with regard to the importance of fostering the partnership relation between SDC and Swiss NGOs. *The evaluation shall review the importance of programme contributions for fostering the partnership between Swiss NGOs and SDC.*
- ii. with regard to reaching SDCs development cooperation goals. *The evaluation will assess the suitability of programme contributions for reaching strategic goals of Swiss development cooperation as established within the Dispatch on Switzerland's International Cooperation 2009 - 2012 and 2013 - 2016. Furthermore, it will provide evidence on synergies, complementarities or conflicts of programme contributions and other collaboration instrument, such as mandates and project contributions (where existent).*
- iii. with regard to institutional development of the NGOs involved. *The evaluation shall assess the influence of programme contribution to organizational development elements of NGOs (this includes thematic, methodological, organizational development).*

**Effectiveness of programme contributions to Swiss NGOs.** It will provide evidence on whether (to what extent) and how the goals and objectives of the partnerships between SDC and NGOs have been reached.

**Efficiency of management processes and modalities of programme contributions.** It will assess the whole management process of contributions; i.e. assessment of the admission and negotiation process; assessment of the whole programme cycle management, including the reporting, feedback and learning processes.

The evaluation is expected to elaborate a clear and evidence based position on following elements:

- The value of programme contributions to Swiss NGOs, in relation to strategic goals of Swiss development cooperation and global development agenda (SDG/MDG, Agenda 2030).
- Lessons learnt regarding the collaboration mechanisms between SDC and Swiss NGOs.
- Recommendations for increasing the performance of the existing partnerships (relevance, efficiency, effectiveness).
- Recommendations for adapting, adjusting or maintaining the current contribution model and/or portfolio of programme contributions.

Based on the above, the evaluation team is also expected to formulate specific recommendations for SDCs senior management; and if assessed necessary and adequate, recommendations for IP Division and/or NGOs.

Indicative key questions have been formulated and are available in the Annex: Approach Paper.

## **1.2. Methodology and Process**

The overall evaluation approach should represent an adequate mix of formative and summative elements. Selected steps from within developmental evaluation are to be considered when appropriate.

The evaluation team is expected to take into consideration the methodological elements from the Approach Paper, but are asked to develop a rigorous and appropriate methodological approach. It is assessed as crucial that an independent evaluation team assesses the evaluation objectives and questions in a neutral and objective way. The evaluation findings shall review and assess existing facts, processes, tools and instruments (summative part). Their findings, lessons learnt and recommendation shall be evidence based and formulated in an open constructive non-judging manner. It is crucial that the involved organisations (SDC and NGOs) understand the evaluation methods as well as the evaluation process, as they are expected to react to the recommendations – this demands for formative evaluation methods and approaches.

The evaluation is expected to make use of a series of different methodologies, such as the following:

- Review of relevant documents (from SDC and NGOs)
- Questionnaire / survey / interviews with all involved NGO partners
- Additional selected in-depth interviews with NGOs
- Focus group sessions
- Semi-structured interviews with staff at SDC headquarters (interviews or interaction with the decentral level (COOFs) with support of modern ICT)
- Other methods (e.g., short surveys, appreciative inquiry; e-discussions)

No field visits or travels outside of Switzerland are foreseen. Interactions with staff outside of Switzerland shall be conducted by phone, Email, online surveys, or other ICT based instruments.

The Core Learning Partnership (CLP) accompanies the evaluation process. Throughout the process, the CLP is engaged in learning through interactive reflection with the evaluation team. The CLP comments on the evaluation design (Approach Paper, Inception Report) and the draft evaluation report. At the capitalisation workshop, the CLP receives and validates the evaluation findings, conclusions, lessons learnt and recommendations.

An External Reference Group (ERG) consisting of distinguished and recognised persons/experts from the public sector, private sector and civil society, offering additional and complementary views on the evaluation results. It is expected that the ERG provides insights and critical but constructive reflections from the outside regarding the evaluation proposal (Approach Paper), as well as on the findings of the evaluation.

## **1.3. Deliverables**

The following deliverables are required:

### **Inception Report**

An Inception Report is prepared by the evaluation team - after an initial review of relevant documentation and, if necessary, some initial interviews. It shall document the conceptual framework(s) to be used in the evaluation, the key evaluation questions and methodology,

including information on data sources and collection, sampling and key indicators. The Inception Report shall clarify what rubrics (assessment scales) will be used for assessing the information, interview results etc.

The Inception Report also includes a timeline for the evaluation process. It shall explain the weaknesses and strengths of the selected evaluation methodologies. Furthermore, it shall present the limitations of the evaluation methodologies and the means used to address these limitations. The evaluation team should suggest a tentative structure of the final report.

The Inception Report should be written in English and should not exceed **12 pages** excluding annexes. It will be addressed to the evaluation management. The report will be presented to the CLP for further discussion, adjustments and approval. Afterwards, a final Inception Report will be elaborated, taking into account the feedback by SDC (E+C Division). This final version will also include the finalized evaluation design and key questions. The final Inception Report will be approved by the evaluation management.

#### **Evaluation Report by Evaluation team**

- A fit-to-print evaluation report in English containing findings, conclusions, lessons learnt and recommendations.
- The evaluation report should not exceed 50 pages (including an executive summary), excluding annexes (coherent with the E+C formatting guidelines). The report should contain clear references of the important information / data available in the annexes. The executive summary (abstract) should correspond to the DAC-Standards and should not exceed 2 – 3 pages.
- Additionally, a short and concise presentation (PowerPoint) shall be prepared by the evaluation team for SDCs use.

#### **Final Evaluation Report**

The final evaluation report consists of the evaluation report by the evaluation team and the Management Response by SDCs Board of Directors. The final evaluation report will be prepared by the evaluation management.

#### **Communication**

Communication is key – this holds particularly true with reporting on the collaboration and partnership with Swiss NGOs, considering its relevance and interest for a wide audience. The evaluation team will therefore elaborate a proposal for an additional public report (e.g. a leaflet or another audio/visual format with most important findings, key recommendations and lessons learnt).

## Annex 2 – Background to SDC/NGO Institutional Partnerships

### *Rationale for institutional partnerships*

The concept of 'institutional partnership' is at the heart of SDC's programme contributions to Swiss NGOs. The system of programme contributions is quite distinct from that of mandates i.e. funding through competitive tendering to implement specific SDC programmes or projects. Whereas the latter is a contractual arrangement, the former is strategic partnership with selected Swiss NGOs to support their own strategies and programmes.

SDC maintains institutional partnerships with NGOs that have a successful, long term track record, proven skills and competencies, substantial knowledge, their own financial basis, and are firmly anchored in Swiss society<sup>92</sup>. These partnerships enable NGOs to implement their own strategies and, in so doing, should contribute to the strategic goals of Swiss international cooperation. They can also act in a complementary role since they are not constrained by SDC's geographic and thematic priorities. Swiss NGOs draw upon their own programme experience to increase public awareness and understanding of development policy and humanitarian issues, and to strengthen national and international debate on these issues.

The strategic relevance of SDC partnerships with NGOs is recognised in the current Dispatch on Swiss International Cooperation 2017-2020 which acknowledges that SDC relies on their knowledge, experience, capacities and networks to deliver its development mandate<sup>93</sup>. In its most recent Annual Report<sup>94</sup>, the Institutional Partnership Department has further elaborated the rationale for such strategic partnerships with Swiss NGOs. The key elements of this rationale are:

- SDC's institutional partnership with Swiss NGOs is a 'valorisation<sup>95</sup>' of the competences of the NGO partner and the relevance of its programmes, and an investment in their organisational development and accountability.
- Swiss NGOs with strong competences offer a distinctive contribution to and add value to Swiss development and humanitarian cooperation. This role will become more important than the donor relationship per se.
- Swiss NGO partners also contribute significantly to public understanding of development and humanitarian issues through their work on raising public awareness and education, and to strengthening the image and effectiveness at Swiss development cooperation
- The role of Swiss NGOs in multi-sectoral partnerships or alliances, in the transfer of competencies and expertise, and in the replication of successful innovation will play an increasing part in tackling global challenges

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<sup>92</sup> This paragraph is derived from <https://www.eda.admin.ch/deza/en/home/partnerships-mandates/partnerships-ngos.html>

<sup>93</sup> Dispatch on Switzerland's International Cooperation 2017 – 2020 p 2510.

<sup>94</sup> Institutionelle Partnerschaften Jahresbericht 2016 Mit Planung für 2017, SDC

<sup>95</sup> "valoriser" is frequently used by SDC when describing the rationale for NGO partnerships. It does not translate easily into English and can mean to value, to increase the status or value of, and to develop. There are probably elements of all of these in its usage with reference to SDC/Swiss NGO partnerships.

## Background

- SDC support to NGOs before the evaluation period.

The Swiss federal government has supported Swiss NGOs in different ways since the 1960s. Helvetas and Swisscontact became the key implementing partners of SDC in the 1960s. In 1982 SDC established Intercooperation to increase the capacity for implementation. The three agencies were the leading and almost exclusive implementation partners of SDC until the 1990s. In 2011, Helvetas and Intercooperation subsequently merged into Helvetas Swiss Intercooperation).

Around 1990 SDC established the NGO Service to coordinate contributions to Swiss NGO projects in the field of development cooperation. This was subsequently upgraded to the NGO Section 2000/01 to coordinate NGO funding and began to introduce the concept of programme funding to selected NGOs. The NGO Section was part of SDC's department of bilateral development cooperation. Both the humanitarian aid department and the department for cooperation East continued to administer contributions to NGOs.

Quality criteria for programme contribution were first "codified" in 2004 at the onset of the negotiations for the Dispatch period 2005-2008. The admission process was managed by the NGO Section and focused on the professionalism of the NGOs and their capacity to develop and implement a programme. The gradual introduction of the 50% limit for programme contributions occurred during this period.

An evaluation of SDC's interaction with Swiss NGOs, conducted in 2004<sup>96</sup>, found that the NGO Section was hampered by the lack of a specific policy for Swiss NGO/SDC co-operation, and a lack of a shared conceptual approach among SDC and NGOs. It also concluded that SDC's rules and regulations regarding its support to NGOs were inconsistent and lacked a strategic reference point. The evaluation recommended that SDC develop and communicate a clear development cooperation strategy as a precondition for establishing a SDC strategy for support to Swiss NGOs<sup>97</sup>.

Following an emphasis on partnerships in the *Bill for the South* presented to Parliament, SDC set up a new Institutional Partnership Division (IPD) in 2009, reporting directly to the Director General, to take a more strategic role to institutional partnerships. The new Division was created as part of a reorganisation of SDC to "enable further structural linkages between different partnership categories and SDC-wide harmonization of partner relations"<sup>98</sup>. This involved a process of integrating NGO contributions from cooperation South, cooperation East and Humanitarian Aid as institutional partnerships, which was completed with the signing of the partnership agreements starting 2013.

The consolidation of institutional partnerships based on programme contribution went hand in hand with the consolidation of the system of competitive bidding procedures for implementation mandates. The tendering of mandates is handled by the geographic and thematic units and the country offices, and IPD plays no role in the process.

The mandate of IPD today is described<sup>99</sup> as to:

- Negotiate and monitor SDC's programme contributions to Swiss NGOs
- Negotiate and monitor SDC's contribution to the promotion of education on sustainable development in the Swiss school system
- Promote exchange with the cantons and municipalities on issues related to development cooperation.

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<sup>96</sup> Königstein, August 2004

<sup>97</sup> SDC subsequently developed an NGO policy in 2007 which has not been updated.

<sup>98</sup> Annual Programme 2010 Institutional Partnerships.

<sup>99</sup> <https://www.eda.admin.ch/deza/en/home/sdc/organisation/departments/institutional-partnerships.html>

### *2009-2012 Dispatch period*

IPD extended and consolidated the programme contribution system by approving programme contributions to 28 NGOs at the beginning of the 2009-2012 Dispatch period<sup>100</sup>.

These approvals concluded a three-stage process consisting of preliminary applications, clarifications and negotiations which IPD had introduced to establish a more systematic framework for programme support for institutional partnerships with Swiss NGOs. IPD at the time reported that that NGOs were generally positive about the process though had some concerns that SDC might introduce a controlling influence on the programmes. For several of the smaller NGOs the new scheme marked the introduction of a more programmatic rather project-based approach to their work.

The introduction of the new system of 'institutional partnerships' coincided also with two reviews of SDC in 2009 – the GPK-S parliamentary audit and OECD Peer Review. The reviews coincided considerably in their recommendations for a more strategic, transparent approach to Swiss support for Swiss NGOs.

The GPK-S audit of support to NGOs that reported in June 2009 made three key recommendations:

- SDC to systematically apply competitive award procedures in relation to its mandates for NGOs;
- NGOs to clearly indicate how mandates or grants have been allocated in accounts so that sources of expenditure can be traced;
- SDC to establish transparent criteria for the selection of NGOs and allocation of resources.

The Federal Council officially responded to the audit in 2010<sup>101</sup>. It pointed out that separate accounting for NGO mandates and programme contributions was required but resisted the suggestion of Open Calls for programme contributions. It justified this stance by citing that long-term development requires long-term partnerships and adding that an aim of the Swiss development policy to preserve and promote their Swiss competences. It also reaffirmed that programme contributions should support the NGO strategic objectives rather than be restricted to SDC thematic or geographic priorities. It acknowledged the need for greater clarity in the allocation of programme contributions and committed to developing a more strategic framework for the scheme in preparation for the 2013-2016 Dispatch phase. The GPK-S was satisfied with the response of the Federal Council and conducted two follow-up examinations that were both again replied to by the Federal Council. All the subsequent measures introduced in 2011 in the administration of SDC/NGO partnerships were submitted by the Federal Council to GPK-S and endorsed by GPK-S.

The OECD peer review<sup>102</sup> in October 2009 noted that the SDC approach to NGO partnerships was "*non-intrusive, pragmatic and individual*". While this allowed for a flexible approach, it also noted that were "*no clear, systematic criteria for engaging in strategic partnerships, nor clear links between financial allocations and performance*". The review welcomed the establishment of IPD and encouraged SDC to develop synergies with the emerging network of cantons active in development co-operation. Five additional cantonal federations were subsequently granted programme contributions in the 2013-2016 phase although IPD states that nothing to do with the OECD recommendation. The review noted

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<sup>100</sup> Institutionelle Partnerschaften Jahresbericht 2010, Anhang 2

<sup>101</sup> Annual Programme 2010 Institutional Partnerships.

<sup>102</sup> OECD Development Co-operation Peer Review SWITZERLAND 2009 OECD 2009Pp65,5

that the 2007 NGO policy did not provide specific, operational guidance for its support to Swiss NGOs and concluded that a more strategic approach to NGOs would require:

- Clear, transparent criteria for funding allocations and strategic partnerships;
- Further harmonising modalities within different components of the programme (in particular Eastern Europe and co-operation with the South);
- Further monitoring of the results and impact of NGO strategic partnerships and public-private development partnerships, at HQs and in the field;
- Consideration of the potential for developing multi-country and multi-sector partnerships; and
- A more systematic approach to managing for development results.

IPD introduced a number of changes in the management of programme contributions for the 2009-2013 strategy period. These included:

- The consolidation of a limit of 50% of the NGO's total budget, excluding other sources of SDC financing, for programme contributions. PEZA NGOs were exempt from this cap till the beginning of 2013. This 'cap' in funding led to an increase in funding to some partner organisations and the capping of support to others. IPD indicated<sup>103</sup> that future levels of funding would be linked to relevance and performance rather than by arithmetic formula, and acknowledged that the process of deciding the size of programme contributions must be comprehensible i.e. understood in the context of the programme and the overall financial architecture of the NGO.
- IPD introduced a more systematic assessment of programme reports including programme milestones for the programme agreements, and written feedback from IPD on these reports.
- In 2010, as result of a parliamentary decision to allocate additional ODA funds for water programmes, a pilot scheme of 'additional contributions' was introduced on the basis of call for proposals<sup>104</sup>. The first Call for Proposals resulted in the creation of a NGO Water Consortium which is still operating today. This call for proposal was thus part of a series of programmes/projects initiated by the Global Programme Water for the implementation of this parliamentary decision and has not been repeated.

IPD carried out a mid-term review of its programme contributions prior to the 2011/2012 credit approval that resulted in the future support to three NGOs being dependent on their institutional and programme development.

#### *2013-2016 Dispatch period*

IPD introduced a more systematic, detailed admission and approval process for its institutional partners for the 2013-2016 Dispatch period. This began in early 2011 with an invitation published on the SDC website and took approximately two years to complete as follows:

##### *- Admission (January –August 2011)*

Current NGO partners were re-assessed for the 2013-2016 dispatch period using a new set of criteria aimed to introduce greater transparency into the admission procedure. IPD focused on three main areas - institutional identity and development policy commitment; organisational governance and strategy; and management and performance system - with regard to eligibility. These three areas were sub-divided into nine categories which were further broken down into 32 specific criteria with a detailed description of each category, respective specific criteria, indicators and suggested sources of evidence NGOs could

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<sup>103</sup> Annual Programme 2010 Institutional Partnerships.

<sup>104</sup> Annual Programme Report 2011 Institutional Partnerships.

provide.<sup>105</sup> NGOs then had to submit an application form explaining their organisations competencies against these criteria.<sup>106</sup>

NGO applications were assessed in detail between March and August 2011 by a three-person commission including two independent assessors. Four organisations did not qualify following the admission examination. The Commission subsequently produced a report for SDC Senior Management including detailed comments on the applications of each NGO, and recommendations on admission. Category E NGOs were subsequently admitted to the scheme without a formal admissions process, following the closure of SDC Communications Department.

- *Negotiations (August 2011 – June 2012)*

IPD produced a Manual to guide the negotiation process with programme and focus contributions to Swiss NGOs in August 2011 and entered into negotiations with eligible NGOs for the 2013-2016 period. The manual included eight main criteria, each with a number of definitions or indicators, including the strategic orientation of the NGO; its relationship with partners; contribution to raising public awareness in Switzerland etc. A separate manual for the Cantonal federations was produced, with criteria adapted to their specificity. The manual for programme and focus contributions also applied to PEZA NGOs.

Negotiations lasted several months involving initial meetings, strategy discussions and consultations. Being admitted to the negotiation process did not automatically entitle an NGO to a programme contribution. One organisation failed in the course of the programme negotiation for reasons of its religious identity, programming and staffing issues. Following the negotiations, NGOs submitted draft programme documents and budgets in April 2012 which were assessed according to eight criteria:

- Coherent strategic programme orientation
- Clear programme profile with genuine substance
- Professional programme implementation
- Cooperation and openness
- Focus on effectiveness
- Relations with partners
- Use and promotion of knowledge
- Substance of content in public relations work in Switzerland

Each of these criteria was accompanied by key definitions and questions to guide the negotiations.<sup>107</sup> Programme applications were discussed during May/June 2012 and the SDC Directorate agreed programme contribution target figures in June 2012.

- *Agreements (July – November 2012)*

The levels of programme contributions for individual NGOs were agreed in July 2012. IPD met with NGOs during July - September 2012 to discuss and finalise the programme documents and draft the credit applications. These were approved during October/November 2012 and contracts were signed by December 2012. IPD approved contribution agreements for 37 NGOs for the 2013-2016 Dispatch period<sup>108</sup>.

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<sup>105</sup> Table: Zulassungskriterien\_Programmbeitrag\_DE (in German).

<sup>106</sup> Form: 17920\_Kriterien\_Vorselektion\_de (in German). Filled forms („Zulassung“) available in each NGO folder.

<sup>107</sup> Referenzdokument\_Verhandlungen\_Programm-Fokusbeitrag\_ENGL (English).

