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Evaluation of the Swiss Cooperation Strategy Yemen 2017 – 2022

EVALUATION REPORT

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Martine Van de Velde – Team Leader – IDHA Consulting
Abeer Alabsi – National Senior Expert

Acronyms and Abbreviations

AR	Annual Report
CS	Cooperation Strategy
DRC	Danish Refugee Council
DRR	Disaster Risk Reduction
EU	European Union
ECHO	European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations
GBV	Gender-Based Violence
HA	Humanitarian Assistance
HI	Humanity & Inclusion
HP	Humanitarian Principles
HNO	Humanitarian Needs Overview
HR	Human Rights
HRP	Humanitarian Response Plan
HQ	Headquarters
IAHE	Inter-Agency Humanitarian Evaluation
ICRC	International Committee of the Red Cross
IDPs	Internally Displaced Persons
IHL	International Humanitarian Law
IHRL	International Human Rights Law
INGO	International Non-Governmental Organisation
IOM	International Organisation for Migration
KII	Key Informant Interviews
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MTR	Mid-Term Review
NFI	Non-Food Item
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
NRC	Norwegian Refugee Council
OCHA	United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
PiN	People in Need
PoC	Persons of Concern
RBM	Results Based Management
SDC	Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation
SGBV	Sexual and Gender-Based Violence
SHA	Swiss Humanitarian Aid
SI	Solidarités International
UN	United Nations
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNSC	United Nations Security Council
WASH	Water, Sanitation and Hygiene
WOGA	Whole of Government Approach
WFP	World Food Program
YHF	Yemen Humanitarian Fund
YHRP	Yemen Humanitarian Response Plan

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Executive Summary

The Swiss Agency for Development Cooperation (SDC) commissioned an independent evaluation of the Swiss Cooperation Strategy (CS) Yemen 2017–2022. The purpose of this evaluation is to assist SDC management and other Federal Department of Foreign Affairs (FDFA) stakeholders in their strategic decision-making with respect to Switzerland's engagement in Yemen. The evaluation focused on the assessment of the ongoing relevance, the efficiency and the results of the strategic objectives defined in the Cooperation Strategy. The evaluation provides strategic and operational recommendations to improve Switzerland's response in Yemen mainly during the forthcoming two-year transition period.

A) Methodology

A mix of primary and secondary data were used as evidence for the evaluation. Primary data gathering included project visits and focus group discussions in the north of Yemen and key informant interviews (KIIs) that were conducted remotely and during the in-country mission. Secondary data analysis included an extensive review of available documents made available by Yemen program staff. The independent evaluators were supported by Yemen program staff based in Bern and in Amman. The main challenges to the evaluation were the limited time available for the mission in the north and not being able to visit the south because of security considerations. For some 'soft' interventions it was not always possible to confirm the results.

The team leader for the evaluation and the national expert were both part of the Inter-Agency Evaluation (IAHE) that was recently concluded. The assessments and findings from the IAHE evaluation were used to triangulate the findings of the SDC evaluation.

B) Main Findings

B.1) Evaluation Area 1: Context Analysis and Relevance

Summary findings: The interventions supported by Switzerland respond to the needs outlined in the Humanitarian Response Plans (HRPs) and the Humanitarian Needs Overview (HNOs) developed by the humanitarian actors, but whether the most vulnerable were consistently targeted could not be confirmed.

The interventions supported by Switzerland under the two Domain Areas—Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH) and Protection—respond to the needs outlined in the HRPs and the HNOs undertaken by the humanitarian actors. Outside the two domains, support was provided to address food insecurity. Whether the assistance provided by humanitarian agencies is consistently targeting the most vulnerable persons of concern (PoC) and the most affected communities could not be confirmed with certainty.

The Yemen program strategy is aligned with the Dispatch on Switzerland's International Cooperation 2017–2020 and 2021–2024 through its focus on saving lives, alleviating suffering, and assisting and protecting people affected by crises in fragile contexts. The evaluation team found that SDC does not have a sufficiently influential role in promoting conflict transformation and resolution in Yemen. Leveraging the synergies between humanitarian aid and peacebuilding have been limited thus far. In a complex conflict and political context, it was found that advocacy and engagement by Switzerland is best supported through a Whole of Government (WOGA) approach.

Overall, the project portfolio is implemented through several international agencies, including United Nations (UN) agencies and international non-governmental organizations (INGOs). There is very limited direct engagement with national civil society actors or government agencies. Limited localisation of the humanitarian response is emblematic of the overall response.

While the interventions are relevant, the quality of the interventions was varied with limited evolution in approach or adaptation to the protracted nature of the crisis, including there being no integration of sustainability concerns or localisation in the planning, implementation, and follow up of the interventions. It was also found that cross-cutting themes such as protection and gender were not sufficiently operationalised.

B.2) Evaluation Area 2: Implementation of the CS and its portfolio

Summary findings: The Yemen program is not decentralized and decision-making and steering is undertaken by SDC HQ in Bern. The Bern-based program coordinator has both managerial and operational duties, which confuses lines of responsibility. In Amman, the responsibilities for the Yemen program staff are not aligned with the human resources capacity. Until recently the thematic and sectoral expertise of SDC was not formally provided to the Yemen team. The absence of Yemeni team members has limited the understanding of the Yemen context.

No decentralized office. Following the closure of Switzerland's office in Yemen in 2014, operational responsibility was transferred to Bern. Recognising that donors were increasingly following up their Yemeni operations from Amman, Switzerland created a Swiss Humanitarian Aid position in Amman in 2019. Project staff in Amman are expected to undertake most of the operational tasks and roles with decision making remaining centralized in Switzerland. This set up means that decisions are being made further away from the area where discussions on Yemen take place by other donors and humanitarian actors. This situation requires continued close collaboration between the staff based in Amman and in Bern.

Limited human resources. The Yemen program has been affected by limited resources and the many responsibilities placed on program staff. The international response to Yemen is one of the largest ever humanitarian operations requiring many coordination mechanisms, meetings, and engagements to be followed by staff in Amman. These responsibilities are additional to following up on a varied program portfolio with numerous partners. During the period covered by the evaluation the Yemen operations have not received the necessary technical backstopping of Swiss expertise in both domains. This has recently changed as thematic experts are now providing necessary technical support to the Yemen team.

No local knowledge on the team. While a more regular presence of SDC in Yemen is of critical importance, it will not address the absence within the team of local Yemeni knowledge. This has a direct impact on the understanding of the Yemen context and impacts the relevance of the design of proposals submitted to SDC for funding consideration.

No presence in-country. Having no physical presence on the ground—whether on its own or shared with other donors—means that SDC must rely on its partners or the UN for logistical support. To avoid association with some partners or being curtailed by the UN's restrictive rules, it would be appropriate for SDC to have a degree of independence when conducting its program monitoring. Having no physical presence limits also the interaction with local stakeholders and authorities.

Not always strategic selection of partners. Decision making in relation to which partners or activities to fund was found not to be sufficiently strategic. This has resulted in SDC not driving linkages between its portfolio of interventions. Given SDC's financial and human resources, it was found that there are too many partners and interventions to manage adequately.

Quantitative Results Framework: The Results Framework is focussed on delivering quantifiable outputs under a humanitarian assistance response and does not go beyond quantitative performance assessment. The Results Framework did not integrate all of Switzerland's objectives—including, for example, engagement at the political level through advocacy—and did not integrate sustainability and provision of technical expertise to the WASH and Protection domains as outlined in the CS. There is no narrative around food insecurity in the CS and food assistance is not integrated in the Results Framework.

Limited engagement with the donor community based on Swiss added value. Switzerland is not sufficiently clear on its added value in the humanitarian response in Yemen. Because of the lack of focus, Switzerland is not sufficiently using its comparative advantage and international standing. While Switzerland is considered a modest financial contributor, it has potential to add value in other areas including humanitarian diplomacy, provided there are sufficient resources and a clear division of responsibilities for those leading that process.

B.3) Evaluation Area 3: Results of the CS – WASH and Protection

Summary findings Domain WASH: SDC-funded interventions contributed to improved access to water and sanitation in vulnerable communities and to a reduction of cases of water-borne diseases during the cholera epidemic. Overall, WASH interventions remained short-term in nature and did not sufficiently consider sustainability, localization, and protection as central to them.

Under the WASH Domain, interventions have resulted in a tangible collection of outputs in the communities where WASH implementing partners operated. WASH interventions have made a difference in the lives of vulnerable communities by providing access to clean water through rehabilitation or expanding the water infrastructure network. However, assessing the sustainability and long-term effect of these results is challenging. Reporting by implementing partners is mainly quantitative and focused on the activity and output level.

Working with Yemeni water authorities on water resources management or developing an exit strategy for the interventions where feasible, to support sustainability was found to be limited. While the evaluation found that there were missed opportunities in terms of improving water efficiency or reduce water loss, it should be stated that only an end to the conflict would bring a sustainable end to the erosion of services and basic infrastructure. Protection was not sufficiently central in WASH interventions, especially the safeguarding of the rights of the most vulnerable post-implementation. Technical support to key ministries and focus on sustainable water-use management at local and national levels as included in the CS did not materialize to the extent expected. There was no overall Do No Harm approach to avoid exhausting resources. The focus of the interventions has largely remained on supporting supply-side options without considering the rapidly worsening water crisis.

Summary findings Domain Protection: The quality of SDC-funded Protection interventions is not consistent, and results reported do not sufficiently reflect the changes that have occurred in the lives of Persons of Concern. Reporting does not sufficiently include the advocacy efforts of Switzerland. The link between advocacy and the Protection interventions supported in-country is also not sufficiently evident.

While reporting highlights integration of sustainability and mainstreaming of Protection, this was not always evident on the ground. Mainstreaming of Protection and it being considered as central to interventions is not sufficiently embedded within interventions. The Results Framework for Protection is narrow in its approach as it does not include Switzerland's diplomatic and advocacy efforts. Since the beginning of the CS implementation, interventions have been varied under the Protection domain and, over time, did not evolve towards having a more refined focus.

Despite IHL violations being a priority concern in the conflict of Yemen, there is limited attention and advocacy around these issues from the international community. SDC has been supporting this indirectly through Geneva Call and the International Committee of the Red Cross' (ICRC) advocacy. It was found that, as a whole, the international community has failed to bring the necessary attention on IHL violations, including on gender and SGBV as weapons of war and the protection of children in armed conflict. This observation is reflective of the Stakeholders highlighted that Switzerland's potential for becoming a member of the Security Council make it very well placed to support efforts addressing IHL concerns. The evaluation found there is no leadership from the UN system or from the donor community with respect to IHL violations and the need for leadership.

Summary findings for interventions outside the Domains. Switzerland's response has not yet transitioned towards combining both humanitarian and development funding, addressing where possible structural problems or considering a longer-term approach.

As with most donors, Switzerland has provided humanitarian assistance but has not complementing it with development funding. However, Germany, Sweden and The Netherlands have either maintained or gradually introduced development funding complementing humanitarian assistance. The focus of the international aid community has been on short-term humanitarian assistance, concentrating on supporting immediate basic needs without addressing structural problems. The bridging between humanitarian and development approaches is seen as a missed opportunity. Some progress is being made especially in the water sector, with Germany leading the donor working group, where a strategy for the water sector has been drafted.