Document\_de\_référence\_pour\_négociations\_contributions\_aux\_fédérations\_cantoniales (French).

<sup>108</sup> Institutionelle Partnerschaften Jahresbericht 2014, Annexe 6

IPD produced a 'mid-term' assessment of the process to date in June 2012<sup>109</sup> Key points included:

- The separation of the "admission" and "negotiations" phases worked well and enabled negotiations to focus on the relevance of the programmes.
- The fact that NGOs could present their programmes in their own formats was positive and provided a good basis for negotiations.
- The diversity of NGOs made it impossible to directly compare programme applications; each application had to be assessed in its own right.
- There were signs that certain organisations were reaching their limits with regard to relevance. not clear what this means.
- The added value of the NGO lies in its role as a development actor on national or international level not just in strengthening the capacity of Southern actors.
- The integration of South, East and HH allowed IPD to assess NGOs with one set of criteria and reduced the administrative burden.
- There was a lack of clarity among some NGOs about contribution and mandate funding. There should not be two different SDC sources of financing for the same programme although programmes can have synergies and complementarities. Programme contributions aim to develop NGO competencies which may give them a "market advantage" with regard to mandates.
- The 2013-2016 negotiation process resulted in some adjustments to individual contributions.<sup>110</sup> For example, Caritas, Swiss Red Cross, Foundation Terre des Hommes were scaled up to the maximum programme contribution of CHF 10 million

A strategic monitoring framework was introduced in 2013 to monitor the NGO contribution to the strategic and partnership goals of the 2013-2016 Dispatch<sup>111</sup>. The aim was to consolidate the monitoring reports in a rolling report to SDC management and be compatible with the SDC results report on the 2013-16 Dispatch. In 2015<sup>112</sup> SDC produced an internal summary report on the 2014 achievements of institutional partners in relation to SDC partnership and development goals. This exercise was not repeated in acknowledgment that it did not succeed in summarising results across such a diverse portfolio.

In 2013 an OECD-DAC Peer Review of SDC in 2013 found that SDC had developed a more strategic, transparent and standardised approach to partnering with Swiss NGOs e.g. the establishment of pre-admission and admission criteria, as had been recommended in the previous OECD-DAC Peer Review in 2009. It highlighted that the SDC policy for working with civil society organisations in developing countries was yet to be updated, and that suggested that SDC could monitor the impact of its new partnership approach with Swiss NGOs, and translate the Dispatch's vision for engaging with civil society into operational and results-oriented priorities.<sup>113</sup>

#### *2017-2020 strategy period*

The admissions/approval process introduced for the 2013-2016 period was not repeated for the 2017-2020 period. In 2015 agreements were reached with the two newly accredited NGOs and negotiations began for programme contributions for 2017-2020. The remaining NGOs submitted their programme proposals in 2016. The current portfolio of NGOs, with one exception, did not have to go through an admissions assessment but passed directly to the negotiations stage. There were no significant revisions to the 2011

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<sup>109</sup> Notiz\_an\_Direktion\_Zwischenbilanz\_Verhandlungen\_Beiträge\_2013-2016\_\_DirKo\_25\_7\_2012\_4203 (Note to the Directorate on the status of the negotiations, June 2012)

<sup>110</sup> Notiz an Direktion Zwischenbilanz A1\_Beobachtungen\_zu\_den\_einzeln\_NGO (Note to the Directorate on the status of the regions – Observations on the individual NGOs)

<sup>111</sup> 2013-2016 Annual Programme Reports Institutional Partnership.

<sup>112</sup> Monitoring stratégique des ONG au bénéfice d'une contribution programme 2014

<sup>113</sup> OECD Development Co-operation Peer Review SWITZERLAND 2013 OECD 2014

negotiations manual. The eight criteria were retained but included a strengthened focus on results. For example, NGOs were asked to improve their results frameworks and required for the first time to demonstrate how their programmes contributed to the SDC strategic goals and SDGs. IPD estimates that about 80% of the programmes submitted can be assigned to one or more SDC priorities.

Once again IPD noted<sup>114</sup> the difficulty in summarising NGO results given the diversity of programmes and indicators, and the future challenge in monitoring partners' contributions to the objectives of the 2017-20 Dispatch. IPD committed to strengthening results-based management with its NGO institutional partners and has more recently confirmed that NGOs will continue to report to their own results frameworks. However, the use of Aggregated Reference Indicators (ARI) are now mandatory across SDC for the 2017-2020 Dispatch period and includes SDC/NGO institutional partners.

IPD reports discussions are going on with several organisations about their potential admission to the scheme during the current Dispatch period. IPD is drafting a new admission process and criteria.

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<sup>114</sup> Institutionelle Partnerschaften Jahresbericht 2016

### Annex 3 – Programme Contribution Matrix

Programme contribution	2009-2012	2013-2016 <sup>115</sup>
Action de Careme/ Fastenopfer	X	X
Brücke • Le pont	X	X
Caritas Schweiz	X	X
Schweiz. Rotes Kreuz	X	X
Enfants du Monde	X	X
EPER/ HEKS	X	X
Found. Terre des Homme Lausanne	X	X
Stiftung Kinderdorf Pestalozzi	X	X
Helvetas Swiss Intercoop.	X	X
Medicins Sans Frontieres Suisse <sup>116</sup>		X
SAH/Solidar Suisse <sup>117</sup>	X	X
Brot für Alle	X	X
Swissaid	X	X
Swisscontact	X	X
Terre des Hommes Schweiz Basel	X	X
Terre des Hommes Suisse Genf	X	X
Interteam	X	X
E-changer	X	
BMI	X	
COMUNDO <sup>118</sup>		X
Unité	X	X
CEAS	X	X
Foundation Hironnelle <sup>119</sup>		X
Iamaneh	X	X
Médecins du Monde <sup>120</sup>		X
Christlicher Friedensdienst (CFD) <sup>121</sup>	X	
SolidarMed	X	X
Vivamos Mejor <sup>122</sup>	X	
Vétérinaires sans frontières – Suisse (VSF) <sup>123</sup>	X	
Fédération Genevoise de Coopération (FGC)	X	X
Fédération Vaudoise de Coopération (FEDEVACO)	X	X
Fédération Interjurassienne de Coopération au Développement (FICD)	X	X
Fribourg Solidaire (FS)	X	X
Fédération Suisse Italienne de Coopération et Développement (FOSIT) <sup>124</sup>	X	X
Fédération Neuchâteloise de Coopération et Développement (Latitude 21) <sup>125</sup>	X	X
Valais Solidaire (VS) <sup>126</sup>	X	X
Akte <sup>127</sup>		X
Baobab Books <sup>128</sup>		X
Interaction <sup>129</sup>		X

<sup>115</sup> Education 21 and CINFO are excluded for the purposes of evaluation

<sup>116</sup> Appears from IPD Jahresprogramm 2013 institutionelle Partnerschaften onwards

<sup>117</sup> SAH /Schweizer Arbeiterhilfswerk became Solidar Suisse in 2011 as a separate legal entity

<sup>118</sup> Comundo was supported 2013-2016 as an alliance comprising of BMI, Interagire and E-Changer. Since 2017 E-Changer has been supported 2017 indirectly through Unité.

<sup>119</sup> First mentioned in IPD Jahresprogramm 2013 Institutionelle Partnerschaften

<sup>120</sup> First mentioned in IPD Jahresprogramm 2013 Institutionelle Partnerschaften

<sup>121</sup> Appears from IPD Jahresprogramm 2011 Institutionelle Partnerschaften onwards

<sup>122</sup> Appears in IPD Jahresprogramm 2010 institutionelle Partnerschaften (Project contribution)

<sup>123</sup> Appears in IPD Jahresprogramm 2010 Institutionelle Partnerschaften (Project contribution)

<sup>124</sup> Appears from IPD Jahresprogramm 2011 Institutionelle Partnerschaften onwards

<sup>125</sup> Appears from IPD Jahresprogramm 2011 Institutionelle Partnerschaften onwards

<sup>126</sup> Appears from IPD Jahresprogramm 2011 Institutionelle Partnerschaften onwards

<sup>127</sup> Collaboration with AKTE was transferred from Communication Division to IPD in 2008 but appears in IPD Jahresprogramm 2014 Institutionelle Partnerschaften as receiving programme contributions for the first time

<sup>128</sup> Same as AKTE

<b>Programme contribution</b>	<b>2009-2012</b>	<b>2013-2016<sup>115</sup></b>
Institut International des droits de l'enfant <sup>130</sup>		x
Fondation éducation et développement <sup>131</sup>	x	
<b>Total</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>35</b>

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<sup>129</sup> First mentioned in Jahresprogramm 2014 Institutionelle Partnerschaften

<sup>130</sup> Prior to 2013 IDE was granted contributions by the Global Institutions division of SDC but appears in IPD Jahresprogramm 2014 Institutionelle Partnerschaften as receiving programme contributions for the first time.

<sup>131</sup> FED is one of the two predecessor organisations of education 21. Collaboration with FED was transferred from the former SDC communication division to IPD in 2008 but appears from IPD Jahresprogramm 2010 Institutionelle Partnerschaften onwards

## Annex 4 – Evaluation Methodology

This Annex describes the approach and methodology taken by the IOD PARC evaluation team to conduct the Independent Evaluation of SDC's Partnership with Swiss NGOs.

The overall *purpose* of the evaluation was to assess the performance of programme contributions as a means of institutional partnerships between SDC and Swiss NGOs for the 8-year period 2009 - 2016.

The objective of the evaluation was to provide findings, conclusions and recommendations on whether and how SDC can strengthen approaches, strategies and instruments as well as improve the relevance, effectiveness and efficiency of its partnerships with NGO

### The Inception Phase

The Inception Phase took place from February to April and consisted of a preliminary desk review, interviews with key stakeholders, discussions with the Core Learning Partnership, developing a working intervention logic, finalising sampling strategies and the Evaluation Framework and refining the evaluation methodology. At this point the following was agreed:

- The working hypotheses, draft intervention logic and Evaluation Framework would form the basis of the evaluation
- The sampling criteria for the donor review, the survey, the documentary review and the interviews were agreed
- The recommendations would take the form of a set of options for the future of the partnerships based on the findings of the evaluation

### The Evaluation Approach and Methodology

The team used an Analytical Framework for which was developed and tested during the Inception Phase. The Analytical Framework makes explicit the logical steps and assumptions behind the hypothesis that SDC institutional partnerships with Swiss NGOs contributes to the implementation of NGOs programmes that also contribute to the strategic goals of Swiss development cooperation and humanitarian aid. This analytical framework consists of two main elements:

- A provisional *intervention logic* for the programme contribution scheme;
- An *Evaluation Framework* that incorporates the lines of enquiry specified for the evaluation in the Terms of Reference

#### *A Provisional Intervention Logic*

The Approach Paper<sup>132</sup> and SDC Manual<sup>133</sup> make it clear that support to Swiss NGOs is expected to contribute to the strategic goals of Swiss development cooperation and to the SDGs. However, SDC does not have an explicit theory of change or logic model for its support to Swiss NGOs, or more broadly, how this support contributes to broader development outcomes.

The evaluation team developed, and subsequently revised following the first CLP workshop<sup>134</sup>, a provisional intervention logic for programme contributions to Swiss NGOs. This has been further refined as a result of the Evaluation Team analytical process and subsequent discussions with the CLP. The provisional intervention logic delineated the steps in the change process between programme support to Swiss NGOs and the strategic goals of Swiss development cooperation, the assumptions they entail, and seeks

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<sup>132</sup> SDC Approach Paper for Call to Offers p 10,11

<sup>133</sup> Manual for the Negotiation of SDC Programme and Focus contributions to Swiss NGOs for the period 2013-2016 p6 Criterion 1

<sup>134</sup> The Evaluation Team has met the CLP 3 times during the Evaluation Process

to articulate the linkages (see Annex 6 for revised intervention logic). The principal hypothesis of the programme contribution scheme is that SDC support to Swiss NGOs contributes to the implementation of NGOs programmes that also contribute to the strategic goals of Swiss development cooperation and humanitarian aid. The provisional intervention logic broke this hypothesis down into three levels of assumption/hypothesis i.e.

- Effective and efficient management of institutional partnerships with NGOs leads to SDC partnership goals – learning, adding value, collaboration and raising public awareness;
- Swiss NGOs effectively implement programmes and help to raise public awareness of and support for development and humanitarian issues;
- Swiss NGOs strengthen programmes and partnerships in the South, East and Globally, and contribute to the strategic goals of Swiss development cooperation.

These assumptions acted as a bridge from the intervention logic to the proposed Evaluation Framework and were tested through an iterative process of data gathering and analysis. As a result, there are four re-formulated assumptions in the revised intervention logic.

#### *An Evaluation Framework*

The evaluation team developed an Evaluation Framework (see Annex 5) incorporating the evaluation questions of the ToR under the OECD/DAC evaluation criteria. Gender was considered implicitly as a cross-cutting issue across the Framework, and explicitly in Question 10 on cross cutting themes. The Framework identifies the data sources and data collection methods for each evaluation question. The team gathered information through all data gathering tools i.e. document review, stakeholder interviews and focus groups and the NGO survey, using questions of the Evaluation Framework. This enabled them to triangulate data to form an analysis drawing upon multiple data sources and data gathering for each question.

The Evaluation met expectation in the ToR to address the criteria in relation to:

- *Relevance*: of programme contributions to Swiss NGOs;
- *Effectiveness*: of programme contributions to the strategic goals of Swiss development cooperation;
- *Efficiency*: of the management processes and modalities of programme contributions.

#### **Data Gathering and Analysis**

The evaluation team adopted a systematic and iterative approach to data gathering and analysis. Data was gathered through different methods in a staged process. A review of secondary data enabled the evaluation to identify any gaps in the evidence base prior to refining the focus of the primary research. Data gathering tools such as interview formats, survey questions and e-mail consultations with Swiss NGOs were developed in line with the working hypotheses and Evaluation Framework to enable the data to be systematically triangulated across different data gathering methodologies prior to the development of the analysis and findings.

#### *Document Review*

Two review templates were designed for the document review to enable it to systematically and consistently screen both Swiss NGO and SDC documents. The document review templates were developed on the basis of the draft Evaluation Framework to enable the team to triangulate documentary evidence with data derived from other data gathering tools.

The NGO document review templates contains six lead questions with 31 sub-questions covering relevance, effectiveness and efficiency. The SDC document review template contains twelve lead questions with 29 sub-questions that are derived from the Evaluation Framework. The templates were tested and refined during the Inception Phase. The templates incorporate gender primarily in terms of the relevance and effectiveness criteria but also include specific gender-related questions linked to the evaluation questions.

*Review of NGO documents*

The volume of documents available from the 35 partner NGOs over a period of over eight years required the team to develop a sampling approach. The team originally applied a systematic random sampling approach to reduce the number of NGOs to be reviewed to a sample of 13 NGOs rather than identifying a number of pre-defined criteria. This provided an independently derived sample that included NGOs from all four partner categories. However, it was decided at the CLP meeting on 31st March 2017 to revise this approach in order to incorporate the sampling criteria of language and budget size.

The revised NGO sample in this report consists of 13 NGOs or 34% of the total of 35 NGOs considered for the evaluation. As suggested by the CLP, the sample reflects the linguistic make-up of the NGO portfolio (54% of NGOs are based in the German-speaking part of Switzerland and 46% of NGOs based in the French-speaking part of Switzerland). The sample also reflects the size of the NGOs in terms of their organisational portfolio in 2015 (40% had a total operational budget of over CHF 10 million in 2015, 60% had less than CHF 10 million). Hence the sample includes four “large” German-speaking and three “large” French-speaking Swiss NGOs and three “smaller” German-speaking and three “smaller” French-speaking Swiss NGOs. Within these boundaries, NGOs have been selected to broadly reflect the diversity of the portfolio and to ensure that all categories are included in the sample.

<b>CATEGORY A:</b> <i>Regular programme contributions</i>	Action de Careme, Fastenopfer, Brücke • Le pont , Caritas Schweiz; Schweiz Rotes Kreuz; Helvetas Swiss Intercooperation; Enfants du Monde; Medecins Sans Frontiers Suisse; Terre des Hommes Lausanne
<b>CATEGORY B:</b> <i>Contributions to exchange of personnel programmes (PEZA)</i>	Interteam
<b>CATEGORY C:</b> <i>Focus contributions</i>	Medecins du Monde; SolidarMed
<b>CATEGORY D:</b> <i>Contributions to cantonal federations</i>	Fédération Genevoise de Coopération
<b>CATEGORY E:</b> <i>Sensitisation and Education contributions</i>	AKTE

The sample can be illustrated as follows:<sup>135</sup>

	<b>German speaking</b>	<b>French speaking</b>
<b>Large/medium (&gt;10m)</b>	Action de Careme, Fastenopfer Caritas Schweiz Schweiz. Rotes Kreuz Helvetas Swiss Intercooperation	Terre des Hommes Lausanne Medecins Sans Frontiers Suisse Fédération Genevoise de Coopération
<b>Smaller (&lt;10m)</b>	Interteam SolidarMed AKTE	Brücke • Le pont Enfant du Monde Medecins du Monde

The team reviewed six key documents of each NGO in the sample i.e. 2009-2012 and 2013-2016 programme documents; 2012 and 2015 annual reports; and 2012 and 2014 credit proposals. Additionally, each consultant will prepare for an NGO interview by reviewing the key documentation available – for example, organisational strategy and report/s and evaluations. This will ensure that the key documents of all NGOs involved in the evaluation are reviewed and will contribute to the development of the overall analysis.

#### *Review of SDC documents*

The team conducted a general introductory review of key SDC documents such as SDC strategy and policy documents, and OECD peer reviews. This will be supplemented by a systematic review of SDC documents including IPD annual reports; documents related to the admission, negotiation and contracting processes; relevant Dispatches and policy documents; and relevant evaluations and audits. Documents have been selected as being potentially the most knowledge-rich in terms of the OECD/DAC criteria of relevance, efficiency and effectiveness.

#### *Stakeholder Consultations*

The evaluation team consulted with approximately 97 stakeholders through individual interview or focus group discussions including Swiss NGOs, SDC staff in Switzerland and overseas; 5 key respondents and 5 staff members from other agency Civil Society Units (see Annex 8 for list of people consulted).

- *Swiss NGOs:* The evaluation consulted with all Swiss NGOs supported by programme contributions through an individual interview or focus group discussion.
- *SDC staff:* Introductory interviews were conducted with a total of eleven SDC staff from the Institutional Partnership Division on and other Departments during the Inception Period. After consultation with the Evaluation Manager, a total of 27 SDC staff were identified for interview – including staff from SDC Cooperation Offices in the South and East; thematic focal points; staff from other SDC Divisions; and from IPD.
- *Key respondents:* Five key respondents for the evaluation, identified in consultation with SDC as having an informed but independent understanding of the programme contribution scheme, were also interviewed.
- *Staff from other Donor Civil Society Units:* One staff member for each of the donors as part of the comparative donor review (see below) were interviewed.

All interviews and focus groups were conducted using a semi-structured format based on the line of enquiry of the Evaluation Framework and adapted for each stakeholder group (see Annex 9). These formats guided but did not restrict the interviews.

<sup>135</sup> See Annex 11 for sampling matrix.

### *NGO Mapping*

Swiss NGOs supported by programme contributions range from large to small; have diverse missions and organisational architectures; a range of strengths, competences and capacities. They operate in different languages and geographies, and their programmes involve humanitarian aid, development cooperation and cooperation with Eastern Europe. Given this diversity, the evaluation team conducted a mapping exercise of the 35 NGOs currently receiving Programme Contributions so that the evaluation findings could be differentiated according to the different characteristics of the NGOs supported.