Where there was some improvement in food security, it was found this was only short term and—in the absence of a resilience focus including support for sustainable livelihoods and rehabilitation of productive assets—could only be sustained by continued food assistance.

Switzerland has fostered a partnership with a local research organisation – the Sana'a Centre For Strategic Studies - through funding research on the quality of humanitarian assistance. This research was aligned with the objectives of the program strategy. Working with local organisations to conduct research around the objectives of Switzerland's program strategy supports Switzerland's ambition to further its evidence-based advocacy.

C) Main Conclusions

The main conclusions within the report are summarised below.

Conclusion 1: Switzerland's interventions in Yemen have been relevant in the context of humanitarian needs and conflict. After seven years of conflict and promising signs that a peaceful solution could possibly be found with appropriate support, it is important for Switzerland to transition towards an engagement that combines humanitarian aid, development assistance and peace diplomacy. The WASH and Protection domains are highly relevant in the Yemen context and respond directly to priority needs. SDC's experiences in the wider region could provide valuable lessons to the Yemen program.

Conclusion 2: The choice of modalities is mainly driven by Switzerland not having a presence in Yemen and the need for scale in the response given Yemen's humanitarian situation. As the humanitarian crisis became more protracted, SDC-funded interventions did not transition in a timely manner to consider sustainability and local ownership.

Conclusion 3: The lack of decentralisation of the program with operational responsibility and decision-making located in Bern has impacted the efficient management of the portfolio. Switzerland has neither the region institutional set-up nor the human resources and Yemeni knowledge embedded within the team required to engage strategically with key stakeholders, or with coordination and advocacy mechanisms.

Conclusion 4: Switzerland has not sufficiently allocated human resources to monitor its interventions. This burdens the program staff such that they cannot engage more strategically with the Yemen response. Expectations around what can be reasonably achieved should be aligned with available resources.

Conclusion 5: The results under both the WASH and Protection domains were negatively impacted by a fragmented approach to interventions, not considering sustainability and a resilience approach where feasible, and limited safeguards to ensure inclusion and access for the most vulnerable after completion of interventions.

Conclusion 6: Engagement with local actors and supporting evidence-based research has been limited. Strengthening this will assist interventions to be more responsive to the needs of the most vulnerable and will ensure a more localised response.

D) Recommendations

The evaluation team has formulated four Strategic Recommendations and three Operational Recommendations. Each recommendation is supported by actions which are included in the Conclusions section of the main report.

Strategic Recommendations:

1. Implement the SDC Directorate decision to elaborate and implement a two-year transition program with a nexus approach as a cornerstone. (Conclusion 1, 3)
2. Work with implementing partners to integrate transitioning objectives into current and future programming. (Conclusion 3, 4, 5)
3. Work towards decentralization of the program with more regular presence in in-country, increased contextual knowledge and engagement with other actors, including national and local authorities. (Conclusion 2)
4. Work with local partners and other like-minded actors to implement evidence-based research to inform interventions and advocacy in line with Switzerland's Yemen program. (Conclusion 6)

Operational Recommendations:

5. WASH Domain – Maintain the WASH Domain in the transition strategy but with a stronger focus on water resources management, consider sustainability where feasible, integrate Swiss thematic expertise, and protect the access of the most vulnerable persons after completion of the intervention. (Conclusion 3, 5)
6. Protection Domain – Maintain the Protection Domain but integrate a focus on women and children under International Humanitarian Law advocacy and direct Protection services, implementing a localisation approach. (Conclusion 3, 5)

7. Outside both Domains: (Conclusion 1, 3, 5)

- i) Strong advocacy supporting a peaceful solution to the conflict
- ii) Maintain the focus on food security but with a resilience and sustainability approach
- iii) Review the Yemen Humanitarian Fund to assess opportunities to support resilience and nexus programming.

1. Introduction

1.1. Purpose and objective of the Evaluation

This Evaluation Report concerns the evaluation of the Swiss Cooperation Strategy (CS) Yemen 2017 –2022 and presents the main findings, conclusions and recommendations.

Based on the Terms of Reference (TOR) the goal of the evaluation is to assist the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC) management and other Federal Department of Foreign Affairs (FDFA) stakeholders in their strategic decision-making with regards to Switzerland's engagement in Yemen. (See Annex 1 – TORs)

The aim of this mandate is to assess the relevance, coherence, efficiency, and results with regards to the strategic objectives as defined in the CS. The following valuation areas (EA) guide the focus of the evaluation:

- Evaluation Area 1: Context Analysis and Relevance
- Evaluation Area 2: Implementation of the CS and its portfolio
- Evaluation Area 3: Results of the CS

1.2. Overview of the Cooperation Strategy in Yemen

SDC's presence in Yemen started in 2011, however the SDC program office in Sana'a was closed in 2014 due to the deteriorating security situation in the country. With the closure of SDC's office in Yemen, programmatic engagement has since been managed from the Headquarters (HQ) in Bern with a predominant focus on contributions to multilateral organizations with a Swiss project officer based in Amman since 2021.

The cooperation strategy was adopted in late 2016 with an entirely humanitarian budget and focus on two domains of intervention: Protection (35% of the funding) and Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH) (31%). Around 30% was allocated outside the two domains mainly to World Food Programme (WFP) to address food insecurity. (See annex 2 – Analysis of Yemen Funding post-2017) The 2016 strategy was a shift from the previous cooperation programme focusing on mixed migration from the Horn of Africa. Because of the start of the war in Yemen it was no longer justified not to include the Yemeni population affected by the conflict. However, it should be noted that the 2016 Cooperation did no longer specifically mention migrants as the target group.

The annual budget was defined at CHF 9 Mio, which also included a budget for WFP of CHF 1.5 Mio outside the two domains. The strategy foresaw a remote management modality for the program from Bern.

Currently - based on the Terms of Reference - the annual budget starts at CHF 12 Mio (of which around CHF 8 Mio for H-Cash, and CHF 4-4.5 Mio for Multi-Bi contributions) with around CHF 1-2 Mio added from the reserve funds annually.

Goal of the Cooperation Strategy 2017-2020: Strengthen the resilience of civilians most affected by the armed conflict through better access to water and sanitation and through enhanced protection.

To achieve this goal, interventions are supported under two domains – Protection and WASH - with an objective formulation and impact hypothesis for each domain.

Three transversal themes – gender equality, local governance, and disaster risk reduction (DRR) – were to be mainstreamed in all interventions. Under gender equality emphasis was placed on gender-based violence (GBV).

Domain 1: WASH

Domain objective: Persons of concern (PoC) have access to sustainable WASH facilities, contributing to improved health and a decrease in water borne diseases.

Impact hypothesis: By providing short-term gender-responsive emergency WASH and protection initiatives the suffering of conflict-affected populations on all sides of the conflict will be reduced. This will result in reduced inter-ethnic and host-IDP tensions and increased inclusion of Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) at community level, which in turn will create an enabling environment for peaceful resource sharing. By improving access to water and sanitation, conflict-affected and vulnerable populations will stand a better chance of achieving safe and viable living conditions with a decrease in water-borne illnesses.

Implementation focus: Technical support to key ministries; rehabilitation of water networks; reviving a nationwide groundwater monitoring network; capacity-building of community-based organizations (water committees) to monitor groundwater levels and engage in a more sustainable use of water.

Domain 2: Protection

Domain objective: Persons with specific protection needs experience an enhanced level of security and have improved access to remedies in target areas.

Impact hypothesis: Promoting a protective and safe environment for conflict-affected and vulnerable people and enhancing access to protection services will increase individual security. Engaging communities and informing them about their rights and the consequences of armed conflict strengthen the capacity of individuals to identify risks and seek assistance. Advocacy on and training in international norms for armed forces, government backed forces, ANSAs and regional military powers, will contribute in the long term to reducing the harm to civilians caused by military operations.

Implementation focus: Emphasis on protection for children, youth and women; enhance protection services, advocacy and training in international humanitarian norms.

1.3. Evaluation Methodology

The evaluation approach was based on extensive consultation of SDC documents and other internal resources complemented with interviews and consultation with internal and external stakeholders (See Annex 3). The evaluation had a forward-looking lens focusing on lessons learned to support the development of a new program strategy while considering several institutional changes that have taken place since the original design. The evaluation report is structured along the three evaluation areas and their evaluation questions.

The independent evaluation team consists of:

- External evaluator – Team Leader Martine Van de Velde
- National external evaluator – Abeer Alabsi

The team of consultants have been supported by SDC SHA peer members:

- Simone Troller Alderisi, Yemen Program Coordinator, Bern
- Chantal Neuweiler, Yemen Program Officer, Amman

A field mission to Yemen took place with the aim of providing a more detailed picture and understanding of the context, capacity on the ground and intervention types. The field mission took place between Monday 16 May and Saturday 28 May. The field mission was complemented with three days in Amman to support meetings with SDC and donor country representatives. (See Annex 4 for the schedule of the mission to Yemen and Amman)

In-country (Yemen) consultations focused on implementing partners as well as selected key stakeholders who could bring additional information or insights not available in the program documentation or which were not obtained through remote calls. The national expert undertook also a workshop with national non-governmental organisations (NGOs) who were currently sub-contracted by INGOs funded by SDC. Important to note is that the evaluation team considered the findings and conclusions of the Inter-Agency Humanitarian Evaluation (IAHE), hence why this evaluation did not focus on SDC's partnerships with the United Nations (UN) agencies. Both the team leader and national expert were part of the IAHE evaluation team.

A number of limitations impacted the evaluation process including:

- Limited time for the in-country visit in the North and no visit in the South.
- Distances between project locations outside Sana'a meant that only a limited number of interventions could be visited. The team responded to this by splitting the team.
- The reporting to date has been quantitative focused with limited analysis of change.

2. Findings against the Evaluation Areas

2.1. Evaluation Area 1: Context Analysis and Relevance

a) Relevant to the context

The interventions supported by Switzerland respond to the needs outlined in the Humanitarian Response Plans (HRPs) and the Humanitarian Needs Overview (HNOs) carried out by the humanitarian actors.

Protection

The protection of civilians is continuously undermined and/or ignored by the parties to the conflict. Underlying the armed conflict, the financial and economic crises are ongoing violations of international human rights law (IHRL) and international humanitarian law (IHL). These violations have resulted in civilian casualties, population displacements, damages to civilian infrastructure and the disruption to, and loss of, livelihoods. As a result, the vulnerabilities of the Yemeni population have become exacerbated, leading to families and individuals increasingly resorting to negative coping mechanisms, such as child marriage, child labour and forced recruitment. Moreover, family separations have increased, and community support structures have been weakened, contributing to a rise in psychosocial and mental distress.