The evaluation team completed a preliminary financial mapping of the 35 Swiss NGOs during the inception which was subsequently revised. The purpose of the mapping exercise was to provide a factual analysis of how SDC Programme Contributions have been allocated across the portfolio during the evaluation period.

### *NGO Survey*

A key part of the methodology for this evaluation was the use of an online survey of Swiss NGOs. The survey was distributed to NGOs' representatives identified by the NGOs themselves. However, NGOs were encouraged to consult more broadly in their organisation when completing the survey and to provide a consolidated response.

The survey was administered through an online survey tool. The tool used an approach which uses a 'forced-choice' protocol, to ensure that respondents select a response option that indicates a definitive opinion (rather than an average) and thus requiring them to express an opinion closest to their perspective. Respondents had the option of partially completing the survey and then saving to complete at a later time. The survey was available in German, French and English.

The types of questions in the survey fulfilled the following purposes:

- To generate both qualitative and quantitative data relevant to the evaluation;
- To gather quantitative perception data and trends on the nature and performance from NGOs of their partnership with SDC;
- To triangulate evidence gathered from document review, interviews and focus groups;

The survey had a total of 23 questions and consisted mostly of a series of rating questions – for example, “To what extent do you think your partnership with SDC supports the following: Please rate on a scale of 0 (Unimportant/Makes no difference) to 4 (Highly important/Critical)”. There was also an opportunity in the survey to add qualitative statements to many questions to enrich the content of the responses. The survey received a 100% response rate and the survey results can be found in Annex 13.

### *Comparative review of donor practices (April/May 2017)*

As per the Terms of Reference, the Evaluation Team conducted a review of how other, similar Donor/NGO partnership schemes compare with SDC's institutional partnerships. The team used a framework which focuses on: management, timescales, eligibility, funding modalities, monitoring and reporting, resource allocation and partnerships.

The sample was based on five agencies - Danida, DFID, Ministry of Foreign Affairs in the Netherlands, Finish MFA<sup>136</sup> and SIDA. The sample was selected from the donors reviewed in a previous comparative analysis that had been conducted by the Team Leader. Four of the agencies selected were discussed and agreed during the Inception Period and subsequently a fifth was added.

The methodology included:

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<sup>136</sup> MFA Finland was added to the sample after the Inception Report

- A rapid desk based review of donor website, strategies and reports
- Email communication with one person from the Civil Society Departments (or equivalent) to check that information is current and up to date;
- Interview with one person from Civil Society Departments to understand the trajectory of the approach to civil society.

The findings have been incorporated in the Evaluation Report and a summary of the key issues can be found in Annex 14.

### **Analysis**

The team adopted a three-stage analysis from the evidence provided from data gathering methods:

- Ongoing analysis: The team developed, and discussed through Skype conferences, an on-going ‘first cut’ analysis of the data at each point in the data gathering process i.e. NGO mapping and NGO survey; document review; individual and group consultations; and the comparative donor review.
- Team analysis: The team met over two days in June after the completion of all data gathering to develop a more in-depth analysis of the evidence provided against the Evaluation Framework. The team also drew upon the Evaluation Framework to analyse the evidence in relation to the three assumptions/hypotheses that underpin the provisional theory of change, and revise the theory of change accordingly. This was an opportunity to discuss possible recommendations and draft some initial options with regard to the future design and operation of SDC institutional partnerships with Swiss NGOs.
- Testing initial findings: The team conducted an additional workshop with the CLP in the first week of July. The purpose of the workshop was to discuss and test some key findings from the team analysis with the CLP and explore possible options with regard to the future implementation of SDC/Swiss NGO institutional partnerships.

Comments and discussions from CLP workshop in July 2017 were subsequently taken into consideration in the preparation of the final draft report.

### **Reporting and Communication**

The evaluation team aimed to ensure that as much learning took place during the evaluation as after the delivery of the final report.

The Evaluation Team had direct communication with the Swiss NGOs, the CLP and the IPD and shared iterations of findings during the process. The key points of communication were:

- Four meetings with the CLP. The first one to introduce the team and discuss the evaluation framework, the second to present and discuss the methodology, the third to discuss the draft report and the fourth to present the final report.
- Ongoing discussions and communications with IPD including interviews, sharing of preliminary findings (the draft history of programme contribution, the draft financial mapping and the draft survey results). IPD was given the opportunity to comment on all of these and provide factual clarifications.
- Ongoing communication with the Evaluation Division to update them on the progress of the evaluation.
- Individual interviews and focus group conversations with the NGOs and SDC staff.

### **Risk assessment and limitations**

The Inception Report identified a number of risks and limitations with regard to the evaluation approach, each with a set of mitigating actions. In general, none of the risks identified have significantly affected the evaluation process. However, there remain two significant limitations to the evidence base of the evaluation with implications for the

evaluation findings. First, although the evaluation drew upon five data sources – interviews, focus groups, an NGO survey, document review and review of similar donor practices. Swiss NGOs provided the most significant body of evidence through interviews and survey responses which may have weighted the evaluation findings towards an NGO perspective. The evaluation Terms of Reference did not provide for field trips or a survey of Southern partners which may have offered a broader perspective. Secondly, the inconsistency in format and quality of NGO reports resulted in any attempt to summarise the overall effectiveness of the portfolio implausible. This is explored in more detail in Section 5.1.

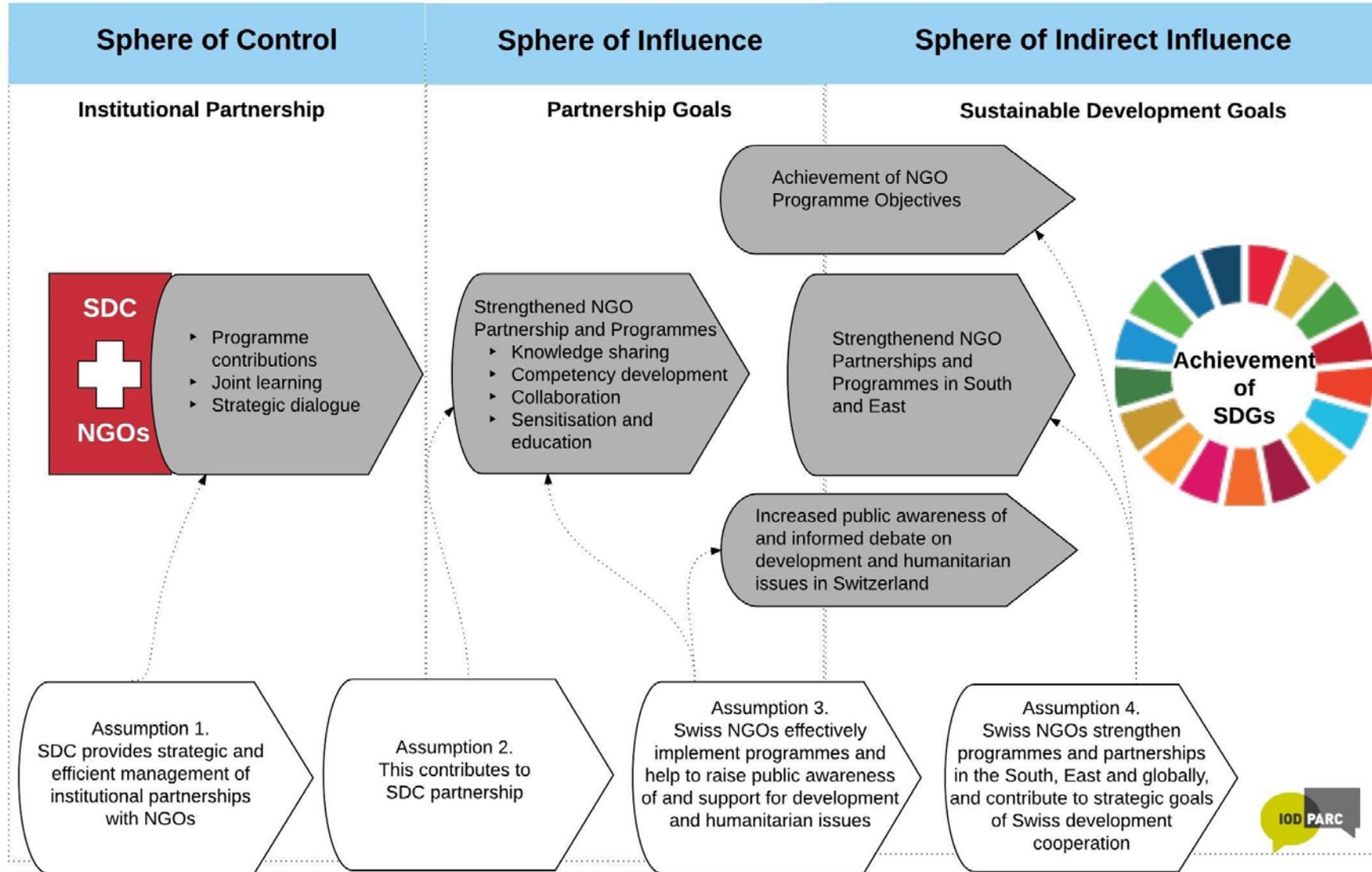
Where possible, the evaluation team have provided disaggregated data. However, it is noted that the evaluation found that, on the whole, many of the issues mentioned were the same across NGO categories with the exception of one category.

## Annex 5 – Evaluation Framework

<i>To what extent has the SDC partnership with Swiss NGOs through programme contributions been relevant, effective and efficient?</i>			
No	Draft EQs	Data sources	Data collection methods
<b>Relevance</b>			
	To what extent do programme contributions foster or hinder a strategic partnership between Swiss NGOs and SDC?	NGO, SDC and IPD staff; key respondents; SDC/ NGO documents	Semi-structured interviews, CLP Meetings, Focus group, NGO survey, SDC document review
	What are the strengths and weaknesses of these partnerships? What room for improvement exists?	NGO, SDC and IPD staff; key respondents; SDC/ NGO documents	Semi-structured interviews, CLP Meetings, focus group, NGO survey, SDC document review
	What is the added value of the programme contribution partnerships for SDC and NGOs?	NGO, SDC and IPD staff; key respondents; SDC/ NGO documents	Semi-structured interviews, CLP Meetings, focus group, SDC document review, NGO document review
	What synergies, complementarities or conflicts are there between programme contributions and other SDC support modalities for NGOs?	NGO, SDC and IPD staff; key respondents	Semi-structured interviews, NGO survey
	How appropriate is the current portfolio of NGOs with regard to reaching SDCs goals?	NGO, SDC and IPD staff; key respondents; SDC/ NGO documents	Semi-structured interviews, NGO survey, NGO mapping, SDC document review
	To what extent are NGO programme contribution partnerships relevant to strategic goals of Swiss development cooperation and SDGs?	NGO, SDC and IPD staff; SDC/ NGO documents	Semi-structured interviews, NGO survey; SDC document review, NGO document review
	What relevant experiences do other donor agencies have with similar modalities?	Evaluation/reviews of donor CS support and/or NGO partnerships. Existing contacts within other donor agencies	Update previous study with literature review and semi-structured interviews
	How has the programme contribution scheme adapted to a changing context, new priorities and needs during the evaluation period?	NGO, SDC, IPD staff. SDC/NGO documents	Semi-structured interviews, focus group, NGO survey. NGO and SDC document review
<b>Effectiveness</b>			
	What contribution have NGOs made to achieving strategic goals of Swiss development cooperation? How is this evidenced?	NGO, SDC, IPD staff; SDC/NGO documents	Semi-structured interviews, NGO document review SDC document review
	What contribution have NGOs made to SDC cross-sectional themes i.e. gender equity and good governance? How is this evidenced?	SDC/NGO documents	Semi-structured interviews, NGO document review SDC document review

<b><i>To what extent has the SDC partnership with Swiss NGOs through programme contributions been relevant, effective and efficient?</i></b>		
<p>What contribution have NGOs made to SDC partnership goals? i.e.</p> <p>a) Learning: Knowledge sharing and adoption of learning within the sector</p> <p>b) Adding value: Contributing distinctive Swiss competencies to the national and international sector</p> <p>c) Collaboration: Facilitating collaborations and complementarities within the sector</p> <p>d) Public awareness: Sensitizing and education on development issues in Switzerland.</p> <p>How is this contribution evidenced?</p>	SDC/NGO documents	Semi-structured interviews, NGO document review SDC document review
What factors have contributed to or impeded the achievement of the agreed goals?	NGO staff; NGO and SDC documents	Semi-structured interviews; SDC document review
How has the SDC programme contribution scheme contributed to/strengthened global frameworks (e.g. SDGs)?	NGO, SDC, IP staff. SDC/NGO documents	Semi-structured interviews, NGO document review SDC document review
How dependent are Swiss NGOs on programme contributions; how has this influenced the partnership and other processes; how effective have they been in diversifying their funding?	NGO staff; NGO/SDC reports	Semi-structured interviews, NGO survey; NGO document review (financial reports)
To what extent (and how) do programme contribution partnerships foster the institutional development of NGOs i.e. their thematic, methodological or organizational capacities?	NGO, SDC, IP staff; NGO/SDC reports	Semi-structured interviews, NGO survey; NGO document review; SDC document review
What commonalities or differences are there in the institutional development paths of programme contribution NGOs?	NGO, SDC, IP staff; NGO/SDC reports	Semi-structured interviews, NGO survey; NGO document review
What other significant NGO results - anticipated or unanticipated - have been reported 2009-16?	NGO, SDC, IP staff; NGO/SDC reports	Semi-structured interviews; NGO document review
<b>Efficiency</b>		
<p>How efficiently is the programme contribution partnership scheme managed? e.g.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Assessment and selection,</li> <li>- Resource allocation,</li> <li>- Monitoring and reporting,</li> <li>- Planning and steering,</li> <li>- Consultation and dialogue,</li> <li>- Reviewing, terminating partnerships?</li> </ul>	NGO, SDC, IP staff; key respondents	Semi-structured interviews, focus group, NGO survey; SDC document review
What are the strengths and weaknesses of the current approach and procedures? How might it be improved?	NGO, SDC, IP staff; key respondents	Semi-structured interviews, focus group, NGO survey; SDC document review

## Annex 6 – Revised Intervention Logic



## Annex 7 – Swiss Development Cooperation Goals

The following text is derived from SDC Dispatches and the Approach Paper to Call to Offers.

Dispatch 2009-12	Dispatch 2013-16	Dispatch 2017-20	Evaluation proposal
<b>Swiss Development Cooperation Goals</b>			
The Government enters into partnerships with non-governmental actors from the civil society and the private sector to fulfil development policy duties. It assures the competencies for implementing development cooperation in Switzerland and increased public sensitivity toward development issue”	Prevent and overcome crisis, conflicts and disaster Support sustainable access to resources and services for all Promote sustainable economic growth Support the transition to democratic, market economy systems Contribute to the development of an international framework .... Cross-sectional themes Good governance and Gender equality	....development of an <b>international framework</b> to respond to global challenges Prevent and manage the consequences of ... <b>fragility</b> Support sustainable <b>access to resources and services</b> for all Promote sustainable <b>economic growth</b> Strengthen the rule of law and <b>democratic participation</b> Ensure respect for <b>human rights</b> and fundamental liberties Strengthen <b>gender equality</b> and the rights of women and girls  Support <b>transition</b> processes to democratic systems .....	<b>Global frameworks:</b> Strengthen global frameworks in support of the SDGs. <b>Basic services :</b> Sustainable access to resources and services for all <b>Governance and Human Rights:</b> strengthen democracies and human rights. <b>Fragile contexts :</b> Strengthen resilience in fragile contexts <b>Gender :</b> Gender equality and the rights of women and girls <b>Economic development:</b> Sustainable economic growth  <b>Transition:</b> Transition to democratic systems and social market economies.  <b>Humanitarian system:</b> Strengthen humanitarian system  <b>Humanitarian Aid:</b> Prevent and alleviate human suffering caused by crisis, conflict or disaster <sup>137</sup> .
<b>Swiss Partnership goals</b>			
Development <b>policy dialogue</b> <b>Experience exchange</b> to shape the Swiss development cooperation  ..... reduce poverty, <b>strengthen structures of civil society</b> , and for promoting civil society participation in political processes	NGO partnerships provide a coherent <b>contribution to the strategic goals</b> of Swiss development cooperation Swiss NGOs <b>put into value specific strengths and competences</b> Swiss NGOs <b>valorize additional</b> potentials within the international cooperation system (complementarities of actors....) Swiss NGOs engage actively in ..... <b>public debate on development policy</b>	<b>Thematic and operational know-how</b>  <b>Knowledge of local context</b>  Potential for <b>innovation</b>  <b>Raising public awareness</b> of development issues in Switzerland	<b>Learning:</b> Knowledge sharing/contributing learning to the sector <b>Adding value:</b> Contributing distinctive Swiss competencies to the national and international sector <b>Synergy:</b> Achieving synergies and complementarities within sector <b>Public awareness:</b> Sensitizing and education on global issues in Switzerland.

## Annex 8 – List of people consulted

Name	Organisation	Position
<b>NGOs</b>		
<b>CATEGORY A: Regular program contributions</b>		
Markus Brun	Action de Careme, Fastenopfer	Co-head of International Cooperation Department / Member of the Executive Board
Sandrine Cottier	Action de Careme, Fastenopfer	Head of Programme Development
Matthias Dörnenburg	Action de Careme, Fastenopfer	Co-head of Communication / Member if the Executive Board
Bernd Nilles	Action de Careme, Fastenopfer	Managing Director
Franziska Theiler	Brücke • Le pont	Managing Director
Hugo Fasel	Caritas Schweiz	Director
Markus Mader	Schweiz. Rotes Kreuz	Director
Beat von Däniken	Schweiz. Rotes Kreuz	Director International Cooperation
Thomas Gass	Schweiz. Rotes Kreuz	Head of Unit Strategic and Conceptional development
Lorenz Indermühle	Schweiz. Rotes Kreuz	Head of Division Africa/Americas
Verena Wieland	Schweiz. Rotes Kreuz	Advisor Conflict Sensitivity and Development Policy
Carlo Santarelli	Enfants du Monde	Secretary general
Fabienne Lagier	Enfants du Monde	Deputy Secretary General
Regula Hafner	EPER/ HEKS	Head of Africa/ Latin America
Peter Merz	EPER/ HEKS	Board member, Head International Division
Philippe Buchs	Found. Terre des Homme Lausanne	Director of institutional partnerships
Beata Godenzi	Found. Terre des Homme Lausanne	Programme Director
Urs Karl Egger	Stiftung Kinderdorf Pestalozzi	Chief Executive Officer
Melchior Lengsfeld	Helvetas Swiss Intercoop.	Executive Director
Remo Gesu	Helvetas Swiss Intercoop.	Co-Head International Programmes
Rupa Mukerji	Helvetas Swiss Intercoop.	Co-Head Advisory Services
Stefan Stolle	Helvetas Swiss Intercoop.	Director, Marketing and Strategic Partnerships
Bruno Jochum	Medicins Sans Frontieres Suisse	Director-general
Claire Vandenheuval	Medicins Sans Frontieres Suisse	Head of Project Management Office
Emmanuel Flamand	Medicins Sans Frontieres Suisse	Director of Finance
Sophie Arbona	Medicins Sans Frontieres Suisse	Head of Project Funding
Felix Gnehm	Solidar Suisse	Head International Programmes
Esther Maurer	Solidar Suisse	Managing Director
Madeleine	Brot für Alle	Network Coordinator

Bollinger		
Bernard DuPasquier	Brot für Alle	Director
Barbara Lutz	Brot für Alle	Head of Cooperation Systems
Dr. Carmen Meyer	Brot für Alle	Executive Director, Christlicher Friedensdienst (CFD)
Caroline Morel	Swissaid	Executive Director
Jeremias Blaser	Swissaid	Head of Development Cooperation
Florian Meister	Swisscontact	Deputy Executive Director
Anne Bickel	Swisscontact	Head of Partner Programmes
Markus Kupper	Swisscontact	Head of Monitoring, Result and Knowledge Management
Franziska Lauper	Terre des Hommes Schweiz Basel	Executive Director
Gabriela Wichser Ladner	Terre des Hommes Schweiz Basel	Head Programmes / Member of Management Team
Jean-Luc Pittet	Terre des Hommes Suisse Genf	Secretary general
Christophe Roduit	Terre des Hommes Suisse Genf	South Programme Director
Anne-Céline Machet	Terre des Hommes Suisse Genf	Swiss Programme Manager
<b>CATEGORY B: Contributions to exchange of personnel programs (PEZA)</b>		
Erik Keller	Interteam	Managing Director
Franz Erni	COMUNDO	Head of International Division
Teres Steiger-Graf	COMUNDO	Chief Executive
Georg L'Homme	Unité	Managing Director
Raji Sultan	Unité	Head of Communication
<b>CATEGORY C: Focus contributions</b>		
Daniel Schneider	CEAS	Director
Patrick Kohler	CEAS	Deputy Director and Mangement of SDC Programme
Jean-François Houmard	CEAS	Programme Manager
Caroline Vuillemin	Foundation Hirondelle	General Director
Xavier de Bruyn	Foundation Hirondelle	Operations Director
Philippe Bovey	Foundation Hirondelle	General Secretary (Finance)
Nicolas Boissez	Foundation Hirondelle	Partnership Division
Maja Loncarevic	Iamaneh	Deputy Director/ Programme Coordinator Western Balkans
Maya Natarajan	Iamaneh	Managing Director
Alexandra Nicola	Iamaneh	Programme Coordinator West Africa
Max Morel	Médecins du Monde	Director
Morgane Rousseau	Médecins du Monde	SDC Partnership Lead
Jochen Ehmer	SolidarMed	Managing Director

<b>CATEGORY D: Contributions to cantonal federations</b>		
Rene Longet	Fédération Genevoise de Coopération (FGC)	President
Silvia Frei	Fédération Genevoise de Coopération (FGC)	Joint Secretary general
Alexandre Cavin	Fédération Vaudoise de Coopération (FEDEVACO)	Secretary general
Isabelle Boegli Milani	Fédération Interjurassienne de Coopération au Développement (FICD)	Secretary general
Michel Diot	Fribourg Solidaire (FS)	Coordinator, Secretary
Marianne Villaret	Fédération Suisse Italienne de Coopération et Développement (FOSIT)	Secretary general
Diana Polimeno	Fédération Neuchâteloise de Coopérat. et Développement (Latitude 21)	Secretary General and Coordinator of the Fédéréseau
Evelyne Bezat-Grillet	Valais Solidaire (VS)	Secretary general
<b>CATEGORY E: Sensitisation and Education contributions</b>		
Christine Pluess	AKTE	Managing Director
Sonja Matheson	Baobab Books	Managing Director
Tezgoeren Olivier	Interaction	Managing Director
Marc Jost	Interaction	Chairman
Paola Riva	Institut International des droits de l'enfant	Director
<b>Name</b>	<b>Organisation</b>	<b>Position</b>
<b>SDC</b>		
Konrad Specker	SDC	Head of IP Division (HQ)
Pierre Kistler	SDC	IP Division (HQ)
Frédéric Noirjean	SDC	Deputy Head, IP Division (HQ)
Sonja Carlotti	SDC	IP Division (HQ)
Dominique Rychen	SDC	IP Division after the interviews (HQ)
André Huber	SDC	Deputy Head, Division / HH Africa (HQ)
Pierre Maurer	SDC	HH Africa Division (NGOs / Health)
Marc André Bünzli	SDC	Africa Division (+ Water / NGOs) (HQ)
Adrian Maître	SDC	Deputy Head, Department (HQ)
Dominique Favre	SDC	Deputy Head, Department (HQ)
Kuno Schläfli	SDC	Head, Knowledge-Learning-Culture Division (HQ)
Odile Keller	SDC	Head Analysis and Policy Division (HQ)
Jean-François Cuénod	SDC	Deputy Head, Department (HQ)

Corine Huser	SDC	FP Democratization, Decentralization, Local Governance (HQ)
Felix Fellmann	SDC	FP Agriculture and Food Security (HQ)
Valerie Liechti	SDC	FP Education, West Africa (HQ)
Peter Beez	SDC	FP e+i, Latin America (HQ)
Nils Rosemann	SDC	FP Conflict and Human Rights, South Asia (HQ)
Jean Christophe Favre	SDC	PPDP (HQ)
Sybille Suter	SDC	SCO Macedonia, Western Balkans
Roger Denzer	SDC	Embassy, Bolivia
Giancarlo de Picciotto	SDC	SCO Grands Lacs, Ruanda
Stephanie Guha	SDC	SCO Mali
Rahel Bösch	SDC	SCO Cambodia, Future Head IPD
Romana Tedeschi	SDC	SCO Tanzania
<b>Name</b>	<b>Organisation</b>	<b>Position</b>
<b>Key respondents</b>		
Walo Egli	Retired from NADEL ETHZ	Development Expert
Mark Herkenrath	Alliance Sud	Director
René Stäheli	Fairmed	Director
Dieter Zürcher	KEK – SDC Consultants	Business Partner
Ivo Germann	SECO	Head of Operations South/East
Joachim Carlson	Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida)	Programme Manager Specialist, Civil Society Uni
Katja Hirvonen	Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland	Unit for Civil Society Cooperation
Mike Battcock	Department for International Development	Inclusive Societies Department
Thomas Nikolaj Hansen	Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Denmark	Senior Adviser & Team leader/ Civil Society Dept. for Humanitarian Action, Migration and Civil Society
Cornelius Hacking	MFA Netherlands	Senior Policy Officer, Civil Society Division

## **Annex 9 – Interview and focus group guides**

### **Swiss NGOs**

#### **Relevance**

1. To what extent do programme contributions foster or hinder a strategic partnership between Swiss NGOs and SDC?
2. What are the strengths and weaknesses of these partnerships? What room for improvement exists?
3. What is the added value of the programme contribution partnerships for NGOs?
4. What synergies, complementarities or conflicts are there between programme contributions and other SDC support modalities for NGOs?
5. To what extent are NGO programme contribution partnerships relevant to strategic goals of Swiss development cooperation and SDGs?
6. How relevant is the current portfolio of NGOs with regard to reaching the strategic goals of Swiss development cooperation?
7. How has the programme contribution scheme adapted to a changing context, new priorities and needs during the evaluation period?

#### **Effectiveness**

1. Please describe an example/s of how your organisation has contributed to the strategic goals of Swiss development cooperation?
2. Please describe an example/s of how your organisation has contributed to SDC cross-sectional themes i.e. gender equity and good governance?
3. Please describe the results framework your organisation uses to provide evidence of your programme achievements.
4. What other significant results - anticipated or unanticipated – has your organisation achieved during 2009-16?
5. Please describe an example/s of how your organisation has contributed to SDC partnership goals? i.e.
  - Learning: Knowledge sharing and adoption of learning within the sector
  - Adding value: Contributing distinctive Swiss competencies to the national and international sector
  - Collaboration: Facilitating collaborations and complementarities within the sector
  - Public awareness: Sensitising and education on development issues in Switzerland.
6. Please describe the results framework your organisation uses to provide evidence of your programme achievements.
7. What factors have contributed or impeded your contribution to SDC goals?
8. How effective has your organisation been in diversifying its funding since 2009?
9. How has your programme contribution partnership contributed to your institutional development e.g. your thematic, methodological or organizational development?

#### **Efficiency**

1. How efficiently is the programme contribution partnership scheme managed and how might it be improved?
2. Overall what are the strengths and weaknesses of the current approach and procedures?
3. What would you do differently to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of SDC partnerships with Swiss NGOs?

## **SDC**

### **Relevance**

1. To what extent do programme contributions foster or hinder a strategic partnership between Swiss NGOs and SDC?
2. What are the strengths and weaknesses of these partnerships? What room for improvement exists?
3. What is the added value of the programme contribution partnerships for SDC??
4. What synergies, complementarities or conflicts are there between programme contributions and other SDC support modalities for NGOs?
5. To what extent are NGO programme contribution partnerships relevant to strategic goals of Swiss development cooperation and SDGs?
6. How relevant is the current portfolio of NGOs with regard to reaching Swiss cooperation goals?
7. How has the programme contribution scheme adapted to a changing context, new priorities and needs during the evaluation period?

### **Effectiveness**

1. Please describe an example/s of how a Swiss NGO has contributed to Swiss cooperation goals and cross-sectional themes i.e. gender equity and good governance?
2. Please describe an example/s of how Swiss NGOs have contributed to SDC partnership goals? i.e.
  - Learning: Knowledge sharing and adoption of learning within the sector
  - Adding value: Contributing distinctive Swiss competencies to the national and international sector
  - Collaboration: Facilitating collaborations and complementarities within the sector
  - Public awareness: Sensitizing and education on development issues in Switzerland.
1. How effective have Swiss NGOs been in diversifying its funding since 2009?
2. To what extent has programme contributions contributed to NGO institutional development e.g. your thematic, methodological or organizational development?

### **Efficiency**

1. How efficiently is the programme contribution partnership scheme managed and how might it be improved?
2. Overall what are the strengths and weaknesses of the current approach and procedures?
3. What would you do differently to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of SDC partnerships with Swiss NGOs?

## **Key respondents**

### **Relevance**

1. To what extent do programme contributions foster or hinder a strategic partnership between Swiss NGOs and SDC?
2. What are the strengths and weaknesses of these partnerships? What room for improvement exists?
3. What synergies, complementarities or conflicts are there between programme contributions and other SDC support modalities for NGOs?
4. To what extent are NGO programme contribution partnerships relevant to the strategic goals of Swiss development cooperation and SDGs?
5. How relevant is the current portfolio of NGOs with regard to reaching the strategic goals of Swiss development cooperation?
6. To what extent has the programme contribution scheme adapted to a changing context, new priorities and needs during the evaluation period?

### **Effectiveness**

1. Can you provide an example/s of how a Swiss NGO has contributed to strategic goals of Swiss development cooperation and/or SDC cross-sectional themes i.e. gender equity and good governance?
2. How have Swiss NGOs contributed to SDC partnership goals? i.e.
  - Learning: Knowledge sharing and adoption of learning within the sector
  - Adding value: Contributing distinctive Swiss competencies to the national and international sector
  - Collaboration: Facilitating collaborations and complementarities within the sector
  - Public awareness: Sensitizing and education on development issues in Switzerland.
3. To what extent are Swiss NGOs dependent on programme contributions? Have they adequately diversified their funding since 2009?
4. To what extent have Swiss NGOs been able to use programme contributions for their own institutional development e.g. thematic, methodological or organizational development?

### **Efficiency**

1. How efficiently is the programme contribution partnership scheme managed and how might it be improved?
2. Overall what are the strengths and weaknesses of the current approach and procedures?
3. What would you do differently to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of SDC partnerships with Swiss NGOs

## **Focus group protocols: Swiss NGOs**

### **Relevance**

1. To what extent do programme contributions foster or hinder an institutional partnership between Swiss NGOs and SDC?
2. What are the strengths and weaknesses of these partnerships?
3. What synergies, complementarities or conflicts are there between programme contributions and other SDC support modalities for NGOs?
4. To what extent are NGO programme contribution partnerships relevant to strategic goals of Swiss development cooperation and SDGs?
5. How relevant is the current portfolio of NGOs with regard to reaching strategic goals of Swiss development cooperation?

### **Effectiveness**

1. Please describe an example/s of how your organisation has contributed to SDC partnership goals? i.e.
  - Learning: Knowledge sharing and adoption of learning within the sector
  - Adding value: Contributing distinctive Swiss competencies to the national and international sector
  - Collaboration: Facilitating collaborations and complementarities within the sector
  - Public awareness: Sensitizing and education on development issues in Switzerland.
2. How has your programme contribution partnership contributed to your institutional development e.g. your thematic, methodological or organizational development?

### **Efficiency**

1. How efficiently is the programme contribution partnership scheme managed and how might it be improved
2. Overall what are the strengths and weaknesses of the current approach and procedures?

What would you do differently to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of SDC partnerships with Swiss NGOs?

## Annex 10 – Sampling matrix for document review

NGOs selected as per discussion with the CLP in yellow.

<b>NGO sampling</b>	
	<b>CATEGORY A: Regular program contributions</b>
1	Action de Careme, Fastenopfer
2	Brücke Le Pont
3	Caritas Schweiz
4	Schweiz. Rotes Kreuz
5	Enfants du Monde
6	EPER/ HEKS
7	Found. Terre des Homme Lausanne
8	Stiftung Kinderdorf Pestalozzi
9	Helvetas Swiss Intercooperation
10	Medicins Sans Frontieres Suisse
11	Solidar Suisse
12	Brot für Alle
13	Swissaid
14	Swisscontact
15	Terre des Hommes Schweiz Basel
16	Terre des Hommes Suisse Genf
	<b>CATEGORY B: Contributions to exchange of personnel programs (PEZA)</b>
17	Interteam
18	COMUNDO
19	Unité
	<b>CATEGORY C: Focus contributions</b>
20	CEAS
21	Foundation Hirondelle
22	Iamaneh
23	Médecins du Monde
24	SolidarMed
	<b>CATEGORY D: Contributions to cantonal federations</b>
25	Fédération Genevoise de Coopération (FGC)
26	Fédération Vaudoise de Coopération (FEDEVACO)
27	Fédération Interjurassienne de Coopération au Développement (FICD)
28	Fribourg Solidaire (FS)
29	Fédération Suisse Italienne de Coopération et Développement (FOSIT)
30	Fédération Neuchâteloise de Coopération et Développement (Latitude 21)
31	Valais Solidaire (VS)
	<b>CATEGORY E: Sensitisation and Education contributions</b>
32	AKTE
33	Baobab Books
34	Interaction
35	Institut International des droits de l'enfant

## **Annex 11 – Documents consulted**

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##### Systematic Document Review

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- Fastenopfer (2012) Programmdokument 2013 – 2016
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- Fastenopfer (2016) Programmdokument 2017 - 2020
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## Annex 12 – Survey Format

### Introduction

Dear colleague,

Thank you for agreeing to participate in an online survey as part of the Independent Evaluation of SDC's Partnership with Swiss NGOs. The survey will be an important source of information for the evaluation and we would be very grateful if you could take the time to ensure that your organisation's views are represented. We would also encourage you to seek other colleagues' views with regards to the survey questions before completing it, if you think this appropriate, although only one response should be submitted for each NGO. Your responses will be treated with complete confidentiality. Survey responses must be received by 5pm Swiss time on Friday 28th April. The survey should take no more than 25 minutes to complete and can be completed in English, German or French. The survey has a save and continue button at the bottom of the survey page to ensure data is not lost due to poor connectivity (hover your mouse under the next and back buttons on any page). If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact [naomi@iodparc.com](mailto:naomi@iodparc.com).

Thank you for your cooperation,  
The Evaluation Team.

Category

- A
- B
- C
- D
- E

1) Name of organisation

2) Your name and role within the organisation

Name

Role

3) How many staff does your organisation have?

	0-25	26-50	51-75	76-100	100+
HQ	<input type="radio"/>				
Country-Level	<input type="radio"/>				

4) What, for you, is the goal of your organisation's partnership with the Swiss Development Corporation (SDC)?

5) How familiar are you with SDC's strategic goals?

Please rate on a scale of 1(Not at all) to 4 (Very significantly).

- 1-Not at all
- 2-Somewhat
- 3-Significantly
- 4-Very significantly

6) Are you clear as to how your organisation is contributing to the SDC strategy/ SDC strategic goals?

Please rate on a scale of 1(Not at all) to 4 (Very significantly).

- 1-Not at all
- 2-Somewhat
- 3-Significantly
- 4-Very significantly

Please explain

7) To what extent do you think your partnership with SDC supports your organisation to contribute to the following goals:

Please rate on a scale of 1(Not at all) to 4 (Very significantly). If the question is not relevant, mark "N/A". Please mark only one circle per row.

	1- Not at all	2- Somewhat	3- Significantly	4-Very significantly	Do not know	N/A
Global frameworks: Strengthening global frameworks in support of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Basic services: Sustainable access to resources and services for all	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Governance and Human Rights: Strengthened democracies and human rights	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Fragile contexts: Strengthened resilience in fragile contexts	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Gender: Gender equality and the rights of women and girls	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Economic development: Sustainable economic growth	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Transition: Transition to democratic systems and social market economies	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Humanitarian system: Strengthened humanitarian system	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Please provide any example(s) of how you have contributed to these goals:

8) To what extent do you think your partnership with SDC supports the following:

Please rate on a scale of 1 (Not at all) to 4 (Very significantly). If the question is not relevant, mark "N/A". Please mark only one circle per row.

	1- Not at all	2- Somewhat	2- Significantly	4-Very significantly	Do not know	N/A
Learning: Knowledge sharing and adoption of learning within the sector	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Adding value: Contributing distinctive Swiss competencies to the national and international sector	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Collaboration: Facilitating collaboration and complementarities within sector	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Public awareness: Sensitisation and education on global issues in Switzerland	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Please outline any relevant examples:

9) Please rate which of these you consider to be the most valuable aspects of your partnership with SDC:

Please rate on a scale of 1 (Of no importance) to 4 (Of high importance). If the question is not applicable, mark "N/A" . Please mark only one circle per row.

	1-Of no importance	2-Of slight importance	3-Important	4-Of high importance	No not know	N/A
SDC's financial support	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Advice and support from SDC staff	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Flexibility of SDC funds/ability to leverage other funds	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Networking with other Civil Society Organisation (CSO)/Non-Governmental (NGO) stakeholders as a result of SDC partnership	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Provision of resources (e.g. documents/websites) from SDC	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Legitimacy/reputation from being in partnership with SDC	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Institutional strengthening (systems, programmes, monitoring and evaluation (M&E) etc.) from SDC	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Please outline any relevant examples:

10) To what extent do you agree with the following statements?

Please rate on a scale of 1 (Strongly disagree) to 4 (Strongly agree). If the question is not applicable, mark "N/A". Please mark only one circle per row.

	1-Strongly disagree	2-Disagree	3-Agree	4-Strongly agree	I do not know	N/A
SDC's selection process of organisations it funds is fair and transparent	<input type="radio"/>					
Payments from SDC are timely and in appropriate phases	<input type="radio"/>					
SDC allows us to make changes when needed about how we manage the funds	<input type="radio"/>					
SDC makes an appropriate contribution to our organisation's general core costs	<input type="radio"/>					
We communicate regularly and effectively with SDC	<input type="radio"/>					
The timeframe of our partnership with SDC is long enough to deliver our partnership objectives	<input type="radio"/>					
SDC monitoring and reporting requirements are clear and useful	<input type="radio"/>					
SDC's reporting	<input type="radio"/>					

processes/mechanisms allow us to demonstrate the impact of our work  
SDC's support allows us to foster innovations in our work

Please outline any relevant examples:

11) What could SDC do differently to more efficiently/effectively manage its institutional partnerships?