The number of people in need (PiN) of protection services is high and is linked to the protracted conflict and humanitarian crisis. In 2017, the Yemen Humanitarian Response Plan (YHRP) emphasized protection as "the centre of the response ... all assistance will be planned and implemented so as to promote the safety, dignity and rights of affected people".¹ In 2017, the Protection Cluster's response included three components: ensuring the centrality of protection and overall protection of IDPs, returnees and host communities; response to GBV through the GBV sub-cluster; and the protection of conflict-affected children through the Child Protection sub-cluster, which was to scale up its activities in 2017.²

WASH

Water scarcity was arguably the country's number one problem prior to the conflict. In 2014, a realistic estimate gave the amount of unsustainable extraction at 1.4 billion cubic metres (the difference between use and replenishment). The annual estimate of renewable water is 2.1 billion cubic metres, working out to 84 cubic metres per capita. The accepted global scarcity threshold is 1,000 cubic metres per capita – over ten times higher.³ Prior to the war (and presumably up to the present day), most of this water was used for agriculture, increasingly via deep tube wells using diesel or solar pumps. The outbreak of cholera in 2017 (and smaller outbreak in 2016) is an indicator of the poor state of Yemen's water and sanitation infrastructure. Access to safe drinking water is the biggest challenge for many in vulnerable rural communities. Rainwater harvesting remains limited and the problem is getting worse as climate change makes rainfall scarcer and less reliable.⁴

Food Security

Support to the World Food Program responds to the food insecurity and the widespread poverty in the country. According to most estimates, poverty has increased over the course of the war since 2015. The World Bank, in its last macro-economic outlook for Yemen in 2020, stated that "Deteriorating economic conditions have likely translated into widespread poverty".⁵ On their country website for Yemen the World Bank states that, "Poverty is worsening: whereas before the crisis it affected almost half Yemen's total population of about 29 million, now it affects an estimated three-quarters of it – 71% to 78% of Yemenis. Women are more severely affected than men".⁶ The increasing poverty illustrates the need for interventions supporting the most vulnerable to access basic services and at the same time consider how the country can be supported through a longer-term approach addressing the causes of the widespread poverty.

¹ OCHA (2017), *Humanitarian Response Plan: January-December 2017*.

² Ibid.

³ Lackner, H. (2014), *Why Yemen Matters: A Society in Transition* (pp 161-183).

⁴ World Bank. 2022. Rainwater Harvesting in Yemen: A Durable Solution for Water Scarcity.

<https://www.worldbank.org/en/news/feature/2022/08/23/rainwater-harvesting-in-yemen-a-durable-solution-for-water-scarcity>

⁵ World Bank (2020). Macro-Economics Yemen.

⁶ World Bank (2021). *The World Bank in Yemen: Overview*. <https://www.worldbank.org/en/country/yemen/overview#1> (Accessed on 01/12/21).

Targeting the most vulnerable

Whether the assistance provided by humanitarian agencies is consistently targeting the most vulnerable persons of concern and the geographic pockets most affected by food insecurity cannot be confirmed with certainty because of data limitations and gaps in the Yemen response. Data constraints and lack of accurate humanitarian data have been highlighted in the IAHE 2022. Same observation can be made on Protection. The IAHE found that protection mainstreaming was not sufficiently prioritized across the humanitarian operations. Protection cluster reports are fragmented and provide incomplete results. SDC has highlighted its concerns in the annual reports (ARs) on the inclusion and targeting of the most vulnerable population groups.

Both Protection and Wash have received in comparison with other sectors such as food security and health minimal funding. This underfunding makes the support and focus of SDC even more relevant.

b) Relevant to the Dispatch on Switzerland's International Cooperation

The Swiss Cooperation Strategy for Yemen is aligned with the Dispatch on Switzerland's International Cooperation 2017-2020 and 2021-2024 through its focus on saving lives, alleviating suffering, and assisting and protecting people affected by crises in fragile contexts.

- The **two domain areas** under the CS are in line with the four priority themes of the Swiss Humanitarian Aid (SHA) Department of the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC) in the **Dispatch on Switzerland's International Cooperation 2017-2020**. The four priority transversal themes include: Protection; DRR; Water and Environmental Sanitation (WES), and sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV). The Yemen program has a strong focus on protection and SGBV.
- The domains of intervention – WASH and Protection – reflect the experience and expertise of Switzerland and correspond to the four areas where SHA can bring added value: (1) Wash; (2) Food Security and Livelihoods; (3) Protection of the most vulnerable; and (4) DRR and resilience reconstruction.
- However, when it comes to Yemen, **Switzerland has not been able to make its know-how available to partner organizations**. Limiting factors cited are: (i) the ongoing conflict and resultant security and safety situation in Yemen; and (ii) SDC's operational structure of its Yemen program. The Yemen program is not part of SDC's Middle East Regional Strategy, which focuses on Syria and Iraq, and the humanitarian situation and displacement in the region caused by the Syria conflict (see also EA 2).
- The Dispatch of 2017-2020, and further emphasized in the Dispatch of 2021-2024, outlines three areas of responsibility for SHA:
 - An actor responding directly, effectively and pragmatically to the consequences of armed conflicts and disasters.
 - A dependable and flexible donor.
 - A defender of the humanitarian cause through its engagement in negotiations to promote respect for IHL and Humanitarian Principles (HP).

The evaluation team found that **SDC does not have a sufficient role in promoting conflict transformation and conflict resolution in Yemen**. Harnessing the synergies between humanitarian aid and peacebuilding have so far been limited. Overall, it was found that advocacy and project interventions are somehow implemented in silo's with limited interlinkages.

c) Relevance of the projects / program portfolios

The **intervention modalities** of the Swiss Cooperation Strategy for Yemen include:

- a) Contribution to multilateral interventions with a focus on multilateral partners, mainly the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), UNDP, WFP and the Yemen Humanitarian Fund managed by the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA)
- b) Bilateral project partnerships with the Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC), Danish Refugee Council (DRC), Humanity and Inclusion (HI), Geneva Call (GC), Medair, Solidarités International (SI) currently receiving financial support.

- ⇒ There are no secondments in Yemen, although secondments are an intervention modality regularly used by SDC in other contexts. The possible placement of a secondment is raised as a point of reflection in the management response to the Annual Report 2021.⁷

Overall, the project portfolio is implemented through several international agencies, including United Nations (UN) agencies and international non-governmental organizations (INGOs). There is very limited direct engagement with national civil society actors or government agencies. Engagement of national civil society actors takes place through the international organizations. It was found that the relationship between INGOs and national actors is mainly reflective of a sub-contracting approach with limited consultation of local partners on strategic issues. This view was expressed by national NGOs consulted under this evaluation. It is also reflective of the IAHE findings.

Based on the document review, the different project interventions are contributing to the objectives of the cooperation strategies and are responding to the needs of the population. But it was found that the quality of the interventions is varied with limited evolution in approach, or adaptation to the protracted nature of the crisis including no integration of sustainability concerns in the planning of the interventions. It was also found that cross-cutting themes were not sufficiently operationalised.

2.2. Evaluation Area 2: Implementation of the CS and its portfolio

a) SDC's institutional set-up

The Yemen program is not decentralized and decision-making as well as steering is undertaken by SDC HQ in Bern. The program and team have been subject to several changes in 2021 and 2022. The current program coordinator in Bern – responsible for the Country Program – was appointed in August 2021, and a national program officer in Amman was assigned to work 50% of the time on the Yemen portfolio in September 2021. A new project officer, based in Amman, started in May 2022 replacing the outgoing staff member. It should be highlighted that no Yemeni staff member is currently on the program team.

Roles and responsibilities between the position based in Bern and the position in Amman are clear in terms of steering, identifying opportunities and engagement in policy issues. However, in practice the staff member holding the Bern-based position has also taken on operational roles. This has been mainly caused by limited human resources working on the program and the multiple tasks the Yemen program team had to take on.

The Bern based program coordinator has both managerial and operational duties, which can confuse the lines of responsibility. Given there are limited human resources which are dedicated to the Yemen operations in Amman, it means that not all the operational responsibilities can be concentrated in Amman. The standard set-up for operations is to have a decentralized office, especially when there are large funding levels involved and a country program strategy has been developed. For Yemen, following the closure of the country office in 2014, operational responsibility was transferred to Bern. This set-up has remained since but has been bolstered with the creation of a SHA position in Amman in 2019, following the increasing presence of other donors on Yemen in Amman.

This evaluation also coincides with an institutional process within SDC to review its operational structures. While it is important for this evaluation to consider broader institutional aspects, it is expected that the SDC institutional review process will have an impact at SDC HQ level but not at the regional level.

b) Human resources

The Yemen program has been affected by limited resources and the many responsibilities placed on program staff. The international response to Yemen is one of the largest humanitarian operations with many coordination mechanisms, meetings, and engagements required of staff. These are responsibilities additional to following up on a varied program portfolio and a large number of partners.

It is evident from all interviews conducted with current and past SDC program staff working on the Yemen program, that **the responsibilities are too great in relation to available resources to be able to follow up in an adequate manner.** These issues can only be addressed if a concerted effort is made by Switzerland on its focus

⁷ At the start of the Cooperation Strategy efforts took place to support 5 secondments in Yemen. For multiple reasons – mainly linked to the context - these secondments did not materialize or needed to cut short.

and what resources will be allocated. Only in this way can Switzerland bring quality and an added value to engagement based on its expertise.

The number of staff dedicated to following-up the Yemen operations is considered too small for the size of SDC's operations and ambitions. It is clear from interviews and the field mission that Switzerland has the ambition to bring added value to the Yemen humanitarian response, and that it is currently engaging in a few coordination mechanisms and working groups. However, the evaluation found that if Switzerland wants to make a difference in these areas, it should be clear about its focus and allocate the necessary expertise and resources to achieve its goals.

There is also an expectation from other donors and local and international actors for Switzerland to bring its expertise and engage more, including for example on the triple nexus. The evaluation team found the quality of interventions and its engagement could be greater if additional technical support was provided. This support can be provided through secondments with the right technical expertise and through having other government entities provide support such as the Peace and Human Rights Division.

c) Remote management

During the period under review, SDC conducted remote management of its interventions. It was not clear from the documents or interviews whether SDC had developed the necessary tools to support remote management. It was found that the **approach to remote management was highly influenced and steered by the program staff managing the Yemen portfolio**. Key components of the remote monitoring have been:

- Engagement with the partners through regular calls with bilateral and multilateral partners to discuss progress and challenges faced.
- Review and commenting on program design and reporting. It was found that project documentation review has mainly focused on the documentation provided by the bilateral partners.
- In-country missions with regularity impacted by the Covid-19 pandemic and the security situation.

In the management response sections of the annual reports, reference has been made since 2017 to potentially revert to third-party monitoring of some projects. This has never materialized. Based on the review and the finding of other evaluations including the IAHE, the evaluation team found that third-party monitoring is not an effective or efficient alternative to strengthening SDC's own monitoring and follow-up activities.

d) No SDC permanent presence in Yemen

Switzerland's lack of presence in Yemen poses clear challenges in terms of knowledge of and monitoring of country context and international response. Yemen's needs remain great and will remain so for many years to come. While the peace process is providing some hopeful signs, it is not yet sufficiently progressed and has many obstacles. These contextual challenges are limiting factors in deciding on a more permanent or regular presence.

Since the closure of the SDC office in Sana'a, SDC has not had a permanent presence on the ground in Yemen. This absence has several implications in terms of gaining contextual knowledge, developing strong networks in-country and the monitoring of SDC funded interventions, which would support evidence-based and more effective humanitarian diplomacy. Not having a regular presence in-country also means that it limits Switzerland's ability to be a strong actor and engage in political or broader humanitarian policy issues.

Given that the Yemen operations are not decentralized, this means decision-making on projects is undertaken through OpKoms. While the project management in Amman undertakes the majority of operational tasks and roles, the de-centralization of decision-making means that decisions are made further away from both the field and the area wherein discussions on Yemen by other actors take place. Feedback highlighted that being part of a regional office is the best alternative to not having a Yemen-based office, especially considering the presence of other donors working on Yemen in Amman. Throughout the period under evaluation, the financial management is done from Bern. The latter was found to be efficient, and feedback received confirmed that for the future the financial management from Berne should be maintained.

While a more regular presence of SDC in Yemen is of critical importance, it will not address the absence within the team of local Yemeni knowledge. The absence of Yemeni programme staff members has a direct impact on the understanding of context and has an influence on the relevance of the design of proposals submitted to SDC for funding consideration.

It was also found that having no physical presence on the ground, whether on its own or shared with other donors, SDC must rely on its partners or the UN for logistical support. To avoid association with certain partners or being curtailed by the UN's overly restrictive rules, it would be more appropriate for SDC to have a degree of independence when conducting its programme monitoring. The steps taken by the programme staff to investigate options are constructive and are providing the necessary information to base its decisions.

The evaluation found that opening of an office is a too large step for Switzerland at this moment, but there are other modalities to support an in-country presence. During interviews, stakeholders from SDC and other donor countries note that an in-country presence is best coordinated with other donor countries. From a security and logistics point of view this is seen as the most plausible option. Based on the feedback received, the evaluation team is of the view that, at a minimum, a regular presence in the country is needed.

The need for a more permanent presence in Yemen is constantly raised in the annual reports and was also reiterated in the interviews with external and internal stakeholders. The evaluation process did not bring a definite answer on what form a future set up should look like. The format for the in-country set-up will be highly influenced by how the security and the conflict in Yemen evolves. Overall, there was consensus among those interviewed that SDC should consider a more permanent presence in Yemen and should consider different forms this could take including but not limited to:

- Secondments providing technical expertise mainly under the WASH Domain
- Be part of a joint effort with like-minded donor countries to have a joint office
- Increase the regularity of the SDC monitoring missions to Yemen and visit on at least a quarterly basis
- Increase visits to Yemen for the thematic experts
- Hire a national staff member who can provide support in-country

e) Link with the Regional Middle East Regional Program

The thematic experts (WASH and Protection), based in the Swiss Embassy in Amman, did not have Yemen in their job descriptions until recently. This meant that technical expertise and/or advice was provided on an ad-hoc basis and when time allowed. This has now changed and the provision for Yemen support is included in the job descriptions. However, it is understood that this thematic support is still provided based on a request from the SDC officer responsible who is based in Amman.

A mid-term review (MTR) of SDC's Middle East Regional Programme Strategy is currently taking place. The evaluation team found that Yemen – being part of the region – should be integrated under the Regional Office. It is understood that the regional programme is focused on the Syrian crisis. But through this long-term engagement and presence in the region there is knowledge and expertise in the regional office that could be used to the benefit of Yemen.

f) Partner selection and financial allocations

The continued restrictions imposed by authorities on bilateral partners over the course of the evaluation period highlighted that having a mix of multilateral and bilateral partners and interventions has been the right approach.

The largest degree of funding is allocated to UN agencies (69%), followed by NGOs (20%) and ICRC (10%). (See Annex 2 for the financial analysis). The largest proportion of funding is being allocated to multilateral agencies reflecting SDC's limited capacity to monitor SDCs funded interventions.

Many of the project interventions supported by Switzerland have been for 2 to 3 years. For many donors, humanitarian funding does not usually extend beyond one year. **It was found that partners have not sufficiently considered this longer-term funding in their planning processes to enable more sustainable results.** In some instances, SDC funding supported subsequent phases of the same interventions, such as Geneva Call interventions to raise awareness on humanitarian norms. Similarly, SDC has been providing continuous funding to UNFPA since 2017 to support the scale up of its GBV interventions. Where there has been continued funding for the same intervention, it is expected that the approach is adapted over time, or that there is greater local capacity strengthening. It was found that this has not always been the case.

It is not evident from the documentation how the selection of the INGOs and interventions was informed. The evaluation found there is insufficient clarity around SDC's selection of interventions and INGOs with whom long-

term partnerships will be developed. In addition, there is not sufficient clarity on what the expectations of SDC are toward these partnerships.

Decision-making within SDC, in relation to which partners or activities to fund, is not strategic enough. SDC has not been in the driving seat to bring together its country portfolio of interventions. Intervention priorities are mainly driven by partners – who take the initiative to solicit funding and submit proposals – and individual SDC staff members who are taking the initiative on where the focus of the interventions should be.

Considering SDC's financial and human resources, it was found that there are too many partners and interventions. Having many partner organizations impacts the quality of project monitoring, whether done remotely or during in-country visits. Partners and interventions were spread across Yemen meaning that during in-country visits insufficient time was available to conduct monitoring of all the partners. Having too many interventions – with limited funding - also impacts the efficacy, results and impact an intervention can achieve. This is especially the case given the capacity of the partners and the degree of need in the areas where each of the partners is working. **A concentration of effort and geographic reach – but maintaining a North-South balance - could enable longer-term change, especially when sustainability and innovative approaches are considered from the onset.**

g) Annual reporting and steering

The management response to consecutive annual reports since 2017 highlight the need for improving the steering function of the annual report. The evaluation also found that, since 2017, the recommendations for steering made in the management response are repetitive mainly highlighting the following recurrent aspects:

- Underfunding and underperforming of the protection cluster
- Weak results under the provision of direct protection services (SDC funded)
- Nexus and transitioning – looking forward – combined with a localization approach
- Gender and protection mainstreaming
- No advocacy agenda
- Division of labour between Bern and Amman (and Muscat)
- Monitoring – remote management – what is possible
- SDC institutional constraints - secondments

There is no evidence on how the steering recommendations were followed up from year to year and there has been no systematic reporting against each recommendation.

The annual reporting is focused on results reporting and challenges linked to SDC-funded interventions. Reports do not sufficiently capture the engagement of Switzerland at other levels including, for instance, the role of Switzerland in co-hosting the pledging conferences.

Most of the partner organizations interviewed indicated the interactions with SDC are regular but that the focus of the interactions is mainly transactional.

Annual reports included a table containing the reporting to the aggregated reference indicators (ARIs). Following the 2017 Annual Report, it was recommended the ARI include the results achieved in the emergency food assistance through WFP and ICRC in addition to the two domains of the strategy.

The annual reports do not provide analysis on how the individual Yemen SDC-supported interventions have contributed jointly towards the overall Swiss outcome statements for the Yemen strategy or the Country-level objectives developed by the international community in the HRP.

The annual reports and the reports prepared by the partner organizations include limited gender analysis or protection integration or it has been omitted. The annual reports do not give a good view on what has taken place or progress towards change. There is no analysis beyond the presentation of the quantitative data.

h) Results Framework

SDC's Cooperation Strategy provided an overall structure for Switzerland's humanitarian operations in Yemen, however it was limited to the two domains of Protection and WASH. The results framework – for both domains – did not go beyond a quantitative performance assessment and focussed on the delivery of quantifiable outputs under a humanitarian assistance (HA) response.

The evaluation team is of the view that the Results Framework reflects how Switzerland viewed its own engagement with Yemen in 2017 and this was mainly focused on providing humanitarian assistance and sharing the international financial burden to respond to a worsening conflict and humanitarian situation.

The Results Framework includes the SDC-funded results and the country development results outcomes, the latter of which was recommended for inclusion following the 2017 Annual Report to allow for a comparison of Swiss results with overall achievements of the international community. However, the evaluation found **the annual reports do not sufficiently reflect on or analyze the challenges within the humanitarian response.**

To illustrate this finding the evaluation team refers to the 'unsatisfactory' rating provided in the annual reports provide to Protection results for Yemen. The absence of results in the Protection cluster has been reported for several years. The underperformance of the Protection cluster was also highlighted in the IAHE. The annual reports did not sufficiently analyze the underlying reasons for this lack of results.

It is a positive approach for SDC to assess the performance of SDC-funded interventions and results in relation to the country results. The evaluation team is of the opinion that Switzerland could have more proactively engaged with the relevant clusters to discuss challenges and weaknesses in the performance of the Protection and WASH clusters.

Not all performance indicators included in the Results Framework for the outcomes under the WASH domain have been incorporated in the reporting by partner organizations. **Reporting has focused on quantitative indicators, measuring the number of Persons of Concern with safe access to facilities.** The objective of the WASH domain has "sustainable" in its description, with indicators including access to affordable drinking water and groundwater monitoring mechanisms. The results framework did not incorporate the strategic priority of providing technical support to key government ministries and there was no evidence of the impact hypothesis that supporting populations on all sides of the conflict will reduce tensions and increase inclusion. (CS p.15)

The results framework did not integrate all the objectives that Switzerland intended to achieve, for example engagement at the political level through advocacy. Nor did it capture the objectives for both domains – integrating sustainability and providing technical expertise – as outlined in the country strategy.

There is no narrative around food insecurity in the country strategy and food assistance is not integrated in the results framework, despite an average of 30 percent of the funding being provided to WFP to address food insecurity.

i) Role of SDC within the donor community

Switzerland has taken an active role in working with other donors to provide support to the humanitarian response efforts, for instance through co-hosting the pledging conferences in 2021 and 2022 with Sweden and engagement in the Senior Officials' Meetings. In 2021 Switzerland organized a side-event on protection during the 2021 pledging conference.

In addition to funding, Switzerland is active in several initiatives supporting donor dialogue and advocacy with like-minded donors at both the technical and HQ levels. Since 2020, Switzerland together with the EU co-chairs the Yemen Children and Armed Conflict (CAAC) Group of Friends, raising knowledge and awareness amongst member-states about grave violations against children.

Switzerland has been elected to sit on the UN Security Council in 2023 providing Switzerland with the highest-level platform to advocate for a peaceful resolution and an end to the conflict in Yemen.

Switzerland has also engaged in the Yemen Humanitarian Donor Coordination Group where it is considered an important actor. Switzerland is not part of the Donor Nexus Group focused on Water but it is expected that Switzerland will become part of that group in the short term. The evaluation team is of the opinion that Switzerland not being part of the Water Donor Group reflects the limited resources available to SDC's team in Amman. The limited resources mean that Switzerland is not able to sufficiently develop its profile in this sector.

The Management Response to the 2021 AR supports the ambition to place more emphasis on the role that Switzerland can play in humanitarian diplomacy and high-level engagement.