12) To what extent has working with SDC allowed you to strengthen your organisation's capacities in the following areas?

Please rate on a scale of 1 (Not at all) to 4 (Very significantly). If the question is not relevant, mark "N/A". Please mark only one circle per row.

	1- Not at all	2- Somewhat	3- Significantly	4-Very significantly	I do not know	N/A
Delivery (impact, scale, sustainability, reach)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Quality (M&E, learning, technical skills within thematic working area)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Accountability (community relations, feedback, responsiveness)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Decision making, management, and governance (strategy, knowledge and mission)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
People and management (staff, management, and culture)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Systems (HR, finance, procurement)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Legitimacy (communications, reputation)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Influence (profile, networking, political, policy dialogue, constituency)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Resources (fundraising expertise, grants, donations)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Learning (technical expertise, peer learning, Participation in thematic/technical working groups )	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Please outline any relevant examples:

13) Please describe the 'Common learning processes' you have identified as part of your partnership with SDC?

14) To what extent do you agree with the following statements?

Please rate on a scale of 1 (Strongly disagree) to 4 (Strongly agree). If the question is not relevant, mark "N/A". Please mark only one circle per row.

	1-Strongly disagree	2- Disagree	3- Agree	4-Strongly agree	I do not know	N/A
We are able to maintain a	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

strategic dialogue with SDC  
about our work together  
SDC understands our  
organisation's priorities and  
values

Our partnership with SDC  
enables us to deliver our  
strategy

Please outline any relevant examples:

15) Our partnership with SDC would be more effective if SDC \_\_\_\_\_  
Please select the best description to fill in the blank. You can choose up to 2.

- Was more respectful
- Listened better
- Provided more timely support
- Was more approachable
- Was more flexible
- Gave more guidance on reporting
- Set clear outcomes/outputs for us to report against
- Designed programmes jointly
- Other, please specify... \_\_\_\_\_

Please outline any relevant examples:

16) What have been the most notable achievements as a result of your partnership with SDC for:  
Your organisation

Your programmes

17) What have been the most critical challenges in your partnership with SDC?

18) Is there an exit strategy in place if your programme contribution funding ends?

- Yes
- Informally discussed
- No

19) To what extent will you be able to continue the work you have started as a result of SDC  
funding/collaboration if the partnership ends?

- Fully sustained
- Partially continued
- The work will end

20) Would the outcomes of your partnership with SDC be sustained if your partnership with SDC  
were to end?

- Fully
- Mostly
- Partially
- Not at all
- I do not know

21) To what extent do you work with the following types of partners:

Please rate on a scale of 1 (Not at all) to 4 (Very significantly). If the question is not applicable,  
mark "N/A". Please mark only one circle per row.

Not at all    Somewhat    Significantly    Very significantly    I do not know    N/A

NGOs	<input type="radio"/>					
Community-based Organisation	<input type="radio"/>					
Government	<input type="radio"/>					
Multilateral organisations	<input type="radio"/>					
Private Sector	<input type="radio"/>					
Academic institutions	<input type="radio"/>					
Other INGOs	<input type="radio"/>					

Please outline any relevant examples:

22) At what geographic level do you work with these partners:

	Regional	National	Province/State	District/County	Local/Community	N/A
NGOs	<input type="radio"/>					
Community-based Organisation	<input type="radio"/>					
Government	<input type="radio"/>					
Multilateral organisations	<input type="radio"/>					
Private Sector	<input type="radio"/>					
Academic institutions	<input type="radio"/>					
Other INGOs	<input type="radio"/>					

Please outline any relevant examples:

23) What is the focus of these partnerships (you may select as many as are relevant for each partnership):

	NGOs	Community-based organisations	Government	Multilateral organisations	Private sector	Other INGOs	N/A
Advocacy	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Policy	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Networking	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Capacity development	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Technical assistance	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Development projects	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Humanitarian projects	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
As implementing partners	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

24) Please describe the interaction your organisation has with SDC at regional level (Corporation Offices):

- Never
- Occasionally
- Often
- Very often
- N/A

## **Annex 13 – Survey Analysis**

### *Purpose of the survey*

This survey report presents the data from the online survey and provides a summary of the key findings from the survey. The purpose of the survey was:

- To generate both qualitative and quantitative data relevant to the evaluation;
- To gather quantitative perception data and trends on the nature and performance from NGOs about their partnership with SDC;
- To generate evidence to triangulate against evidence gathered from document review, interviews and focus groups.

### *Survey methodology*

A component of the methodology for this evaluation has been an online survey of Swiss NGOs. The survey was distributed to one NGOs representative in each of the Programme Contribution organisations who was identified by the NGOs themselves. NGOs were encouraged to consult more broadly in their organisation when completing the survey and to provide a consolidated response, although the evaluation team were unable to assess the extent to which this was undertaken. The survey had a 100% response rate with responses received from all 35 NGOs it was sent to. The survey was administered through an online survey tool and was available in German, French and English.

In terms of the analysis of the survey responses, charts and tables were developed in order to analyse quantitative responses, and disaggregated analysis is presented in cases where there were variations in response across the different NGO categories. In terms of qualitative responses, these were analysed by theme and trends, and again, where possible disaggregated across the different NGO categories. In some cases, particularly those questions addressing effectiveness, the answers received from NGOs covered a broad range of themes and were not always possible to aggregate. Where outliers were identified, the analysis attempts to identify why this might be the case (i.e. from a particular category). Anonymised quotations are used throughout the survey report to illustrate key themes.

### *Survey limitations*

In the inception report, the evaluation team identified two potential limitations with regards to the survey:

- Delay in rolling out the survey so that analysis is not available prior to interviews: This was the case; the survey was distributed on the 10<sup>th</sup> April with an initial deadline of the 28<sup>th</sup> April. This was extended to the 3<sup>rd</sup> May, meaning that the analysis of the survey was not completed before the interviews began.
- Slow or low response to the survey: After extending the survey deadline and issuing three reminders, the survey had an exceptionally high participation rate with 100% of NGOs completing the survey.

Additionally, there were two other limitations encountered in the roll out of the survey and for subsequent analysis:

- Whilst the survey questions were reviewed as part of the inception report by the CLP which included representation from NGOs of all categories, it was noted by a number of respondents that the questions in the survey were at times more relevant to NGOs than they were to other categories of NGO (i.e. Federations). The evaluation team have mitigated this by highlighting in the analysis where certain categories of NGOs felt that the questions were not relevant to them.
- There was a technical error in questions 22 and 23 (At what geographic level do you work with these partners, what is the focus of these partnerships), which meant that respondents were only able to select one answer from each category rather than select multiple as would have been the case for many

organisations. Consequently, the data from these questions is inaccurate and we have removed them from the analysis.

- There were some issues pointed out by respondents in terms of the translation between English, German and French; for example, significant was translated as significatif into French and ziemlich in German, which one respondent felt was weaker than significant/significatif. The evaluation team do not feel that these issues had any impact on the results gathered by the survey though as the levels (significant etc.) were placed alongside a numerical scale for respondents to provide ratings, and the responses received across the survey correlated to the questions asked.

### Survey questions

#### 1) How many staff does your NGO/organisation have?

Number of staff		0-25	26-50	51-75	76-100	100+	Total Responses
HQ	Overall	22 (62.9%)	4 (11.4%)	2 (5.7%)	1 (2.9%)	6 (17.1%)	35
	Category A	4	4	1	1	6	16
	Category B	2	0	1	0	0	3
	Category C	5	0	0	0	0	5
	Category D	5	0	0	0	0	5
	Category E	4	0	0	0	0	4
Country-Level	Overall	8 (30.8%)	3 (11.5%)	3(11.5%)	3 (11.5%)	9 (34.6%)	26
	Category A	4	3	1	0	8	16
	Category B	0	0	1	2	0	3
	Category C	2	0	1	1	1	5
	Category D	2	0	0	0	0	2
	Category E	0	0	0	0	0	0

As the above table indicates, the majority of organisations included in the Programme Contribution scheme have between 0-25 staff in Switzerland; this was the case for all organisations in Categories C, D and E and for all organisations in B with the exception of one. Contrastingly, for Category A, there was a diversity of organisation size at HQ level. In terms of staff at country-level, organisations in categories D and E did not have country-level staff and the numbers of staff at country-level were varied for categories A-C.

#### 2) What, for you, is the goal of your organisation's partnership with the Swiss Development Corporation (SDC)?

*"The partnership fosters dialogue, synergies and complementarities between government and NGO development approaches with the aim to contribute to global development goals."*

Analysis of the qualitative responses to the survey identifies the following key themes identified by NGOs regarding the goal of their partnership with SDC:

For groups A-C, the following key goals were identified:

- **Learning:** Improved cooperation, collaboration and learning among Swiss NGOs, the exchange of knowledge and experience with SDC and other SDC-supported organizations, identification of common learning processes, fosters dialogue, synergies and complementarities between government and NGO development approaches;
- **Improved development results:** contributing to the SDGs, eradicating poverty in all its dimensions by covering basic needs, strengthening resilience and enhancing equity, increase the impact of poverty reduction: through joint learning, improve quality, achieve structural changes, network, complementary programs
- **Implementing an organisation's own Development Programme**, which is in line with its own mission and vision and at the same time contributes to the overall SDC goals;
- **Strengthening** the quality of personnel development cooperation (PEZA) (Category B);
- **Contributing** to Art 5 (Objectives) of the Federal Law on International Development Cooperation and Humanitarian Aid (1976), i.e. the support of developing countries in an effort to improve the living conditions of their population;
- **Increasing** the quality, effectiveness and efficiency of the various actors in development cooperation (the federal government, the civil society, the private sector);
- **Supporting** programmatic rather than projectised development and which allows for increased innovation in development approaches;
- **Delivering** of the Swiss International Cooperation 2017-2020 strategy;
- **Allowing** the development of flexible and innovative approaches in fragile states;
- **Promoting** understanding and awareness of development in Switzerland
- **Informing** development policy making in Switzerland, influencing development policy, lobbying the government for continued commitment to development, improved coherence in Switzerland's development approaches,

For organisations (Federations) in category D:

- As well as the aim of achieving development results, Federations also detailed partnership goals around bringing together public authorities in Switzerland at the three state levels: communes, cantons and the confederation and promoting Switzerland's international cooperation policy at a regional level of with local institutions, the population, NGOs and the media.
- Federations also stated their objective to facilitate access for federation members (largely smaller organisations) to SDC funds, expertise and technical support which they would be unable to access without the partnership. Federations also outlined their goal in their partnership with SDC to optimise the impact of Development Corporation through supporting members to achieve quality standards.

Category E:

- The partnership goals for organisations in category E presented by organisations in category B focused in education and awareness in Switzerland.

### **3) How familiar are you with SDC's strategic goals?**

Over 97% of respondents were significantly or very significantly familiar with SDC's strategic goals. There was no statistical variation of responses between the different categories of organisations.

Response	Chart	Percentage	Count
Not at all		0%	0
Somewhat		3%	1
Significantly		51%	18
Very significantly		46%	16
<b>Total Responses</b>			<b>35</b>

#### 4) Are you clear as to how your organisation is contributing to the SDC strategy/ SDC strategic goals?

Response	Chart	Percentage	Count
1-Not at all		0%	0
2-Somewhat		9%	3
3-Significantly		60%	21
4-Very significantly		31%	11
<b>Total Responses</b>			<b>35</b>

In terms of whether respondents were clear as to how their organisation is contributing to the SDC strategy/SDC strategic goals; 60% of respondents answered significantly and 31% answered very significantly. The highest numbers of respondents answering significantly were from categories B (3/3), and D (6/7).

A number of respondents reported that they felt the SDC Dispatch was developed in a collaborative way, and that where NGOs felt where their work was not explicitly supportive of SDC strategy, then it was complementary.

*“XX is familiar with the SDC dispatches 2013-2016 and 2017-2020 and our programmes have been scrutinised by the SDC to check for conformity with the SDC dispatches, as a condition for approval by the SDC. We cooperate pro-actively and significantly with the SDC both at the HQ level and in the countries of common presence - Our own priorities match with several key SDC's priorities, such as in health, water, migration, humanitarian aid”.*

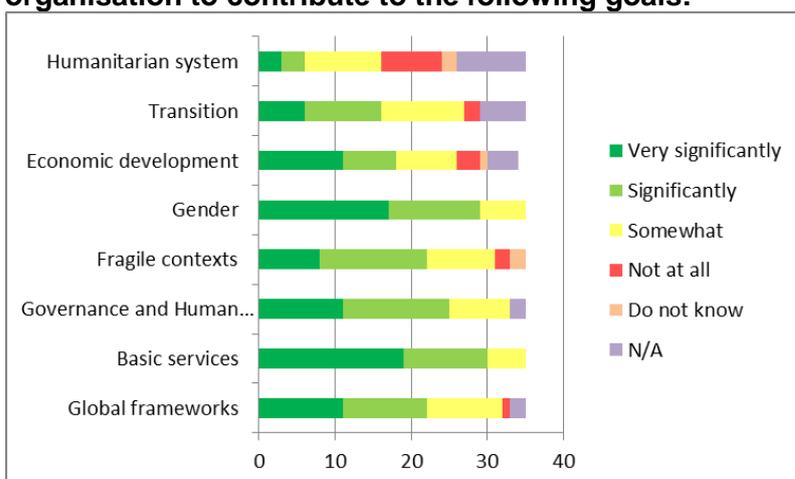
It was also noted by a number of respondents that the objective of the programme contribution scheme was not to deliver SDC's strategy, but instead to enable the organisations to deliver their own programme.

*“We have not received any information from the SDC on how we are contributing to the SDC's strategy, so the points below are assumptions on our part.”*

Generally, NGOs reported an awareness of the SDC strategy and felt that they were contributing, but some respondents acknowledged that how they were contributing was not always explicit in terms of reporting, but implicit based on their knowledge of SDC's work. It was highlighted by some respondents that whilst IP organisations were aware of the message, it would be helpful to have more clarity on how they are contributing to SDC strategy, especially at the level of the thematic groups, regional coordination and in their countries of common intervention.

They also noted that much of their work was now framed around the SDGs, as was that of SDC.

**5) To what extent do you think your partnership with SDC supports your organisation to contribute to the following goals:**



When asked 'To what extent do you think your partnership with SDC supports your organisation to contribute to the following goals', the response where the highest number of respondents answered 'Very significantly or significantly; was the goal on Basic services (30/35), followed by Gender (29/35). This was assessed as 'very significantly' by the majority of respondents in each category of organisation with the exception of B (majority responded somewhat) and D (all significantly).

The goal where the highest number of respondents answered 'Not at all' or 'not applicable' was strengthening the humanitarian system (8/35) and 9/35 respectively), likely due to the fact that the majority of organisations in the Programme Contribution portfolio are development organisations rather than humanitarian ones.

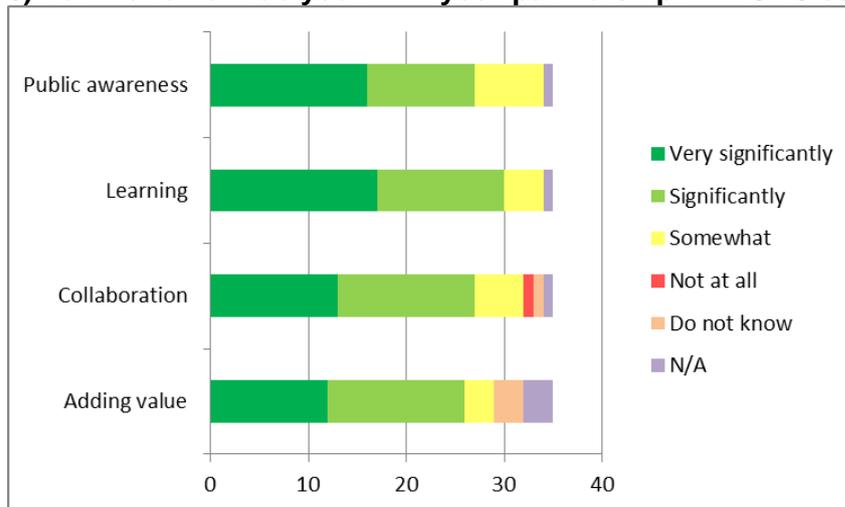
Qualitative responses from NGOs revealed that NGOs are making a broad range of contributions to the above themes; examples include:

- Participation at Swiss Delegation for the Sendai-Framework for DRR and Migration Platforms. Humanitarian aid in Syria, Horn, Haiti and others;
- Collaborations with Ministries of Health and Education in several countries to improve the quality of education and access to maternal and neonatal health services
- Global Frameworks: XX has contributed to the UNFCCC processes as a member of the Swiss delegation, through trainings for negotiators (forestry, REDD+) and with inputs on key frameworks as a member of the Swiss delegation to the UNFCCC. It has similarly contributed to the UN Convention on Combating Desertification (UNCCD) and the Hyogo/Sendai frameworks through SDC led Swiss delegations and stakeholder consultation processes.
- Fragile contexts: Programmes at the interface of humanitarian aid, reconstruction and development including DRR; programmes in areas of conflict (Syria/Lebanon), in post-conflict societies (e.g. Sri Lanka, Kosovo); programmes in 'fragile' states (Pakistan, Mozambique, Burkina Faso).
- Gender: Part of XX's vision; in Latin America, activities under 'Democracy and Participation' focus on violence prevention, with particular attention paid to gender-based violence. Combating the discrimination of women and their empowerment in the workplace is a key element of many programmes.
- XX is engaged in the International Forum for volunteering in development. We operate a horizontal cooperation between North and South, based on the strengthening of the partner organizations of the South and the sensitization in Switzerland.

- XX and its members contribute to the implementation of the SDGs. The projects carried out by the association members and their partners in the South are part of three of the Confederation's Strategic objectives: 1) The promotion of sustainable economic growth 2) The promotion of sustainable development, 3) Equitable access to resources and benefits. Latitude's actions also contribute to anchoring development corporation at a local level, raising awareness of the challenges of sustainable development and encourages the increase of ODA by facilitating institutional dialogue with cantonal and communal public authorities
- XX contributed to the health goals of the Millennium Development Goals through various projects and programmes in Programme countries, for example in the domain of improved maternal and child health, improved access to water, sanitation and hygiene. The Programme contribution also allowed XX to engage in Long-term partnerships with local Partner organisations, both governmental (for example health ministries) and non-governmental (for example Red Cross Societies).
- “XX does not develop its own projects on the ground. On the other hand, the 75 projects undertaken by our 50 member associations in their geographic and thematic diversity contribute significantly to the above themes, except emergency aid which is not in our mission”.

Organisations in both categories D and E highlighted that it was not necessarily them who contributed to these goals, but it was their partners (who they support) and individuals they sensitise.

**6) To what extent do you think your partnership with SDC supports the following:**



*“Several workshops have allowed us to discuss and learn together with other Swiss organisations topics including fraud, the migrant crisis. The SDC contribution has also put us into better contact with other Swiss NGOs”*

In terms of the SDC partnership goals, 30/35 of organisations felt that their partnership with SDC either significantly or very significantly supported their learning, 26/35 felt that their partnership with SDC either significantly or very significantly supported the ‘adding value’ to the national and international sector, 27/35 felt that their partnership with SDC either significantly or very significantly supported collaboration, and 27/35 felt that their partnership with SDC either significantly or very significantly supported their work on public awareness. The highest number of ‘somewhat’ responses was received in regard to public awareness from respondents in category A (4/16).