The evaluation team found that SDC is not sufficiently clear on where the added value of Switzerland is in the humanitarian response in Yemen. It was found that because of the lack of focus and more concentrated efforts, Switzerland is not sufficiently utilizing its comparative advantage and international standing. Switzerland is

considered a modest financial contributor but with the potential of having an added value in other areas including humanitarian diplomacy, provided that there is sufficient resources and clear division of tasks on whom lead that process.

j) Advocacy

With UN-OCHA and Sweden, SDC has co-hosted the pledging conferences in support of the humanitarian crisis in Yemen. This role has given SDC important recognition of Switzerland's commitment to engage and support the humanitarian response. Switzerland has used this role to advocate for issues linked to Protection and respect for humanitarian law. The evaluation could not verify whether these advocacy efforts are supported by a strategic approach and are consistently followed-up and maintained.

In Amman, SDC is engaged in advocacy through the Children in Armed Conflict (CAA) Yemen and Friends of Yemen. It was found that while SDC is actively engaged in CAA it does not have a child protection focus in its interventions.

In Yemen, SDC has also been engaged in high-level advocacy through visits with the SOM Co-Chairs - European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations (ECHO) and Sweden. As a result of this in-country advocacy, SCMCHA has reacted and improved some of its processes for implementing NGO partners. SDC has tried to maintain visits to Yemen, including a visit by the Head of Humanitarian Aid in 2019. Feedback received from in-country stakeholders suggested that Switzerland, because of its neutral standing, has the potential to play an important role in advocating for a peaceful solution to the conflict.

2.3. Evaluation Area 3: Results of the CS – WASH and Protection

2.3.1. Domain 1 – Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH)

Summary findings WASH: SDC-funded interventions contributed to improved access to water and sanitation in vulnerable communities and to a reduction of cases of water-borne diseases during the cholera epidemic. Overall, WASH interventions remained short-term in nature and did not sufficiently consider sustainability, localization, or work with Yemeni water authorities on water resources management or developing an exit strategy for the interventions to support sustainability. Protection was not sufficiently central in WASH interventions, especially the safeguarding of the rights of the most vulnerable post-implementation. Technical support to key ministries and focus on sustainable water-use management at local and national levels as included in the country strategy did not materialize to the extent expected. There was no overall Do No Harm approach to avoid exhausting resources. The focus of the interventions has largely remained on supporting supply-side options without considering the rapidly worsening water crisis.

a) Results at the output and outcome level

The objective of the WASH domain was to support sustainable WASH facilities. The objective was partially achieved; vulnerable persons have been reached, but whether interventions reached the most vulnerable and marginalized groups could not be confirmed by the evaluation team. The evaluation found that sustainability was not consistently considered in interventions where feasible. The evaluation team acknowledges that while sustainability is not always possible under short-term humanitarian interventions, there are opportunities for a longer-term perspective for some interventions when a humanitarian crisis becomes increasingly protracted as is the case in Yemen.

Under the WASH Domain, interventions have resulted in a tangible collection of outputs in the communities where WASH implementing partners operated. WASH interventions have made a difference in the lives of vulnerable communities by providing access to clean water through rehabilitation or expanding the water infrastructure network. However, assessing the sustainability and long-term effect of these results is challenging. Reporting by implementing partners is mainly quantitative and focused on the activity and output level.

WASH results have contributed to access to clean water impacting on reducing water-borne diseases.

- The cholera epidemic peaked in 2017. SDC's focus on supporting WASH interventions and the quick responses of implementing partners in areas affected by cholera have been effective in reducing the incidence of cholera.
- Rehabilitation of the water supply systems which restored access to clean water for vulnerable communities. SDC's funded projects have helped affected remote communities to access clean water even in very difficult terrains like Hajah governorate where villages are located on mountain tops.
- Rehabilitation of the water supply systems prevented the possibility of their collapse and reduced the vulnerability of conflict-affected communities to water-borne diseases. These interventions made a notable difference during the period when Yemen was affected by a cholera epidemic between 2017 and 2020.
- The rehabilitation of water supply for affected communities has made a notable difference during the outbreak of cholera including the project implemented by NRC towards reducing the spread of cholera by improving access to safe water in Sana'a, Amran and Lahj governorates. During the field visit, the evaluation team concluded that water rehabilitation projects have reduced cases of diarrhoea and cholera.
- Support to ICRC-supported health facilities set up cholera treatment units, treated 19% of the reported caseload.

This evaluation report provides examples where a more sustainable approach has been considered, including the provision of community-based WASH infrastructures. However, as the example of AlSharaqi water project shows (see textbox), there are elements that should have been considered in the design or where a more development-oriented follow-up was warranted. While project interventions have provided safe access to Persons of Concern and have made a difference, the evaluation team observed there were opportunities missed in the design to ensure longer-term impact.

Outcome 1.1. – Persons of Concern have safe access to sustainable WASH facilities

Despite geographic challenges and some villages being located on mountain tops, the WASH project in AlSharaqi in Hajah succeeded in delivering water to households in the targeted 64 villages by installing a water distribution network with household water meters. However, the expensive water supply system powered by a diesel generator in AlSharaqi gives rise to **sustainability considerations**:

- As per HHs and interviews with the water committee, it is unaffordable
- Diesel sometimes is not available to operate the system
- Increases in diesel prices will lead to increased water tariffs which will impact the most vulnerable.

Focus Group Discussions **confirmed the intervention enabled the community to stop water trucking** of 4,000 litres (4 cubic metres) costing 15,000 RY. The price of one cubic meter of water during when diesel is a is 1,500 RY. During the fuel crisis, the community water committee raised the price to 2,500RY to enable purchase from the black market. Community members are not consulted on the increase in water tariffs indicating a lack of transparency.

The increase in the fuel price – and the subsequent increase in the cost of the water - means the most vulnerable households can no longer pay for water usage. Persons of Concern will revert to coping strategies including stopping use of the water from water network (with the likelihood they will be disconnected if they can no longer pay fees) or reducing dependence on the water supply project by using it for drinking purposes and fetching water for domestic use from private wells.

In the AlSharaqi WASH project, some of the women interviewed mentioned they spend six hours every day (from 8:00 am until 1:00 pm) fetching water from private wells for domestic use to reduce the water consumption costs. During our visits, we noticed some women and children were fetching water from a private well using unclean jerrycans and, when asked about the quality of the water, they mentioned it was unclean (it is sulphur water) but they had no alternative but to use it as they cannot afford fees associated with using the water from the project. Women also reported that there are no reduced fees for vulnerable women including, for instance, female headed households. Only families that can afford the cost are provided water in their tanks.

A second project visited in Al-Hasn district in Sana'a provided similar observations. The project location was selected based on a high incidence of cholera. The project supported the installation of a solar power system to pump water from a well to reduce the price of the water pumped with the diesel generator. While the cost of one cubic meter of water pumped from the solar powered system is 500 YR⁸ (a family uses four to five cubic metres per month), 60% of the targeted 600 HHs could not afford these fees. The evaluation team found the HHs who could not pay the accumulated bills were disconnected from the system and, at the time of the visit, approximately 120 HHs were disconnected. **The inability of the vulnerable and poor to pay for water consumption also impacts the sustainability of the operations and maintenance of the water supply projects.**

As a coping mechanism, women and children fetch water from a shallow well which stakeholders confirmed is starting to run dry and the water is salty and not clean. People in the communities are supporting one another with families sharing some drinking water with their neighbours who have been disconnected from the system.

The project visit in Al-Hasn district raises concerns around sustainability and the effectiveness of the intervention. The project limited its support to the installation of the solar panels to replace the diesel generator but leakages in the connection pipes to the houses were not repaired and spare parts not provided. Capacity building of the water management committee was limited to operating the solar panel driven pumping station and did not include the monitoring water quality.

The project was also found to be implemented in isolation from the relevant water authority (NWRA) and coordination with local councils was absent.

Before project implementation, the network covered 70% of the households in the village. The project did not expand the network to cover 100% of the households. From a Do No Harm perspective this unequal access to water may lead to conflict in a water scarce environment. There was limited evidence that a conflict assessment was carried out prior to and during the implementation by SDC and its partners. This is not acceptable from a Do No Harm perspective in such a multi-layered conflict setting.

There was not sufficient capacity building and focus on the importance of monitoring the groundwater level. There wasn't any training for WUC/WUG on the importance of such monitoring and how to do it. The head of the community explained, "we monitor the water level of the well by our eyes".

Common elements across the WASH projects visited include:

- Protection and inclusion of the most vulnerable persons of concern during and after activity completion
- Accountability of the community-based water management committees to the households using the intervention, especially in terms of fees collected
- Representation of different types of stakeholders on the water management committee
- No monitoring or follow-up after project completion to ensure the project keeps benefitting the stakeholders it was intended to support
- Risks that water projects support the income of strong individuals in the community as they can sell the water to neighbouring communities
- Water resources management is not considered in the projects
- Hygiene promotion but with limited effects because of weak contextualisation of the messaging

Outcome 1.2. – Water-borne diseases and environmental hazards are reduced through improved hygiene practices, cleaner water, and waste management

The SDC-supported interventions have reduced the incidence of water-borne diseases and contribute collectively to preventing the spread of cholera and protect lives. Quantitative indicators – number of persons reached – have been achieved.

⁸ The installation of the solar panels reduced the cost price for a cubic metre of water from 700 YR (when diesel generators were used for pumping) to 300 YR (during implementation) which was later raised to 500 YR after completion. The water management committee mentioned that the increase was to cover maintenance costs and salaries of the committee members. Households connected to the network were not consulted about the fee increases.

“The people who have access to clean water have confirmed the reduction in diarrhoea” – Hajjah governorate- the manager of the health centre in AlSharjai.

The evaluation team was found there was no baseline data on water-borne diseases in the selected areas. This makes assessment against outcome indicators (% decrease in cases) challenging. There were also no milestone indicators which, given the tendency for long-term projects of two years, would have been both possible and helpful.

The evaluation team highlighted under Outcome 1.1. that the most vulnerable who could no longer afford water fees were disconnected from the network. This means those groups become more vulnerable to water-borne diseases (including skin diseases or kidney problems) than others because they must resort to using unclean water.

Behavioural change following hygiene promotion activities could not be measured as these require longer-term projects with qualitative indicators. Overall, the evaluation team found **waste management and sanitation interventions did not bring lasting change and interventions were limited to awareness raising.**

Partners implemented also the distribution of Non-Food Items (NFIs), rehabilitation of latrines and sanitation facilities in health centres and schools. **During the field mission the evaluation team found that the quality of the tools and equipment used was poor and, in many instances, dysfunctional.** This observation was corroborated by two other sources of evidence. Remote interviews with partners in the South confirmed that engagement was mainly focused on the short-term. Recently, some of the partners have considered, ‘sustainability’, in some of their intervention focuses. This observation on weak quality was also consistent with the findings of the IAHE. Both in the North and the South, the WASH interventions showed poor quality in the IDP camps and communities.

2.3.2. Domain 2 – Protection

Summary findings Protection: The focus on Protection is relevant for the context of Yemen. Despite international direct funding for Protection remaining below what is required, and Protection not being made central in the overall humanitarian response, needs assessments indicate there are increasing numbers of people in need of Protection. The quality of SDC-funded Protection interventions is not consistent and results reported do not sufficiently reflect the changes that have occurred in the lives of persons in need. Reporting does not sufficiently include the advocacy efforts of Switzerland. The link between advocacy and the Protection interventions supported in-country is also not sufficiently evident. While reporting highlights integration of sustainability and mainstreaming of Protection this was not always evident on the ground. Mainstreaming of Protection and considering as central to interventions is not sufficiently embedded in interventions. The Results Framework for Protection is too narrow in its approach as it does not include diplomatic and advocacy efforts of Switzerland. From the start of the CS implementation, interventions have been varied under the Protection domain and, over time, interventions did not evolve towards having a more refined focus.

a) Results at the output and outcome level

In its description of the Protection domain, the Cooperation Strategy focused on strengthening respect for IHL and the protective environment for conflict affected and vulnerable populations. (CS p. 16) The impact hypothesis highlighted that when people are better informed about their rights, then they will seek assistance. It follows that training in international norms provided to armed forces, ANSAs, government backed forces, and regional powers will reduce harm to civilians caused by military operations.

The Results Framework for the Protection domain included two outcomes:

- Outcome 1 aimed to capture results around direct services provision to persons with specific Protection needs with an emphasis on children, detainees, and victims of gender-based violence
- Outcome 2 focused on the respect of humanitarian norms and accountability mechanisms by armed groups and military forces.

The performance indicators under both outcome statements are all quantitative, focusing on the number of persons reached with access to services or persons trained. From the documents reviewed, the evaluation team did not obtain sufficient evidence that supports the impact hypothesis developed in the CS.

The outcome statements and the performance indicators respond to important Protection needs in the conflict context of Yemen. SDC's focus under the Protection domain also addressed gaps in the humanitarian response. Protection has been continuously underfunded under the international response as highlighted by the protection cluster⁹ and the IAHE evaluation and only limited support has been provided to address violations of international norms by armed actors to the conflict.

Protection has been supported by SDC through funding for bilateral and multilateral partners. Funding to bilateral partners focused mainly on services provision with funding from SDC provided to well-defined projects. Funding to multilateral partners was directed to the general funding of the agency and contributed to the wider efforts of the UN agencies, for instance, UNHCR or the ICRC.

The Results Framework for the Protection domain allows gathering of data to provide information to SDC and Swiss Government stakeholders, especially for reporting to Parliament. However, the Results Framework does not gather information on the quality of interventions or the changes achieved for the Persons of Concern through implementation. This means the Results Framework supporting the CS is limited in its ability to steer Switzerland's interventions in Yemen.

The Results Framework provides the basis for preparing the annual report. The absence of qualitative indicators means only quantitative data is being collected and there is no data collection or systematic assessment of the quality of SDC's interventions. Aspects that are not reported on and which are important for the Protection domain include:

SDC's advocacy on protection priorities. SDC has engaged in various advocacy efforts addressing Protection and IHL violations, however, the extent to which advocacy complement Switzerland's funding for access to Protection services and its efficacy is unknown. These are not sufficiently captured under the Results Framework indicating a weak link between operational interventions and advocacy efforts. The link between both – working at different levels - is critical in bringing results and sustainable change.

Mainstreaming of Protection and gender across the interventions. The focus of the Results Framework is on direct services provision and does not address the issue of Protection being central to all interventions. Mainstreaming of gender across all interventions is not sufficient and reporting is often limited to the detailing the number of women and girls reached under the intervention.

Localization of protection interventions. Protection of women is influenced by cultural norms so involving local organizations – especially Yemen women's organizations – and having them take a lead in raising awareness on women's Protection concerns within communities and with authorities is critical to bring change in awareness. Assessing the quality of the partnerships between UN agencies and INGOs with national NGOs is important for setting expectations and monitoring progress.

Lack of data and understanding of the context. It was evident from the Protection data reported in the consecutive HRPs that Protection needs in Yemen have increased. There is limited analysis in the annual report on data gaps and the consequent implications for funding allocations.

The performance indicators or the targets set did not sufficiently reflect contextual realities. For instance, one of the targets set for the Swiss portfolio outcomes was reducing the number of persons in need of Protection by 10%. There is little or no analysis in the annual reports on where gaps lay under the Protection cluster and why there has been consistent underperformance.

Weak performance of the protection cluster. The IAHE report highlighted the absence of protection concerns being mainstreamed into humanitarian interventions and the chronic underfunding of direct protection services. The evaluation team noted that SDC, in steering recommendations prepared after each annual report and in the 2019 Mid-Term Review, highlighted the unsatisfactory protection results. However, this did not result in SDC developing a strategy to tackle the underlying issues. SDC did not engage systematically with the Protection Cluster or work with other donors to address protections concerns.

⁹ https://www.globalprotectioncluster.org/wp-content/uploads/GPC_Protection_Funding_Mid-Year-Review_2022.pdf

SDC has maintained funding for various interventions over several years under the Protection domain. The evaluation team selected those interventions where SDC had provided longer-term funding to review results achieved and determine whether there has been an evolution in the approach used.

- **UNFPA's women's safe spaces implemented by the Yemen Women Union.** The in-country visit and FGDs with women accessing women's safe spaces clearly highlighted the importance of these spaces to women. It allowed women to come together, to provide support to one another, and access services including health services, psycho-social support, and skills training. Given the increased poverty and dire economic situation of Yemen, accessing economic opportunities was important for the women targeted by the intervention. However, funding to UNFPA over the years has not led to UNFPA developing a sustainability approach for the different safe spaces nor has it led to more local ownership. The evaluation team is not questioning the need for the women's centers or the difference they make in the lives of vulnerable women but questions the extent to which there has been evolution over time to address sustainability and localization. During the field mission, the center visited had to reduce services because of funding constraints. The reduction of services abrupt in manner and was not acceptable from a Do No Harm perspective; women accessing the center for mental health support were left without assistance and without the necessary referrals.

International Humanitarian Law. Switzerland is seen as a neutral and principled donor that is well placed to work with all parties to the conflict in respect to advocating for adherence to IHL. A few initiatives have already been supported, including with CIVIC, and currently with Geneva Call. Funding for CIVIC ended because of the lack of evidence-based results. The evaluation team is of the view that supporting IHL awareness and working with parties to the conflict on adherence to IHL is of critical importance. However, approaches and methods need to be guided by results and changes on the ground. The team acknowledges that change will take a long time before any results can be seen. **Partners have been able to provide awareness-raising and trainings over a considerable time now, but it needs to be demonstrated that the approach has led to effective change.** It will be important to learn lessons and assess results achieved through the different approaches used by Geneva Call (GC) and the ICRC. It was also found that it is important that organisations working on IHL are based in both the north and the south of the country. The latter is not yet the case for Geneva Call. Geneva Call has been negotiating with the authorities in the North for months. GC has obtained their registration however they have not yet been able to open an office.

- Switzerland has been supporting Geneva Call since the start of the implementation of the CS. Based on the document review and interviews, the results of training provided is not yet visible. Progress has been made in the form of three deeds of commitments signed by STC on the protection of children from the effects of armed conflict, use of landmines, and SGBV as a means of war and elimination of gender discrimination. **Whether these commitments have changed practice on the ground cannot be assessed. Until STC installs internal accountability mechanisms to investigate, results cannot be reported.** Changing the behaviour of armed forces requires a long-term approach and requires a sensitive engagement. The evaluation team is of the opinion that more follow up in-country is needed by SDC. However, as Geneva Call is mainly present in the south of Yemen where there are extreme security issues, there is limited opportunity for SDC to make visits.
- Despite IHL violations being a priority concern in the conflict of Yemen, there is limited attention and advocacy around these issues from the international community. SDC has been supporting this indirectly through GC and ICRC who have undertaken advocacy roles. It was found that the international community has failed to bring the necessary attention on IHL violations, even on gender and SGVC as weapons of war and the protection of children in armed conflict. **Stakeholders highlighted that Switzerland's potential for becoming a member of the security council makes it very well placed to support efforts addressing concerns around IHL.** The evaluation found there is no leadership in this regard from the UN system or from the donor community.

Support for persons with disabilities, victims of war. Humanity and Inclusion was the last project to be added to the bilateral project portfolio in Yemen. It was found that the approval of this intervention did not fit within the objectives of the Protection Domain and has more the characteristics of a health intervention. The project does address a need in a hospital where the lack of infrastructure and medical equipment was noticeable during the evaluation's field visit. But the needs in Yemen across all sectors are extremely high. It was also found that access to HI services is managed by the hospital management. HI does not seem to have the leeway to provide

services to other patients in need of their services. It was also observed that "inclusion awareness", provided by HI staff to patients in the hospital, was not well developed.

2.4. Which internal and external factors enhance or hinder aid performance and results achievements?

- SDC's results framework of the Yemen strategy is focused on quantitative data gathering, with very limited focus on gathering evidence around the long-term effects of the interventions. Therefore, there is no SDC guidance at the outset regarding the sustainability and quality of the interventions. While this guidance did not necessarily have to be provided by SDC, it would have had a positive effect on SDC's monitoring and on the reporting by partner organizations. To date, SDC has not strategically engaged with stakeholders in the WASH sector in terms of sustainable management of water resources, innovative approaches, or localization of the response.¹⁰
- Implementing partners belong to the WASH cluster system and select the geographic areas for their interventions based on their own-needs assessments or assessments done by other cluster agencies. The evaluation team was unable to confirm whether these geographic areas selected were the most vulnerable. The lack of such evidence was also observed and highlighted by the IAHE evaluation which concluded the most vulnerable geographical areas and the most vulnerable groups have not always been prioritized.
- The interventions of the partner organizations are spread across different geographic areas, both in the north and the south. WASH interventions were not formulated on an area-based analysis which has led to the scattering projects and there being no coherence or complementarity between different interventions. The WASH cluster indicated that restrictions imposed by the authorities precluded such analysis.
- The scattered distribution of projects also has an impact on monitoring activities. SDC's capacity to directly monitor projects is limited because it has no presence in Yemen; it conducts remote monitoring and infrequent monitoring visits.
- Anecdotal evidence gathered during the field mission by the evaluation team indicates there is insufficient follow-up post-implementation and the quality of the implementation was below what should be delivered. Post-intervention follow-up is crucial to humanitarian assistance focused on relieving suffering during emergency situations and to addressing ongoing issues or structural causes of crises. While humanitarian aid offsets the immediate effects of a crisis, there are opportunities to address longer-term needs when a crisis becomes increasingly protracted. In these cases, short-term humanitarian interventions can be complemented with interventions that – where feasible – address structural concerns. The evaluation team views this as a missed opportunity under the WASH interventions funded by SDC.
- During interviews and in their reporting, WASH partners discussed challenges faced during implementation. The constraints faced are mainly linked to access challenges caused by delays in the approval of project agreements with authorities or permissions relating to field visits. From the interviews and the project documentation it was not possible for the evaluation team to get a clear view on the regularity of the project monitoring performed by implementing partners.
- What was evident during the field mission visits to project sites were the challenges impacting the follow-up and consequent monitoring of the quality of interventions. The issues observed included:
 - Partner organizations' weak understanding of land and water resource ownership
 - A poor understanding of the culture and norms (including gender issues) and power dynamics at the community level relevant to water resources management
 - A lack of conflict sensitivity approach in the implemented projects and little understanding or analysis of the power dynamics at the community level
 - Sustainability criteria are not being considered despite being their feasibility owing to multi-year funding
- While humanitarian interventions are mostly seen as short-term to address immediate needs, in a protracted crisis, efforts should also focus on longer-term outcomes. The evaluation found an absence of long-term sustainable approaches to resilience under the WASH sector in Yemen.