NGOs highlighted the importance of the exchanges of knowledge they had gained from being part of the programme contribution scheme:

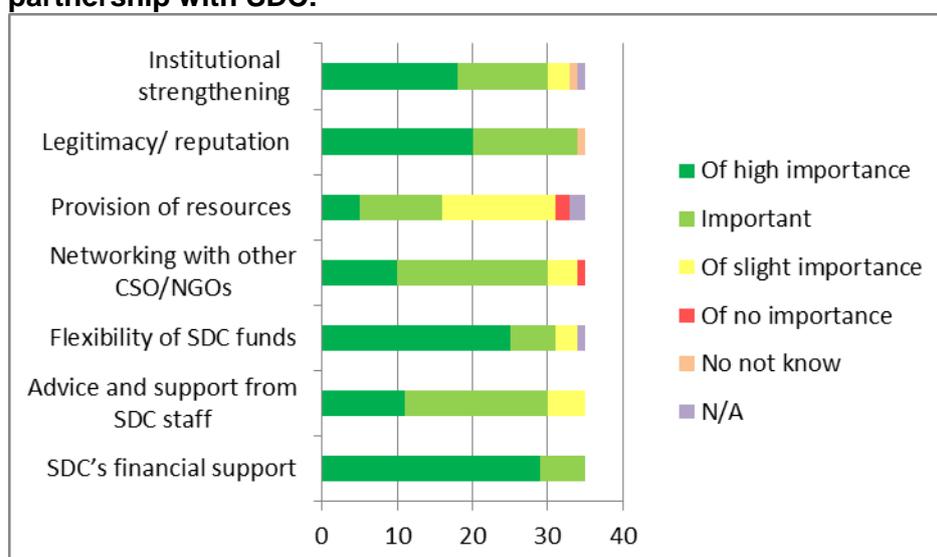
*“There is a very active health network, led by the SDC. We participate in this network and in this way, we can pass on our expert knowledge to the SDC audience. We are participating in the relevant SDC Health Conferences; the SDC participates in our major health events; as well as in events organized by the Swiss network of organizations working in health care. There is a very positive dynamic and a real added value.”*

*“SDC deliberately supports the public awareness raising activities of the NGOs in Switzerland, because sensitisation and education strengthens the SDC itself and gives it a better position with regard to critics towards development cooperation.”*

*“Training and conferences organised by SDC on a wide range of topics regarding development cooperation strongly contribute to the further qualification of our employees and enable the appropriate level of exchange of experience between specialists, which also benefits SDC employees.”*

*“Thanks to the SDC Programme contribution, XX was able to strengthen its technical expertise and conceptual development in health and disaster risk management both at HQ and regional level. With Support through the SDC Programme contribution, XX conducted three major studies on volunteering in health, on access to health, and on health in fragile context. The study outcomes were shared through learning events, public events, Videos and publications.”*

**7) Please rate which of these you consider to be the most valuable aspects of your partnership with SDC:**



*“Highly important is the flexibility of SDC's financial support, as it allows focusing on quality aspects, learning, piloting projects etc., which are difficult to fund otherwise. SDC's financial support has a high impact on the quality of programs”.*

SDC's financial support was rated as important or very important by all survey respondents; all of the organisations who answered important rather than very important were from category A (with the exception of one federation); which could be due to the fact that larger organisations are more likely to be able to access funds from alternative sources. SDC's provision of resources (e.g. documents) was considered to be the least

valuable aspect of partnership with SDC (17/35 of no/slight importance) across the different categories of organisation.

Three of seven federations found the network with other civil society organisations as an aspect of their partnership with SDC to only be 'somewhat important'. This could be because of the fact that the federations are themselves network organisations and so this is their 'core business' and they may not attribute their work in this area to their partnership with SDC. It may also be that as the federations are not operational in the same way as CSOs/NGOs then this limits the extent to which they would network under the programme contribution scheme with other NGOs (e.g. in thematic networks).

#### 8) To what extent do you agree with the following statements?

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly agree	I do not know	N/A	Total Responses
SDC's selection process of organisations it funds is fair and transparent	1 (2.9%)	1 (2.9%)	17 (48.6%)	14 (40.0%)	2 (5.7%)	0 (0.0%)	35
Payments from SDC are timely and in appropriate phases	1 (2.9%)	1 (2.9%)	7 (20.0%)	26 (74.3%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	35
SDC allows us to make changes when needed about how we manage the funds	0 (0.0%)	4 (11.4%)	10 (28.6%)	16 (45.7%)	4 (11.4%)	1 (2.9%)	35
SDC makes an appropriate contribution to our organisation's general core costs	0 (0.0%)	1 (2.9%)	16 (45.7%)	18 (51.4%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	35
We communicate regularly and effectively with SDC	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	10 (28.6%)	25 (71.4%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	35
The timeframe of our partnership with SDC is long enough to deliver our partnership objectives	0 (0.0%)	3 (8.6%)	17 (48.6%)	15 (42.9%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	35
SDC monitoring and reporting requirements are clear and useful	1 (2.9%)	5 (14.3%)	18 (51.4%)	10 (28.6%)	1 (2.9%)	0 (0.0%)	35
SDC's reporting processes/mechanisms allow us to demonstrate the impact of our work	1 (2.9%)	0 (0.0%)	19 (54.3%)	14 (40.0%)	1 (2.9%)	0 (0.0%)	35
SDC's support allows us to foster innovations in our work	0 (0.0%)	2 (5.7%)	7 (20.0%)	24 (68.6%)	2 (5.7%)	0 (0.0%)	35

In terms of SDC's selection process for the organisations to be included in the Programme Contribution scheme, 88.6% of respondents strongly agreed or agreed that this was a fair and transparent process: *"The SDC has consulted with NGOs on the implementation of Programme contribution criteria and processes. These are known and available to all"*. However, there was one respondent from a category E organisation who outlined that there is at times of lack of clarity as to how these criteria are applied to NGO networks or association organisations. Another respondent highlighted that at times, the criteria (or their application) were unclear:

*“Admission is not transparent and depends more on personal sympathy ..... we received the contribution only after a lengthy procedure. We always had to create new documents; but what was missing was never clear, it seemed to us very arbitrary. In the end we had use of political influence”. 74.3% of respondents strongly agreed or agreed that SDC allowed organisations to make changes when needed as to how funds were managed. “The flexibility of the Programme contribution is an incentive for innovations. It also allows for negotiated and justified changes according to the evolution of the needs and the environment”*

97% of organisations strongly agreed or agreed that SDC makes an appropriate contribution to an organisation’s core costs, however, in the case of one federation, it was highlighted that generating 40% of its own budget to be eligible for a programme contribution can be a challenge for small organisations.

In terms of communication with SDC, this was perceived very positively by respondents; 100% either strongly agreed or agreed that their communication with SDC was regular and effective.

Respondents were asked whether SDC monitoring and reporting requirements are clear and useful; 70% of respondents strongly agreed or agreed. Of those that strongly disagreed or disagreed, 3 were from category A, 1 B, 1 C and 1 D.

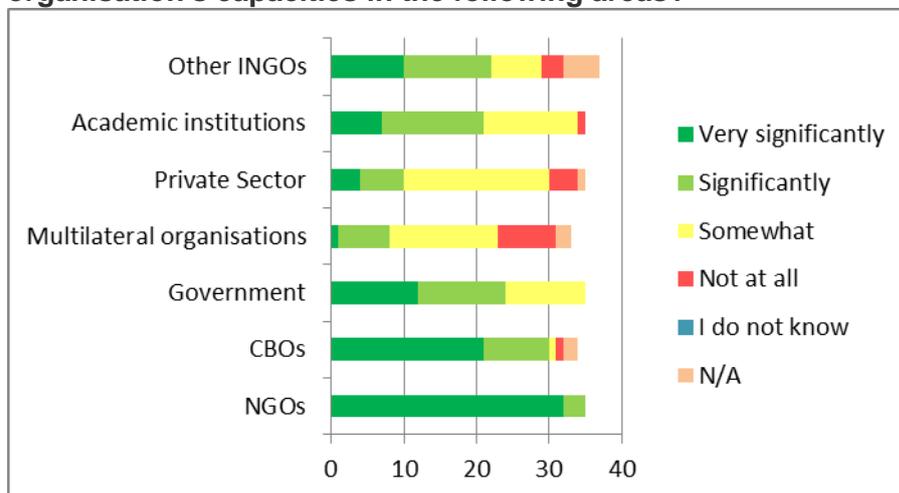
### **9) What could SDC do differently to more efficiently/effectively manage its institutional partnerships?**

*General themes emerging from respondents include:*

- Lack of clearly defined guidelines for the admission process, especially in the case of NGO associations/networks. There are no formal requirements for an application dossier
- For small organisations, having ridged specifications and requirements can be detrimental in terms of use of resources:  
*“Especially for small organizations, too rigid specifications (such as reporting) are of little use or difficult to use, especially when defined for large organizations”.*
- To have the work of Federations better known within DDC
- A number of respondents said that as far as they were concerned, the partnership was working well and there were no improvements they could think of.
- Optionally propose indicators for NGOs in specific areas (e.g., health) to which they can (but do not have to) contribute. This would allow SDC to aggregate in a standardized way and to show effect in a simple way.
- To facilitate synergies among all SDC partner NGOs, annual conferences could be partly open to other partners, facilitate more learning across organisations within the IP scheme; merging the annual reporting of NGOs within joint learning processes (for example, thematic specialist events:  
*“Further strengthening of joint learning between the different organisations and the SDC, e.g. with special learning events. The joint learning event for Enabling Environment is a good example of this. Further strengthen networking and exchanges between the SDC networks and the various organizations. SDC headquarters should encourage cooperation offices even more strongly to foster the exchange of knowledge and experience with the Swiss NGOs on the ground (openness is often dependent on people).”*
- Provide a clear reporting framework:
- Regular meetings with operational staff members from diverse divisions (learning partnerships
- Better communication and engagement with Corporation Offices:

*“The Swiss cooperation Offices in the countries do not know much about the partnership. Therefore, there is no dialogue / cooperation / coordination between SDC offices and SRC Delegations in the countries. Also, SDC-internally, the link between IP and the regional divisions and global programmes is weak”*

**10) To what extent has working with SDC allowed you to strengthen your organisation's capacities in the following areas?**



The online survey asked respondents the extent to which their partnership with SDC had strengthened their capacity in a number of areas; the highest rated area was quality (26/35 significantly or very significantly), delivery and legitimacy (both 24/35 significantly or very significantly). The area where SDC was thought to have had least impact on strengthening an organisation’s capacity was in terms of people and management (6/35 not at all) and in systems (HR, finance, procurement).

In terms of delivery, in categories A, B and C responses varied between very significantly and somewhat and for Category E between significantly and very significantly. For category E, three rated this as non-applicable, one as do not know, one as somewhat and one significantly. In qualitative comments, a number of Federations outlined that they were not involved in the direct implementation of projects and so this was irrelevant to them; the other responses from Federations could be due to a different understanding of the questions. For quality, legitimacy, systems and people and management responses did not differ significantly across the different groups.

*“The Programme Contribution requirements have strongly contributed to systematise monitoring, reporting and the strategy development. This has also motivated stronger engagement in downward accountability (social/public audits) in our programmes. The four-year Programme has become the basis for the organisational Strategy. The Programme Contribution constitutes a very significant source of funding and provides effective leverage to trigger private donations”.*

**11) Please describe the ‘Common learning processes’ you have identified as part of your partnership with SDC?**

The survey revealed a great diversity of common learning processes taking place between organisations and SDC:

- Themes identified by organisations in categories A-C include:
  - Gender (e.g. family planning guidelines, arranging a joint event on engaging men and boys)
    - “Thematic dialogue with the SDC on gender, participation in SDC 's gender network, development of internal quality standards (e.g. position papers on*

family planning, checklist for the implementation of projects in these areas), feedback from SDC, especially at the annual conference.”

- Developing specific indicators for measuring peacebuilding and information dissemination activities
- Religion and development
  - “Our organization arranged two joint learning processes for each of the core topics of our organization. In the area of "Religion and Development", - a field that has been given special attention by SDC - we made our knowledge from a large-scale thematic evaluation available, which was discussed with various stakeholders of other civil society organizations, thus providing a broad range of experience to the Swiss development cooperation landscape. These findings were used internationally by the SDC (in particular the German GIZ showed great interest in the subject) and led to a (renewed) awareness among civil society actors for the challenges of local religious contexts for development projects.”
- Modernisation of the PEZA approach
- Measuring the behaviour change in individuals as a result of awareness raising in Switzerland
- Psychosocial support for GBV victims and community prevention mechanisms.
- Child participation in migration processes
- Roma Inclusion Migration and Development
- Religion and development
- Access to land
- Health programming in fragile context
- In some cases (Category E), the common learning processes identified were largely operational (improved reporting, improved financial management of projects).
- The responses from organisations in Category D (Federations) indicate that they do not have a ‘common learning process’ agreed with SDC as part of their partnership in the same way as other categories of NGOs, as most answered this question in regard to learning more broadly rather than a specific common learning process.

**12) To what extent do you agree with the following statements?**

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly agree	I do not know	N/A	Total Responses
We are able to maintain a strategic dialogue with SDC about our work together	0 (0.0%)	1 (2.9%)	10 (28.6%)	24 (68.6%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	35
SDC understands our organisation's priorities and values	0 (0.0%)	2 (5.7%)	13 (37.1%)	20 (57.1%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	35
Our partnership with SDC enables us to deliver our strategy	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	10 (28.6%)	25 (71.4%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	35

Over 97% of respondents indicated that they agreed or strongly agreed that they were able to maintain a strategic dialogue with SDC; 94% agreed or strongly agreed that SDC understands their organisation’s priorities and values and 100% of respondents detailed that their partnership with SDC allows them to deliver their strategy.

*“We have a number of possibilities to carry out an appropriate strategic dialogue with SDC on our joint work. In addition to the annual program conferences, the presentation of the SDC annual programs (International Cooperation, IP, Multilateral), discussions with the*

*Directorate within our alliances, as well as thematic events provide useful and efficient opportunities for these dialogues”.*

### 13) Our partnership with SDC would be more effective if SDC

Response	Chart	Percentage	Count
Was more respectful		0%	0
Listened better		13%	4
Provided more timely support		7%	2
Was more approachable		3%	1
Was more flexible		10%	3
Gave more guidance on reporting		23%	7
Set clear outcomes/outputs for us to r		17%	5
Designed programmes jointly		7%	2
Other, please specify...		73%	22
<b>Total Responses</b>			<b>30</b>

#### Other...

When asked ‘Our partnership with SDC would be more effective if SDC’.... the most popular of the given responses was ‘Gave more guidance on reporting’ (23.3%), although the most popular selection overall was ‘Other’. There was no correlation between selection and organisation category. Areas listed under “other” include:

- A better focused integration of the NGOs into the thematic networks of SDC could foster collaborations, provide more opportunities for NGOs to share learning, cross-organisation common learning processes and not just defining topics bilaterally, capitalisation of NGO learning across NGOs and within SDC
- Improved guidance in financial and narrative reporting, provide clarification on the expected contribution to SDC objectives and reporting indicators
- Provide more solid examples of good practice; sometimes requirements and what SDC wants are unclear, provided a spectrum of indicators that could be given to SDC and NGOs to allow greater coherence and a clearer overview of the impact of SDC partnerships
- Lack of exchange in annual conferences; high preparation from NGO and required to have a number of staff there but relevant SDC people not always there or not participating
- Extending further the Programme contribution scheme
- More notice given when making a request to NGOs, more clarity on certain processes (audit e.g. their scope and documents needed)
- Ownership within SDC of the IP programme could be further improved, give more weight to SDC ownership in countries. A respective process to identify topics of joint interest could be established involving SDC's Regional and Global Programmes, more exchange of information, collaboration in countries where multiple NGOs are present;
- Constraints in time and human resources of IP limit the potential of dialogue and synergies.
- Strengthening collaboration/relationships with SDC Corporation Offices
- At times an inherent contradiction between the idea of ‘it’s your programme, you own it’ and SDC’s reporting demands.

**14) What have been the most notable achievements as a result of your partnership with SDC for your organisation:**

*The types of key achievements outlined by NGOs are:*

- Creating or learning networks and NGO coalitions in Switzerland supported by SDC, leading to important results such as collaborations of their partner organisations in the South, the use of shared tools and South-South exchanges
- Intensive and critical dialogue forcing organisations to question and improve themselves, organisations becoming more strategic
- Pushing organisations to move to a programmatic approach has concentrated them, allowed them to deepen technical expertise rather than being broad in a wider number of areas;
- Support to professionalise and increase the capacity of organisations' governance.
- Refining results framework, establishing clear outcomes, results and impact hypotheses for management, geographic areas, Swiss engagement. Setting up of organisational performance indicators and comprehensive measuring processes.
- Increased professionalisation of organisations and legitimacy and credibility within the sector
- Improvements in project cycle management, in financial reporting and systems
- Leveraging of SDC support to access other financial resources
- Being able to support a larger number of organisations, allowing a wider number of organisations to access SDC funding, increased relationships at cantonal and community level (Category D)

**What have been the most notable achievements as a result of your partnership with SDC for your programmes:**

*The types of key achievements outlined by NGOs are:*

- Ability to work in forgotten crisis areas that other donors are unwilling to fund, ability to respond to emergencies quickly and then access funding from donors. Local links with SDC (in special cases also with Swiss embassies) in fragile contexts contribute to a higher security of exposed partner organisations and thus contribute to the achievement of targets, especially in the area of human rights promotion.
- Supporting members to implement projects by accessing SDC funding, improving the quality of members projects, successful awareness raising campaigns, engaging diaspora groups in development (Category D);
- Development from portfolio/project to programme organisation
- Increased coherence of activities through strengthening technical expertise and narrowing scope of work
- Able to make a greater contribution to the reduction of poverty in individual countries thanks to the additional resources of the SDC.
- Promotion of innovative approaches and exploratory work, pilots to create more impact, seek donors once have demonstrated something works.
- Improved outcome and impact monitoring.
- Broaden our network in the South, thus enabling us to better align policy development between North and South networks and to diversify inputs from the South for our research work.

- Allowing flexibility and long-term commitment with local partners to build their capacity

### 15) What have been the most critical challenges in your partnership with SDC?

A number of key challenges were identified by respondents:

- The amount of funding received; particularly in the case of federations who disseminate funds to a number of smaller organisations
- The requirement of raising 40% of their own funding to be eligible for the Programme Contribution scheme was noted as a challenge, particularly for smaller organisations.
- Challenges around Swiss German development sector understanding the role and purpose of federations in Latin Switzerland.
- Funding: Reoccurring budget cuts, or the threat of cuts to development spending, predicting 4 years financial volume of activities despite a challenging environment for fundraising. The requirement of raising 40% of own funding to be eligible for the Programme Contribution scheme was noted as a challenge, particularly for smaller organisations, the change of rule during the contract (2013-2016) on the consequences in case of non-realization of the expected finance.
- IPs lack of influence with SDC, being seen as an IP partner not an SDC partner
- Inconsistencies at times in guidance from IP, lack of clarity in certain areas such as audit, standardisation of IP contracts with NGOs when they operate differently
- Challenges in meeting SDC's requirements for the selection process: demonstrating added value for SDC within the selection process, preparing lengthy documentation etc. for selection with limited human resources
- Closure of Corporation offices, communication and getting Corporation Office 'engaged' with the work of NGOs
- Rotation policy within SDC means that they have 'remarket' themselves regularly to get SDC staff on board/familiar with what they are doing.
- High expectation from SDC around the demonstration of impact/outcomes; lack of clarity on what SC expects in terms of results; reporting at a consolidated, programmatic level, difficulty of aggregating results across a diverse thematic and geographic portfolio

### 16) Is there an exit strategy in place if your programme contribution funding ends?

Response	Chart	Percentage	Count
Yes		2.9%	1
Informally discussed		47.1%	16
No		50.0%	17
<b>Total Responses</b>			<b>34</b>

Only one organisation (category A) reported having an exit strategy, the rest, across all categories were divided between no, and that it was informally discussed with SDC.

**17) To what extent will you be able to continue the work you have started as a result of SDC funding/collaboration if the partnership ends?**

Response	Chart	Percentage	Count
Fully sustained		5.7%	2
Partially continued		85.7%	30
The work will end		8.6%	3
<b>Total Responses</b>			<b>35</b>

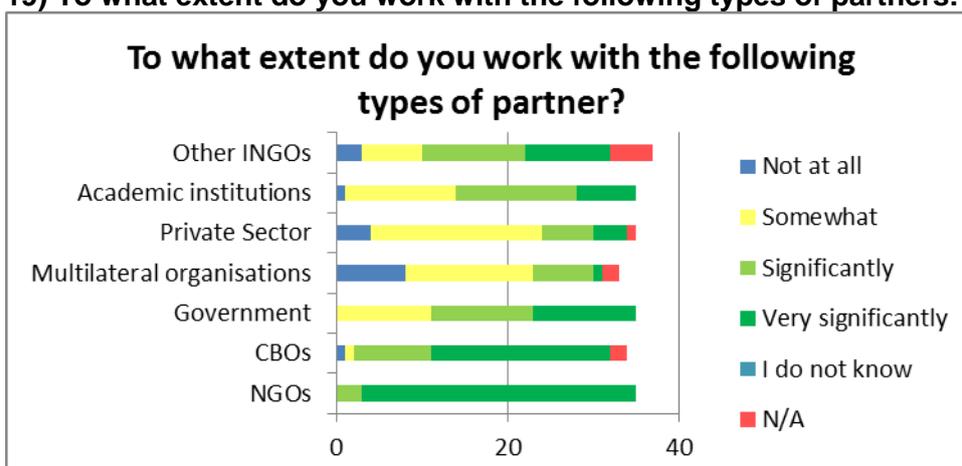
The majority of respondents across all stakeholder groups indicated that they would be partially able to continue the work if the partnership with SDC were to come to an end.

**18) Would the outcomes of your partnership with SDC be sustained if your partnership with SDC were to end?**

Response	Chart	Percentage	Count
Fully		2.9%	1
Mostly		26.5%	9
Partially		55.9%	19
Not at all		2.9%	1
I do not know		11.8%	4
<b>Total Responses</b>			<b>34</b>

The majority of respondents across all stakeholder groups indicated that outcomes would be partially sustained if the partnership with SDC were to come to an end.

**19) To what extent do you work with the following types of partners:**

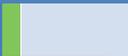


For all categories of organisation, NGOs were the most common type of partner organisation, followed by CBOs and government. In the case of multilateral organisations, organisations from categories A (most frequently), B and to some extent C partnered with multilateral organisations. For private sector and academic institutions, responses were

mixed across the categories and for other NGOs as well, with the exception of category D, for whom this was mostly non-applicable.

Other categories mentioned by respondents included trade unions and unions of interest groups, cross-sector mechanisms (i.e. child protection groups), national coalitions/networks, and religious leaders.

**20) Please describe the interaction your organisation has with SDC at regional level (Corporation Offices):**

Response	Chart	Percentage	Count
Never		2.9%	1
Occasionally		31.4%	11
Often		37.1%	13
Very often		5.7%	2
N/A		22.9%	8
<b>Total Responses</b>			<b>35</b>

Regarding the interaction with Regional Corporation Offices, this was of a higher frequency for Category A organisations; 8/16 said that their interaction was often, 2/16 very often and 6/16 occasionally. All of the federations marked this question as non-applicable and all category Bs marked occasionally. All of the organisations in category E gave different responses and for category C, all marked often with the exception of one occasionally.

## **Annex 14 – Key Points on donor support to civil society/ strategic partnerships with NGOs.**

The following eight key points are drawn from interviews with representatives from the Civil Society Units within Danida, DFID, SIDA, Netherlands MFA and MFA Finland and a review of their respective Support to Civil Society web pages. The purpose of the review was to understand current trends and changes in donor support to Civil Society through their “strategic funding” mechanisms. These are: UK Aid Connect (DFID), Dialogue and Dissent (Netherlands MFA), Strategic partnerships between Danish civil society organisations & Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Denmark (Danida), Framework Agreements (SIDA), and Programme Based Support (MFA Finland). This note is limited to these channels of support to civil society and it is recognised that they sit within a wider portfolio within the Donor agencies. They have been selected on the basis that either the new funding modality or its predecessor is comparable to SDC’s programme contribution.

### **1. “The times they are changing”**

All donors are going through, or have recently gone through, a process of change in terms of their support to civil society. This has also been accompanied by significant cuts to strategic partnership budgets for NGOs in the Netherlands, Denmark and Finland<sup>138</sup>. DFID through a new fund, UK Aid Connect, and the MFA Netherlands have most radically changed their approach, moving away from strategic funding of national NGOs through the DFID PPA Scheme and MFA Netherlands’ previous strategic funding scheme to more thematic support to a wider range of organisations and consortia. DFID’s UK Aid Connect has recently issued a call for applications and the MFA Netherlands “Dialogue and Dissent” is now in its second year. MFA Finland has recently commissioned a series of evaluations on its support to civil society and national NGOs. Danida has just completed the second phase of an evaluation of its civil society support; has revised its approach to strategic partnerships and begins a new funding round in 2018. Sida has also recently evaluated its Civil Society policy and is starting a new funding round this year with a new Civil Society Policy.

### **2. Two lead donors have radically changed their approach to NGO strategic partnerships**

DFID and MFA Netherlands no longer provide core funding to NGOs to implement their strategies through these funds, although both donors have a specific focus - Netherlands MFA on advocacy; DFID on innovation – and specify thematic areas within these. Both donors are encouraging a consortia approach to encourage a new interpretation of strategic partnerships and greater innovation in approach, but recognise that a consortia approach requires a longer lead time. DFID and MFA Netherlands are broadening their portfolio. MFA Netherlands is funding 20 new organisations. DFID has not yet completed its application round for UK Aid Connect, however they anticipate that the portfolio of NGOs will change.

### **3. But the ‘Nordics’ are retaining bilateral strategic partnerships**

Danida, SIDA and MFA Finland continue to support NGO programmes linked to their strategies although they expect their partnerships to broadly contribute to national development cooperation goals. Danida have opted to continue with strong bilateral partnerships and to strengthen their dialogue with partners but is likely to require greater NGO alignment with its geographic and thematic priorities in the future. Sida and MFA Finland do not steer NGOs thematically or geographically; this is also true for the Netherlands.

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<sup>138</sup> SIDA’s budget has actually increased

There have been some minor changes to each donor portfolio. Three of the original Danish Framework NGOs did not pass the eligibility criteria and three new NGOs have prequalified for the new scheme. Similarly in Sweden, following the 2013/14 criteria assessment, two new organisations were introduced and two were phased out. In contrast, the DFID and Netherland MFA portfolios have and are anticipated to change.

#### **4. All donors use some form of “Open Call” and most are concentrating on fewer partners**

DFID, MFA Netherlands and Danida have used an Open Call for strategic partnerships. Only the first two are open to foreign NGOs. There have been new entrants to all schemes. There has been some discussion about competitive tendering compromising NGO independence and/or undermining knowledge -sharing between NGOs. The use of eligibility criteria can restrict potential applicants through an Open Call. MFA Finland refers to an “Open Call” but in fact it has restricted it to its 22 previous partners, although it plans to issue a genuine Open Call for Finnish NGOs in four years. Similarly, Sida's Call was open to NGOs that passed the eligibility criteria - which were mainly previous NGO partners.

On the whole, the donors have a smaller portfolio of strategic partners than SDC – ranging from 14 (Danida) to 25 (MFA Netherlands). Only Danida places limits on the organisational budgets of potential partners - between DKK 25-125 million per year – though DFID and MFA Netherlands put parameters on the size of programme they will support.

#### **5. Policy frameworks//theory of change set out the rationale for partnerships**

All donors have either policy frameworks or intervention logics in some form to set out the rationale of their partnerships. DFID and MFA Netherlands have policy frameworks for their partnerships schemes and plan to develop / have developed theories of change. Danida has a Civil Society Policy; a theory of change; and a detailed policy framework for its NGO strategic partnerships. Sida has a Civil Society Policy and MFA is revising its guidelines for support to civil society.

#### **6. Most are moving towards the use of results frameworks and outcome reporting.**

Danida is moving towards a results framework for its NGO portfolio and requires NGOs to report at the outcome level. MFA Netherlands is using outcome based results framework based on stories of change. DFID will also expect reporting at the outcome level. In contrast to the other agencies, MFA Finland asks partners to produce results framework, although it is flexible and allows for outcome mapping approaches. Sida is the only agency that does not require a results framework from partners but it does ask them to describe the goal of the partnership and how they know when they have achieved their results. They also have a strong emphasis on narrative analysis. All donors recognise that aggregated data reporting is difficult.

#### **7. Transparency high on the agenda**

All donors require their strategic partners to comply with the financial standards of the International Aid Transparency initiative (IATI).

#### **8. Some experiments with how to link NGOs to donor policy specialists**

MFA Netherlands has taken the most radical steps in transferring management (including financial management) of 22 of its 25 NGO partnerships to relevant thematic departments (which also have independent programmes with NGOs, often the same ones) within the Ministry. The other three are managed by the Civil Society Unit. The thematic departments are responsible for monitoring results (though the Civil Society Unit monitors

capacity development). Nonetheless, overall results reporting is the responsibility of the Civil Society Unit.

DFID UK Aid Connect partnerships will continue to be managed by the Inclusive Societies Unit, but will aim to develop much deeper engagement between the NGO Consortia and Policy units. Danida and MFA Finland are also aiming to ensure the partnerships are more relevant to the embassies and political/geographical units and as such are encouraging a stronger dialogue. One way they have done this is to involve the units and embassies in the application assessment process. Sida is encouraging more of a partnership approach where they “manage relations rather than manage contributions”.

## Annex 15 – Comparative matrix on donor support to civil society/ strategic partnerships with NGOs

The purpose of this table is to provide a comparative framework of current practice amongst donors of their strategic funding schemes. The information has been drawn from interviews with representatives from the Civil Society Units within Danida, DFID, SIDA, Netherlands MFA and MFA Finland and a review of their respective Support to Civil Society web pages. The purpose of the review was to understand current trends and changes in donor support to Civil Society through their “strategic funding” mechanisms. These are: UK Aid Connect (DFID), Dialogue and Dissent (Netherlands MFA), Lot CIV (Danida), Framework Agreements (SIDA), Programme Based Support (MFA Finland). This table is limited to these channels of support to civil society and it is recognised that they sit within a wider portfolio within the Donor agencies. They have been selected on the basis that either the new funds or their predecessors are most similar to SDC’s programme contribution.

	<b>SDC</b>	<b>Danida</b>	<b>Dutch MFA</b>	<b>SIDA</b>	<b>DFID<sup>139</sup></b>	<b>Finnish MFA</b>
Open to other non-national NGOs	No	No	Yes	No	Yes	No
By invitation only?	No- Open. Swiss NGOs can engage with IDP at any point to discuss potential participation.	Open	Open	Yes (for those who have passed the eligibility criteria)	Open	Yes (for those who have passed the eligibility criteria)
Intervention logic required	Not during 2009/16 though impact hypotheses included in 2017-20 draft admissions manual.	Theory of change and results framework required.	Theory of change required. Not using logframes, but using stories for change approach. Outcome based results frameworks	No	Theory of change will be required and outcome level reporting	Yes results framework or Logframes (or similar) are required
Performance related funding	No	Results-oriented assessment of future partners’ application	To some extent – work with a flexible budget, but if goals are	To some extent – Assessments based on qualitative data	To some extent. Not payment by results or outputs, but will be managed against	New emphasis on RBM

<sup>139</sup> UK Aid Connect

	<b>SDC</b>	<b>Danida</b>	<b>Dutch MFA</b>	<b>SIDA</b>	<b>DFID<sup>139</sup></b>	<b>Finnish MFA</b>
			not achieved financial unit will show this	rather than through Results Frameworks.	outcomes.	
Co-financing required	Yes 50%	Yes 20%	Yes, 25% income from non-MFA contributions over total income of NGO (not over activity)	Yes, 10% <sup>140</sup>	No	Self-financing 15% of the total programme cost
Required strategic fit with donor objectives	General fit with Swiss development goals Not more specific in the draft revised (July 2016) assessment grid <sup>141</sup> or the analysis themes <sup>142</sup> of the 2017-20 Admissions process.	Yes, with 2017 Strategy for development and humanitarian action	Yes, with CSO Strategy, not with overall objectives of the Dutch policy	Yes, with CSO Strategy	No information	Yes with the overall objectives of the Finnish Development Policy
Geographical restrictions	No	Greater demands in terms of geographical alignment than before	Must work with CSOs in more than two low and lower middle-income countries.	No	Countries ranked in the bottom 50 countries in the Human Development Index and/or those on DFID's fragile states list	Not strictly speaking, but do encourage synergies with the bilateral programme countries
Thematic focus	No	Greater demands in terms of thematic alignment than before. Capacity development advocacy and strategic	Yes, development of lobbying and advocacy capacity. Within this they	None	Yes – for July 2017 call: Promoting SRHR, Global Security and stability, disability inclusion, building CS	None

<sup>140</sup> Self-financed part of total costs is to comprise of at 10% and consist of cash funds raised in Sweden.

<sup>141</sup> Annex 3 : Zulassungskriterien Programmbeitrag, no date

<sup>142</sup> Annex 5 : CADDCC Thèmes de référence pour l'analyse des dossiers

	<b>SDC</b>	<b>Danida</b>	<b>Dutch MFA</b>	<b>SIDA</b>	<b>DFID<sup>139</sup></b>	<b>Finnish MFA</b>
		service delivery is imp. Must address thematic priorities and SDG priorities	can chose any of the four MFA thematic areas or beyond		effectiveness, tackling child labour and modern slavery, building open societies, supporting tolerance and freedom of religion or belief and addressing LBGT inclusion	
Use of standard indicators	The use of Aggregated Reference Indicators (ARI) in monitoring and reporting to the 2017-2020 Dispatch is mandatory, including SDC institutional partners	Are in discussion as to whether they will use standardised reporting In the current portfolio they do not summarise across frameworks	No but will work up a Results Frameworks based on the partners' RFs and their outcomes.	No	No, but commitment to IATI standard is used as marker for transparency when scoring in proposal	No
Resource allocation	Significant budget increase in 2013 but recent cuts.	Approx. 1 bn DKK (includes humanitarian funding)	Have halved budget from 2 to 1 billion Euros for NGO capacity building programmes	Has increased and there is political support for the budget line	No overall budget	200 Million euros over four years
Budget limitations	Max CHF10 million p.a. (with exception of Eastern Europe components)	For individual Strategic Partners: DKK 15-125 million/yr	For individual orgs will be at least Euros 2 million and max Euros 20 million/year	Not specified	Individual organisations can receive between 1 and £10 million a year	Not specified

	<b>SDC</b>	<b>Danida</b>	<b>Dutch MFA</b>	<b>SIDA</b>	<b>DFID<sup>139</sup></b>	<b>Finnish MFA</b>
Type of partnerships	Currently 37 institutional partners divided into 5 categories:	They plan to have partnerships with approx. 14 Requirement that partnerships involve southern based actors that genuinely constitute local CS.	25 strategic partnerships. Very strong focus on partnership and how this is managed. Mostly consortia The partnership has to formulate a joint strategic goal NB only 2 led by Southern CSOs 2 standalone	15 partners – want to “manage relations rather than manage contributions”. Are in discussion about how much of the funds go directly to partners.	Consortia only eligible Up to 15 Consortia. Diverse multi-institutional coalitions. Will include development organisations, think tanks, foundations, philanthropic and the private sector. Plan to give a long lead in time for partners to establish relationship. Emphasis on strategic relationship between thematic/policy teams and NGOs.	22 large Finnish NGOs (including 2 umbrella organisations and three special funds)
Management	Managed by Institutional Partnership Division	Currently in discussion about how they will manage. Is likely to involve embassies, policy and geographical unit.	22 out of 25 are managed in relevant thematic unit Mutual accountability is imp.	Sits within CS Unit	Are discussing this. Likely to be in more consultation with the policy dept	Sits within CS Unit
Most recent CS Strategy	Most recent NGO policy from 2007	Danish Strategy for DC and Humanitarian Action New strategic partnership will start 2018 Policy for Danish Support to Civil Society (2014)	Dialogue and Dissent	“Strategy for support through Swedish organisations in civil society 2016-2022” currently in process of being translated into English	The Civil Society Partnership Review is the foundation of the approach (engagement, strategy, funding)	Currently revising the guidelines for support to civil society.

	<b>SDC</b>	<b>Danida</b>	<b>Dutch MFA</b>	<b>SIDA</b>	<b>DFID</b> <sup>139</sup>	<b>Finnish MFA</b>
IATI	Not a requirement. SDC not a member of IATI	Will include phasing in of the use of IATI platform. IATI member	All have to be IATI compliant. MFA will refer to IATI reports IATI member,	Goal to all be IATI compliant. IATI member	No information. though IATI member	Encourage IATI compliance. IATI member

## Annex 16 – Examples of NGO contributions to SDC goals

SDC goal	Illustration
<b>Global frameworks:</b> Strengthen global frameworks in support of the SDGs	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Work within the context of the <u>UN -Conference „Rio+20“ and post 2015 debate</u>, e.g. AKTE, Caritas, Helvetas.</li> <li>• MSF has worked with ICRC, WFP, UNHCR and the Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue for a strategic partnership that will lead to the creation of a Competence Center for Humanitarian Negotiation.</li> <li>• <u>UN Human Rights Council</u>, e.g. AKTE part of UPR-NGO-coalition for assessment of human rights situation in Switzerland.</li> <li>• Working within <u>global health frameworks</u> such as Declaration of Alma Ata or WHO Ottawa-Charta: Solidarmed; Red Cross</li> <li>• Agenda 2030 and SDGs, e.g. by contribution to the Swiss position (Fastenopfer); position paper on SDGs and tourism (AKTE, Brot für Alle); participation in AGUSAN workshop on SDGs means of implementation (Helvetas); through DRR Platform working towards DRR and resilience integration in the SDGs (Swiss Red Cross).</li> </ul>	
<b>Basic services:</b> Sustainable access to resources and services for all	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Helvetas (2015)</i> reported that the Ministry of Education in Honduras signed a tripartite agreement with Foundation Helvetas Honduras and the Red ICT, its main implementing partner in a vocational educational programme, that commits the government to allocate a budget for the educational centres under the educational programme EDU- CAR+ working with out-of-school and unemployed youth.</li> <li>• <i>Medecins du Monde (2015)</i> has helped reduce the geographical and financial barriers to access to care by opening or maintaining new offers targeted on certain cross-cutting themes. In Benin, a new center for the management of sickle-cell anemia was opened in the center of the country and already allowed more than 100 screening tests and a center for the care of pregnant minor girls benefited 60 girls and their babies.</li> <li>• <i>SolidarMed (2015)</i> reported strengthening existing treatment capacity in the remote district of Namuno in Mozambique. By attracting more investors in the province to take advantage of SolidarMed's potential, the range of healthcare services has improved and demand increased, as evidenced by increased numbers of outpatient treatments and institutional births in the project area.</li> <li>• In Bangladesh, <i>Terre des Hommes Foundation (2015)</i>, Terre des hommes' support to the health system has borne fruit by supporting 120 community clinics in an integrated health / nutrition / Wash and Livelihood approach, with DRR still a cross-cutting focus of projects.</li> <li>• <i>Swiss Red Cross (2015)</i> works in partnership with the University of Karachi to improve mother and child health in the deprived region of Dadu in Pakistan where the maternal mortality rate is nearly double that of the national average. By taking a patient-focussed approach and increasing staff, the programme has doubled the number of outpatients in supported facilities over a year and increased institutional deliveries fourfold in three years to reach full capacity.</li> <li>• <i>Enfants du Monde (2015)</i> as part of a programme co-financed by SDC and SIDA, has been undertaken teacher training with pedagogical monitoring to improve teaching quality. 19 teacher trainers were trained by an EdM education specialist; 310 teachers were then trained and received follow up. Teaching and learning guides were developed the support teachers.</li> </ul>	
<b>Governance and Human Rights:</b> strengthen democracies and human rights	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Fédération Genevoise de Coopération:</i> In its values, the FGC outlines a commitment to the elimination of human rights abuses and as part of its sensitisation work, FGC has organised a 'Right to Food conference'.</li> <li>• <i>Enfant du Monde</i> take a rights-based approach to its work; this is demonstrated through its sensitisation work which is framed around the right to health, and the CRC.</li> <li>• <i>Terre des Hommes</i> explicitly detail that they take a rights-based approach: To ensure the sustainability of its interventions, Tdh develops programs with a human rights-based</li> </ul>	

approach (HBRA). In crisis contexts Tdh aims to guarantee the continuum between its development interventions and its emergency action.