¹⁰ SDC. Humanitarian Mission to northern Yemen. March 2022.

- The evaluation team cannot be sure the most vulnerable are always adequately supported and protected. Anecdotal evidence indicated there were concerns with the follow-up and ownership after interventions were completed. Interventions are handed over to communities, but after completion vulnerable community members do not always continue to benefit from the intervention. This was particularly notable in cases where fees for water usage must be paid, and vulnerable groups cannot afford these. This also indicates Protection is not seen as being central to sectoral activities or the response. This was a main finding from the IAHE and should be considered under SDC funded interventions.

2.5. To what extent have the Swiss portfolio results (outcomes) of the different domains and transversal themes been achieved?

Gender mainstreaming

Overall, there is weak gender disaggregation of data both at the design and implementation phases. Throughout the different phases of the interventions, it was found that women have not been fully consulted or engaged. Proposals are missing good socio-cultural analysis and power dynamics for the targeted governorates/areas to understand how best to involve women and design tailored approaches and activities. The lack of representation of women at the community level in water management committees was noticeable. While women were engaged at the level of health promotion or awareness raising, they were found not to be sufficiently engaged in community-level decision processes.

Protection mainstreaming

Evidence gathered during the in-country mission indicated that Protection is not always central to the WASH interventions. The evaluation team could not confirm whether the most vulnerable were being targeted during the selection process. The evaluation team could observe through site visits that there were no lasting measures in place that the most vulnerable maintain access to the services. There were no mechanisms put in place with the water management committees to ensure continued access, not even at a minimum level. During the interactions with the water management committees, it was evident the knowledge of committee members on protection and humanitarian principles was limited, and that neither capacity-building nor instruction on sensitization had taken place. A strategy ensuring continued access for the most vulnerable was not put in place and no mechanisms were developed to hold the water management committee accountable to the community. After completion of the project, the water management committee was not connected to local councils or local community-based organisations, resulting in failures to follow up on ensuring access by the most vulnerable.

Localization

The evaluation team found the engagement of Yemeni NGOs is limited both under WASH and Protection interventions and not aligned with the Grand Bargain commitments that call for greater engagement and role for local civil society.

Where local NGOs were engaged this was, in most instances, as a sub-contracted services provided under UN agency or INGO management. There was no strategic approach in Yemen from the humanitarian aid community to strengthen the capacity of local actors to lay the foundation for resilient communities and support sustainable peace through a community-based approach.

The evaluation team held a workshop with local NGOs currently sub-contracted by INGOs funded by SDC. The feedback received highlighted that national and local Yemeni organizations are not involved in decision making and their role limited to that of an implementing actor. Beyond the SDC funded interventions, the NGOs highlighted that there is no transparent process for working with local NGOs. As it was mentioned during the NGO workshop, *“The selection of organizations is not based on professional standards. Local organizations are selected, either based on your relationships with staff of those organizations or with the government.”*

Empowering local organizations

The localization agenda among donors is becoming increasingly important in terms of supporting local NGOs or engaging the private sector. Switzerland is not providing support to national organizations, primarily due to its remote management approach except for supporting the Sana'a Strategic Studies center to undertake research on the quality of the humanitarian assistance in Yemen. The limited resources and lack of presence means that SDC has not been able to provide direct funding to national NGOs. It was found that this was a short-coming

considering the international commitment under the Grand Bargain to move toward increased localisation of aid.

There are several well-established Yemeni national NGOs with strong capacities who – with the necessary capacity support – could directly implement some interventions that have been funded by SDC and for which national organizations were subcontracted by INGOs or UN agencies.

Contracting of national organizations will require selection criteria and rigorous processes to monitor and support capacity. Ideally, this kind of engagement is done jointly with other donor countries. During the in-country mission it was evident that localization and working more directly with local actors is increasingly a priority for other countries as well.

As of the 2018 Annual Report, it has been increasingly stressed that more emphasis should be placed on the examination of programme contents to ensure sustainability and gender-sensitivity and that interventions are effective and bespoke. (AR 2018 page 4)

Disaster Risk Reduction and Climate Change

Climate change was not considered in the planning of WASH interventions. From a Do No Harm perspective, it was found that in some instances no measures were taken to ensure interventions were not harmful to the environment. Humanitarian organisations working on the WASH interventions did also not have the in-house technical expertise to address these issues. Evidence supporting this finding includes:

- Weak water resources management
- No monitoring of groundwater level at the community level
- No capacity building or training of the water management committee at the community level
- No community capacity building
- No awareness of monitoring activities
- The absence of hydro diplomacy with NWRA and other relevant stakeholders
- No connection of the project to the related water authority at governorate level
- A link with the governorate water authority was missing across all the projects

Interventions did not integrate a proper community empowerment-based approach to address resilience to shocks or to support emergency preparedness capacity activities.

There is a gap among INGOs in water resource management, as well as there being no integration of earmarked funding for climate change adaptation. This is partially caused by what is predominantly short-term humanitarian funding. Additionally, at the cluster level, there is no coordinated action on how best to integrate or consider climate change in the overall response. A continued emission of proper water resource management aggravates climate change.

Governance

From the in-country mission and the document review, it was evident there is no consistent approach to strengthening the capacity of local water and sanitation authorities. While setting up or supporting the water committees at the community level and handing over the project to the committee is important, it was evident that the issue of local power dynamics had not been considered.

In two projects visited there were issues around “using power for one’s own interest”. It was also evident from interviews conducted that decisions are made by the head of the committee rather than being consultative.

The community water committees are not linked to the local councils/local water authority to ensure sustainability and transparency and there is no agreed constitution to formulate committee governance structures. Women were largely absent from community level committees and if there are women, they are excluded from decision making and their roles limited to hygiene awareness during project implementation.

No development cooperation funding

As is the case for most other donors, Switzerland has provided humanitarian assistance only without complementing it with development funding. This is different from other donors such as Sweden and Germany. The Netherlands did not stop their development engagement over the last 40 years. However, the focus of the international aid community has been short-term, focusing on supporting immediate basic needs without examining structural problems. Among donor countries there is now an increased push for economic

development and focus on economic recovery. Interview provided evidence that there is no clarity around how best to approach support for economic development. It is also not evident the extent to which donor countries will support allocating development cooperation when there is no foreseeable political solution to the conflict. Donor countries often consider the provision of development cooperation funding as being less neutral than humanitarian assistance where such assistance is provided directly based on needs and with limited engagement of authorities.

2.6. Which innovations generated by field experience have been scaled up through policy dialogue, alliances, networking and dissemination?

Documentary evidence does not show any innovations under the WASH domain that have been scaled up or disseminated. In the early annual reports of 2017 and 2018 reference is made to the failure of innovative approaches. No reference is made to innovative approaches in the more recent annual reports.

The 2017 Annual Report highlighted the innovative approaches to interventions in the WASH domain had not been successful but the underlying reasons for the lack of results were not provided. The efforts around ground water monitoring were highlighted as a priority given the precarious water situation in Yemen; short-term humanitarian interventions have affected Yemen sinking groundwater levels. The evaluation found SDC did not sufficiently consider the sustainability of water resources in its objective of ensuring access to clean drinking water to the conflict affected population.

The evaluation team found that **partners and SDC itself did not make systematic efforts to focus on innovative approaches in either the WASH or Protection sectors.**

The evaluation mission to Yemen highlighted the need for expertise and contextually relevant solutions for sustainable water resources management. The partners implementing WASH interventions are all solid humanitarian actors but are not necessarily the best placed to bring innovative expertise to their operations. This approach also requires a longer-term approach with strategic thinking and structural solutions given a priority focus in a context with significant humanitarian needs.

2.7. Which actions have been taken to facilitate bridging between short-term relief, recovery activities and long-term development?

Current partners are, in first instance, humanitarian aid organizations. This evaluation found that when a humanitarian crisis becomes protracted, short-term humanitarian interventions are not always the most effective and the opportunities have been missed to support lasting changes in the living conditions of persons of concern. The IAHE evaluation supports this finding.

The bridging between humanitarian and development approaches was identified by the evaluation team as a missed opportunity and observed under both WASH and Protection domains. To date, in Yemen, SDC has only provided support through humanitarian funding and not through development cooperation. Not having both funding modalities may have impacted negatively on programming. The evaluation team's view is that this has been a challenge across the humanitarian aid operation in Yemen as humanitarian and development actors do not work collaboratively towards collective outcomes and humanitarian actors are not taking a longer-term approach to supporting resilience activities.

Especially under the WASH Domain, there were clearly missed opportunities for supporting interventions with a more longer-term approach. The domain strategy had a strong focus on water resources management, but this was not achieved. The interventions were scattered and lacked a comprehensive approach on supporting water resources management.

The evaluation team acknowledges the efforts of partner organizations in working with or formulating Water Users Committees (WUCs) and Water Users Groups (WUGs). However, in-country visits have provided evidence that **capacity-building requires longer-term engagement between implementing partners and community-based structures.** It was also found that capacity-building should go beyond the implementation and maintenance of an activity itself and should include sensitization on including the most vulnerable and at-risk groups and support transparency and accountability from water committees toward the community members.

The evaluation team also noted the absence of a more comprehensive approach to the governance and management of water resources. This was found not to be linked directly to SDC's funding, but to reflect the lack of a coordinated longer-term approach to the management of water resources in Yemen.

Community governance systems, important to ensure water rights for all (equity in the distribution of water) and long-term maintenance, are not sufficiently linked to water authorities and local councils. Such linkages will assist the management of water resources and enhance sustainability. That also was concluded in the SDC humanitarian mission report of March 2022. The provision of targeted salary support (based upon the IAHE recommendations) was found to be needed to ensure there is sufficient staff for water authorities to carry out the work. The World Bank recommended that the Swiss could look to begin with building capacity of the local water authorities. By involving them and elevating their capacity, Switzerland can work on multiple levels, wherein not only do they work in advocacy on IAHE recommendations, but they are also further the capacities of the water authority.

The WASH interventions funded by SDC do not show sufficient evolution and transition towards more sustainable approaches where these might otherwise be included. The quality of interventions varies and follow-up or monitoring of quality and sustainability is lacking. The focus of the partner organizations remains on quick fixes of broken infrastructure.