In terms of results, these were best documented by *Brücke • Le pont*, which had the most explicit approach to rights programming (Brazil 2015):

- In terms of contributions to the promotion of human rights: BLP (Brazil) 100% of young people trained were informed about their rights, and their roles as citizens.
- Slavery: In 2015, 574 people were trained on the phenomenon of modern slavery, acting as prevention multipliers, in their circles: 26 trained professors act in the academic and academic Communities, leading debates and prevention actions and 548 workers are aware of their rights. 96 workers were saved from forced labor. They were able subsequently to find a decent work alternative and / or to integrate into the social programs of their municipalities of origin. The inhabitants of the Assentamento 23 Nova Conquista (Monsenhor Gil commune) were able to recover 920 hectares of land, confiscated from a neighboring landowner.

#### **Fragile contexts:** Strengthen resilience in fragile contexts

- *Caritas* - Bangladesh (2015): In 2012 the Government has issued the "National Disaster Management Act" a law on the management of disasters to reduce vulnerability. Caritas supported these efforts at community level in rural areas. With local populations concrete plans at village level were developed for preventive and preparatory measures with regard to future disasters. The project also trains of volunteer groups, who in the event of a disaster, provide first aid or care for the injured and the most needy. In 2015 a total of 90 help teams were trained and 48 community plans worked out. 5'439 households have been covered by DRR plans and are organized at community level in disaster relief. A total of around 30,000 people are now better equipped against disasters.
- *Swiss Red Cross* - Honduras (2015): The role of hazard and risk mapping for strengthening resilience - Based on the IFRC resilience concept and its seven relevant characteristics of resilient communities, the SRC Honduras program defined its community-based projects. They integrate health and DRR, while working simultaneously at community, family, individual and political level, combining hardware and software strengthening activities. Outcomes are defined as 1) Strengthened capacities and improved practices for risk reduction at all levels; 2) Reduced exposure of infrastructure and goods to risks and existing risks mitigated; and 3) Improved coordination and cooperation between all relevant stakeholders, linking from local to superior levels. Results: At the local level, communities know their exposure to the existing threats. Combined with training provided by the project they can respond appropriately. Community development is guided towards safe zones. As co-benefit, many critical sites have become productive land. Municipal and local Emergency Committees, which traditionally were active only in emergency response, have expanded their focus towards prevention and mitigation activities. At the municipal level, risk assessments foster development planning and territorial management.
- *Medecins Sans Frontieres* (2015) Strengthening resilience for MSF in this context has been understood in this context to be the strengthening of health systems and capacity in fragile contexts. In Chad: In the frame of its preventive strategy against epidemics and of the fight against diseases preventable by vaccination, OCG and the local health authorities setup a cholera vaccination campaign in Mokolo and Hina health districts, including the refugee population of Minawao camp. This campaign was associated with an antitetanus vaccination, a soap distribution, a sensitization with regards to hygiene and a malnutrition screening.
- *Terres des Hommes Foundation* (2015): In Afghanistan, Tdh began the last phase of phase 3 of the poverty reduction project through the development of income-generating activities and in 2016, a process of capitalisation of all the phases of this project were to be put in place.

#### **Gender:** Gender equality and the rights of women and girls

- *Medecins du Monde* (2015) has undertaken a GBV programme in Benin; the population of Cotonou has acquired skills to prevent or know how to deal with gender-based violence through the use of an emergency telephone line (the green line), which has received close to 1200 calls in 2015, an increase of more than 50% compared to previous years. Social, psychological and health barriers to access to care have decreased for girls who are minor mothers who have been victims of violence in Cotonou

through a 6-month comprehensive care of 20 girls and their babies and psychological support for 66 mothers and 157 parents and / or guardians. Girls supported or accompanied have developed individual sexual and reproductive health skills through awareness-raising sessions and participatory workshops.

- *Enfants du Monde* (2015) in early 2015 organised a training workshop and guidance on gender including field coordinators in Geneva with the help of a consultant. The workshop aimed to recall the main concepts of an integrated gender approach and take stock of gender mainstreaming to date in programs, identify ways to improve the recognition, monitoring and documentation of gender issues and results in programs on the subject. Through this workshop and approaches, a Gender Policy was subsequently developed; it will enable EdM to go further as in its programs and partnerships to promote changes affecting gender equality.

**Economic development:** Sustainable economic growth

- *Fastenopfer* (2015) - program evaluation results: The target groups of Burkina Faso, India, Colombia, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Colombia, Nepal and South Africa were able to increase and diversify food production. This was due to the higher number and / or quality improvement of house and community gardens (e.g., Nepal, South Africa) as well as family farms and cooperatives (e.g., Colombia, Democratic Republic of the Congo). In Burkina Faso, the share of the families involved in the program, which managed to cope with the scarcity period between harvests without buying grain and without borrowing, rose to over 50 %. The country programs of Guatemala, Colombia, India and South Africa show a significant increase in the number of women and men applying agrarian ecology and climate-adapted farming practices. Three country programs (India, Madagascar and Senegal) worked predominantly with saving groups to prevent debt and / or create reserves for emergency situations. In India, for example, more than 3400 people were freed from guilt in 2015 alone. In addition, the saving groups functioned as a tool for empowerment to successfully address cases of land grabbing. In South Africa, since 2014, the law cases accompanied by partners on land, labour and settling rights have increased almost tenfold from 350 to 3,100.
- *Interteam* – Colombia (2015): The Corporación Desarrollo y Paz del Canal del Dique has strengthened 52 basic social organizations in 6 different thematic lines (vegetables, fruit, fish farming, livestock, cultural initiatives and local crafts) and supported productive initiatives (subsidized by the European Union). In doing so, strong emphasis was placed on the organizational development of the various grassroots organizations (fishermen, small farmers, war victims, youngsters, etc.), whereby Interteam played a key role in the concept of the Capacity Building Strategy. By strengthening the grassroots organizations in around 20 communities, the living conditions of the families could be significantly improved by a higher income. According to the Baseline, 130 families have improved their incomes by 30 to 50% thanks to the productive initiatives.
- *Brücke • Le pont* (2015): 40'000 direct beneficiaries (including 15'000 women) have significantly increased their income by strengthening the agricultural sectors in Togo and Benin. 182 young people (including 84 women) received vocational training and were hired through a recruitment grant in El Salvador. 545 young people and adults (65% women) have been included in the labor market in Brazil. In Bolivia, 432 independent workers (domestic workers, civilian builders) obtained better remuneration (between 20% and 40%) by obtaining a certificate formally recognizing their skills.

**Transition:** Transition to democratic systems and social market economies.

- *Helvetas*: Concerning the transition to democratic systems only a few with direct focus - Helvetas has this prominently included as a sub-theme Local Governance and Policy (part of the core work field Democracy and Peace). The main approach of the partner NGOs is to work with civil society and strengthen various levels of administration, mainly at municipal or district level; strengthening of local government and administration reform
- In 2015, *Helvetas* trained through its partners more than 2'130 local government institutions to plan in a participatory manner and/or to deliver services to citizens in a responsive, accountable and inclusive way. 2'910 local development plans were developed in a participatory manner. Over 52'260 people attended an event or course on governance, decentralisation/democratisation or local administration organized by Helvetas or its partners during 2015. Of them around 11% belonged to disadvantaged groups.

- *SolidarMed*: However, also other partner NGOs work on strengthening lower levels of administration through sector-specific interventions, e.g. *SolidarMed* through capacitating local and district authorities in the health sector.
- During 2013-2016 *Solidar Suisse* provided support including negotiations, lawyers and consultancy services to improve the working conditions of more than a hundred thousand workers from a wide range of sectors (construction, agriculture, textile, mining, food). Hundreds of workers won their cases before the labour court and thus secured their rights (compensation for accidents, deaths, over time, layoffs, etc.). For example, in South Africa, CWAO (Casual Workers Advice Office) supported 220 collective labour disputes of 7,700 precarious workers. Through that 3,900 workers have been able to convert temporary contracts into permanent positions. This results in up to 40% higher wages and health as well as in annuity insurance.

**Humanitarian system:** Strengthen humanitarian system

- *Medecins Sans Frontieres* (2015): In 2012, efforts were also made in establishing standards for crisis management. The operational guidelines, managing Abduction, were defined and implemented. Validated by the Management Team, the Crisis Management Protocol Framework elaborates on steps in responding to critical incidents with complex consequences going beyond the scope of in-country contingency planning (crisis cell, roles and responsibilities, crisis communication).
- *Medecins Sans Frontieres* (2012): Through proactive engagement with parties at war, MSF was able to intervene for populations directly affected by conflict violence and/or related displacement. In Ukraine, MSF deployed activities on both sides of the frontline to support vulnerable populations.

**Humanitarian Aid:** Prevent and alleviate human suffering caused by crisis, conflict or disaster

- *Caritas* (2015): Example Humanitarian aid /Nepal (2015): Following the devastating earthquake of April 25th, Caritas Switzerland immediately deployed a team to Nepal to implement a relief programme to support the affected population. Within days after the disaster, Caritas developed several relief projects, which it carried out together with partners from the Caritas network as well as in cooperation with the Swiss NGO Helvetas. Additional to relief item distribution, Caritas and Helvetas developed a project to support 6 Village Development Committees (VDCs) in constructing temporary learning centers (TLCs) and temporary latrines in 40 schools. The design of the TLCs was based on construction plans prepared by the Department of Education of the Government of Nepal and provided a simple structure of bamboo and corrugated galvanized iron sheets for roofing. Within 3 months after the earthquake and before the onset of the monsoon during which construction of schools was rendered impossible, Caritas provided 6'626 students with 200 temporary classrooms, in which they continued their education. Additionally to the TLCs, Helvetas constructed 193 simple temporary latrines and hand washing stations in the 40 schools. Following the successful implementation of this relief project, Caritas launched a large school rehabilitation project in which 34 schools will be reconstructed in an earthquake-safe and child-friendly manner in the same project area.
- *Terre des Hommes* (2015): Terre des hommes responded in the Magwe region of Myanmar with an urgent cash distribution and child protection response, followed by recovery in the livelihood area. Terre des hommes continued to work on the reintegration of children placed in institutions in collaboration with the Department of Social Affairs. All the 13 Myanmar governmental institutions for children without parental support or in conflict with the law benefited from the collaboration with Terre des hommes. Tdh has also continued to respond to the Syrian crisis with projects in Syria, Jordan, Lebanon and Egypt. In Iraq, Tdh has provided emergency assistance to the most vulnerable displaced families who have taken refuge in informal shelters without water or electricity, in areas where there is little international aid. More than 2,000 displaced families in Kirkuk and Salah Ad Din governorates were provided with livelihoods to cover their basic needs during the critical period from October to December.

## Annex 17 – Examples of NGO results reporting on Basic Services and Gender

The following examples illustrate the different ways in which results were reported in education, health and gender-related programmes in NGO 2015 Annual Reports, and the degree to which there was a sufficient evidence base for the results described.

### - Example of results-oriented reporting at country level

One of the NGOs reviewed<sup>143</sup> provides a positive example of results-oriented reporting at country level where an outcome has been formulated at country or programme level as well as means of verification, baseline, and target appropriate to the local context. This enables country programmes to systematically verify progress and potentially to aggregate data such as “numbers of institutional births in programme regions”. Annual reports describe results achieved to target and provide a narrative description of the outcome and any other relevant results.

For example, the Mozambique country programme identifies as an outcome “*to improve physical access to adequate health services in emergency situations*” in three districts. Achievement of the outcome will be measured by “*annual numbers of out-patient consultations per district*” in relation to 2013/2014 baselines. The 2015 country report indicates considerable progress - in the Ancuabe district an increase of 80.5%; in the Chiure district an increase of 26.2%, and in the Namhauno district an increase of 22.5%<sup>144</sup>.

### - Example of reporting at outcome level against corporate objectives with weak provision of evidence

Another NGO reports to its corporate strategic objectives<sup>145</sup> at outcome level with a detailed set of key indicators; and a ‘traffic-light’ system rating results green, red, and amber according to the extent to which they had been achieved; and a narrative which outlines results in further detail.

For example, for the outcome “*enhance responsiveness and relevance in emergency and conflict situation*”, the key indicators included “*critical reviews are done to evaluate our emergency response*” and “*lessons learned from emergency interventions are incorporated into our practices*”. These were both ‘partly’ achieved in 2013, 2014, and 2015. However, the results reported did not include reference to baseline data; evidence sources from which results are derived; the means of verification; or targets. The accompanying narrative does explain why these results were achieved or the factors affecting them. This may reflect the challenges associated reporting at corporate rather than country level.

### - Example of where policy level reporting does not adequately capture the policy outcome process

One NGO report<sup>146</sup> described an interesting policy-related outcome in Honduras where they had worked to support the Ministry of Education in signing a tripartite agreement with the main implementing partner in its vocational educational programme. This has led to the government allocating a permanent budget for the educational centres where youth can benefit from the educational programme. However, the report does not describe the process by which this policy outcome was achieved; details of budget allocated; and the

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<sup>143</sup> 2015 Mozambique Country Report p.11

<sup>144</sup> Evaluators’ own percentage calculations on the basis of total figures provided in the 2015 Mozambique country report.

<sup>145</sup> 2015 Annual Report p.27

<sup>146</sup> 2015 Annual Report p.58

number of beneficiaries who will potentially benefit. The credibility of a potentially significant result is undermined by the lack of a contribution analysis and supporting evidence.

*- Example of where a weak evidence base has been provided*

A report<sup>147</sup> on a project where teachers were trained on a specific methodology called 'Pédagogie du Texte' drew from an external consultant's assessment of the mathematics and language learning outcomes of a statistically representative sample of second year pupils where this has been delivered and where it has not. The study identified significant improvements e.g. in comprehension, and solving maths problems, for the students that received this support. However, the report does not define 'significant' improvements; the evidence base from which they were derived; and their relation to any targets.

*- Two examples of weak gender outcome reporting*

One NGO reported<sup>148</sup> on its efforts to develop a common gender approach across its programmes. A workshop was organised to take stock of current gender mainstreaming in programmes, how this was being monitored and documented. The NGO subsequently developed a gender policy to enable it to support partners addressing gender; improve its gender programming; and improve how gender is integrated in the organisation. The 2017-20 Programme Document<sup>149</sup> outlines a number of outcomes linked to the gender policy such as '*Promote a common vision and reflection in terms of gender and, where appropriate, to support partners in the implementation of an approach in this field*' but provides no information on how progress towards these outcomes will be monitored.

Another NGO reported on its support to its partners to develop Gender Action Plans for their work in supporting self-employed construction workers. They reported that their partner in Bolivia invited women working in construction in a Government Employment Programme to participate in the project. Partners have been supported to employ measures to improve women's participation in projects, for example, through the use of positive discrimination to promote women's participation in leadership positions. However, the report provides no detail of any associated outcomes e.g. the increased participation of women in leadership roles.

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<sup>147</sup> 2015 Annual Report p.12

<sup>148</sup> 2015 Annual Report p.30

<sup>149</sup> *ibid* p.21

## Annex 18 – A summary analysis of NGO results frameworks and reports

NGO	2013-2016 Programme document	2015 Annual Report
1.	No results framework	No reporting against formulated outcomes
2.	No results framework. Intended outcomes and indicators set out in the narrative of the report (overarching goals then by area of work). Specific country level outcomes are listed in the annexes.	Reports total number of beneficiaries across the programme. Reports on three thematic areas outlined in the programme document by country in the text but no explicit reference to achievement against intended outcome
3.	No results framework Formulation of outcomes and description of corresponding activities in the text	Reporting against formulated outcomes to a large extent through sample cases
4.	No results framework. Intended outcomes are set out in the narrative of the report by thematic area (but not associated indicators).	Results are reported tables against outcomes (indicators, target, achieved) alongside comments and then further narrative reporting on outcomes.
5.	No results framework. Formulated strategies and goals in text; results chains for the three thematic areas in the annex	Reporting on the three thematic areas in the text no explicit reference to results chain
6.	No results framework. Narrative sets out a number of intended activities and associated results, although these are not necessarily worded as outcomes.	Narrative description of results at activity/output level in synthesis report. Separate results report against objectives (not outcomes) by listing outputs achieved. Unclear how they relate to objectives.
7.	No results framework. Intended outcomes are set out in the narrative of the report by thematic area (but not associated indicators).	Reports progress to outcomes in narrative form although unclear how results align to specific outcomes. Annual results report accompanied by county and thematic reports which list outputs and outcomes.
8.	Results framework with impact hypothesis, outcomes, milestones and indicators. Reference to %age PC contribution and to MDGs according to sector/thematic field.	No reporting against targets and indicators in logframe format. In the text sector/thematic chapters corresponding with logframe and presenting respective data on progress
9	No results framework. Formulated impact hypothesis and goals in the text	Reporting against formulated goals in the text
10	No results framework although the programme document contains a number of logic models outlining connection between activities and outcomes. Outcomes described in the narrative of the document.	Results presented in a table detailing the positives and negatives of achievements across two strategic intervention pillars. Qualitative descriptions of progress to outcomes. Results presented at outcome level by country in narrative form.
11	A results framework for the NGOs strategic plan (Table of objectives, expected results, actions and indicators) is set out in the annex. Description of outcomes specific to SDC given in the document's narrative.	Results reported at strategic objective, outcome, activity and output level, in a table of achievements of indicators presented as 'traffic-light' to gauge success. Narrative descriptions of progress towards outcomes.
12	Results framework in place including expected outcomes/impact, proxy-indicators, baselines, means of verification, assumptions/impact hypothesis	Results framework capturing progress against targets of proxy indicators
13	No results framework. In the text tables presenting for each region thematic priorities and strategic goals. In annex tables presenting country programmes formulating long-term goals, priority approaches, thematic focus and expected results but no indicators	Description of main results in the text including quantitative data according to region. In annex reports on regional strategies include reporting against each strategic objective as well as reporting on synergies with mandates/water consortium with quantitative data on beneficiaries reached etc.

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