It was found that there was limited engagement with the NWRA on issues of water resources management. This was an observation at the level of the implementing partners but also at the level of SDC itself. Switzerland has not been part the Donor Nexus Group focused on Water. Switzerland will now be part of this donor working group and it is expected this will positively affect the steering by SDC of the SDC funded interventions.

The evaluation team also found that **better management of water resources could be initiated at the community level by the implementing partners in coordination with community structures.** This is not done in all instances. Based on the visits conducted and documents reviewed, it was found community-based infrastructure is handed over to local committee organizations without those community members having sufficient knowledge of the management of water levels. This presents risk of communities pumping water beyond well capacity. In the communities visited, people complained about the salty taste of the water, an indicator of over-pumping.

However, the current project implemented by Solidarité Internationale is a good example of working at different levels to integrate water resource management by working with water authorities and undertaking the necessary research and analysis with different stakeholders, including at community level. The WASH cluster coordinator also recognised this project as a good example of water resource management and working with water authorities.

The lack of accountability of the water committee members towards the communities was noted by the evaluation team to be problematic. On one occasion it was evident water committee members saw water installation as a potential source of private income and that there was potential danger of committee members selling water to other communities in the area. Income from the fees collected from water users was not used to maintain the water pipes, with leaks reported in pipes connecting houses to the system.

Investment in water infrastructure was found to be an improvement towards sustainability considerations although **not all aspects of sustainability were considered.** Increased consideration of sustainability under the WASH cluster was also noted in the IAHE report which observed that broader sustainability aspects could have been considered by agencies earlier. However, it was found by IAHE that for the agencies to do so this will require integration of both humanitarian and development perspectives and longer-term funding cycles.

2.8. Results outside the Domains of WASH and Protection

Yemen Humanitarian Fund (YHF)

Switzerland allocates a substantial amount for the YHF (in 2021, the contribution was CHF 3 million). The Yemen Humanitarian Fund (YHF), funded by Switzerland and other donor countries, has not been evaluated since its start up. The YHF is considered a good funding mechanism to support the international response by donor countries who do not have presence in Yemen.

The YHF allocates its funding based on the needs and priorities identified in the HRP. However, it is difficult to fully understand the extent to which funded proposals have made a difference as the reporting focuses on quantitative data gathering.

As highlighted in the IAHE, the YHF has not made sufficient progress on localisation and supporting local NGOs to access funding directly. Most of the funding is accessed indirectly by national NGOs through contracting arrangements with INGOs.

Both the IAHE and this SDC evaluation determined that the YHF can play an important role in supporting the localisation agenda of donors but, based on the interviews conducted, it is evident there is no clarity within UN-OCHA around how to bring the localisation agenda forward. It was found there is limited engagement with national NGOs and their relationships and attitudes are not always supportive.

World Food Programme

Outside the domains of Protection and WASH, the main recipient of SDC funding is WFP for addressing food insecurity in Yemen. WFP's reporting is not donor specific as donor contributions support the overall efforts of WFP to address food security. As per the findings of the IAHE, donor contributions to WFP – including Switzerland – have made a difference in the food security outcomes.

Food security has been the largest aspect of the collective response in Yemen, comprising over half of the resources allocated and spent. The IAHE evaluation found that the collective response had made a difference in the area of food insecurity, reducing macro-level food insecurity over the course of the collective response.

It was found that whilst there was some improvement in the food-security sector, this was largely short-term and lacked a resilience focus, resulting in its existence having to be sustained by continued food assistance. Over the years there has not been a gradual shift – where possible – toward supporting the resilience of vulnerable groups. Livelihood interventions were equivalent to cash-for-work, with no well-planned schemes to restore productive assets.

Collaboration with the Sana'a Centre for Strategic Studies

Switzerland supported the Sana'a Centre for Strategic Studies with funds to conduct research into the quality of humanitarian assistance in Yemen. The report's publication, which contributed to highlighting the critical quality shortcomings of the humanitarian response in Yemen, coincided with the IAHE commissioned by the UN. The findings of the study and the IAHE report were very much aligned and are providing a solid basis to hold the humanitarian system to account to improve the humanitarian response.

The Sana'a Centre has the ambition to expand its capacity and conduct research and advocacy on several issues. The evaluation team is of the opinion that organisations such as the Sana'a Centre have a critical role to play in Yemen's future to keep actors accountable and to provide research to inform future policy. However, there are only a limited number of research organisations in the country and there is a danger that the Sana'a Centre will receive financial inputs beyond its capacity and at levels that cannot be sustained. Therefore, support to the Sana'a Centre is best coordinated through a joint approach with other donor agencies.

Peace Support Facility: Under the Peace Support Facility implemented by UNDP only limited results were achieved. The program results did not warrant a continuation of SDC.

3. Conclusions

Overall, the evaluation team finds that Switzerland has taken a responsible role in burden sharing with the international community to respond to one of the world's most severe humanitarian crises. While Switzerland has provided financial support in priority areas linked to Switzerland's expertise, it has not been able to bring added value beyond the financial support it has provided due to its limited human resources and fragmented approach to intervention implementation. Switzerland has engaged in advocacy and coordination initiatives but has missed opportunities to focus its resources in some areas. To improve the effectiveness of its interventions, SDC's human resources allocation needs increasing to better align with what it can reasonably achieve in the WASH and Protection domains.

Since the start of conflict in 2015, poverty and inequality have been continuously exacerbated. The conflict has had a devastating impact on civilian life, infrastructure and institutions. Humanitarian, development and peace actors have the task of finding new ways of collaborating to address political, humanitarian and development challenges. With the recent extensions to the truce there is some hope that an end to the violent conflict may be possible. The UN Yemen Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework 2022-2024 aims to support a transition period where critical humanitarian assistance remains but is supplemented by the return of development actors. Throughout the transitioning period the respect for humanitarian principles across the aid community must remain the guiding framework from which to provide assistance. This is to ensure that the most vulnerable are being effectively reached.

Switzerland is considered a credible and neutral humanitarian actor in Yemen by the humanitarian actors, donors, and national stakeholders. A view supported by stakeholders interviewed under this evaluation. The perception of Switzerland's neutrality is important considering the complex and divisive political context including some Western countries openly taking sides in the conflict.

The active role of Switzerland in organising Yemen pledging conferences and its engagement with other donors have contributed to Switzerland being recognised as an important humanitarian partner by the international humanitarian community or Yemen. This standing is also reflected by Switzerland increasing its annual funding to respond to the increased severity of humanitarian needs in the country.

3.1. Evaluation Area 1 – Appropriate to the priorities of Yemen

Conclusion 1: Switzerland's interventions in Yemen have been relevant in the context of humanitarian needs and conflict. After seven years of conflict and promising signs that a peaceful solution could possibly be found with appropriate support, it is important for Switzerland to transition towards an engagement that combines humanitarian aid, development assistance and peace diplomacy.

The two domains of focus – WASH and Protection – are highly relevant in the Yemen context and respond directly to priority needs.

Yemen's already scarce water supply is depleting further, and at an accelerated pace, due to the impacts of climate change and continuous conflict.¹¹ Most of the Yemen population cannot readily access safe drinking water and poor performing or absent sewage and wastewater treatment systems have increased Yemen's vulnerability. Inadequate sanitation and hygiene conditions aggravate the risk of disease.

The protection situation in Yemen remains volatile with violations and abuse of human rights (HR) including killed, injured, and displaced civilians. Women, children, Muhamasheen and other minorities, people with disabilities, migrants and older persons have been disproportionately impacted by these violations.

While Switzerland's Yemen strategy has a central focus on the two domains of Protection and WASH, this is not entirely reflected in the budget allocation. Approximately 30% of funding is allocated outside these two domains, most of which is provided to WFP to address high levels of food insecurity. The high levels of food insecurity warranted an international burden sharing to prevent famine occurring in the country.

Conclusion 2: The choice of modalities is mainly driven by Switzerland not having a presence in Yemen and the need for scale in the response given Yemen's humanitarian situation. As the humanitarian crisis became

¹¹ <https://reliefweb.int/report/yemen/water-situation-yemen>.

more protracted, SDC-funded interventions did not transition in a timely manner to consider sustainability and local ownership.

Switzerland implements a portfolio that is mainly centred on engaging with multilateral actors with 69% of funding allocated to UN agencies, 10% to ICRC, and 20% to NGOs. The choice of modalities is mainly driven by Switzerland not having a presence in Yemen and the need for scale in the response given Yemen's humanitarian situation.

The focus on the need to achieve scale was especially relevant during the early stages of the humanitarian crisis as was confirmed in the IAHE. However, as the humanitarian crisis became more protracted, SDC-funded interventions did not transition in a timely manner to consider sustainability and local ownership. SDC has highlighted the need for this in its annual reports and management responses since 2017, but this was not sufficiently implemented across all interventions. This is not unique to SDC-funded interventions; the absence of timely transitioning and linking relief and development where feasible and relevant was highlighted as a weakness of the collective response in the IAHE.

Implementing partners' have selection processes for targeting vulnerable persons under their interventions. Whether the most vulnerable were targeted in all instances could not be verified by the evaluation team. However, evidence gathered during the in-country mission shows that even when the most vulnerable Persons of Concern were included during the design and implementation phases of an intervention, their sustained participation after the completion of the interventions was not guaranteed. In some instances, the most vulnerable Persons of Concern did not continue to benefit from the intervention, especially in instances where a fee was needed to be paid for accessing services. This meant the most vulnerable persons were not sufficiently protected and the handover of the service to the community after completion did not have sufficient protection and accountability mechanisms in place. Ensuring the protection and continued participation of the most vulnerable is not adequately addressed in the engagement between SDC and its partners and is not sufficiently focused on during monitoring.

Away from the intervention level, Switzerland's support of advocacy and coordination with other donors is valued. However, it was found that if more resources were to be made available, Switzerland would be able to play a more important role in advocating for respect for humanitarian principles, more effective assistance, and supporting of peace efforts.

Protection and WASH are two domains in which Switzerland has considerable expertise and experience. But SDC's sharing of technical expertise to support operational improvement did not take place in Yemen. This is most noticeable under the WASH Domain. The expertise available in SDC's regional office in Amman has only recently been made available – and in a more structured way – to programme staff following up on Yemen operations. Sharing of technical know-how and expertise would have made Switzerland's interventions more relevant and provided opportunities for much needed innovation given the Yemen contexts. The expectation among stakeholders is that Switzerland shares and transfers its expertise (especially in the WASH domain) and has a focus on niche areas or sub-thematic focus.

Switzerland's interventions under the Protection and WASH domains currently address several aspects of each domain, reducing impact which might have occurred through greater focus.

3.2. Evaluation Area 2: Efficiency of portfolio management

Conclusion 3: The lack of decentralisation of the program with operational responsibility and decision-making located in Bern has impacted the efficient management of the portfolio. Switzerland has neither the region institutional set-up nor the human resources and Yemeni knowledge embedded within the team required to engage strategically with key stakeholders, or with coordination and advocacy mechanisms.

The lack of decentralisation of the program has impacted the efficiency of the portfolio and management. This is owed to operational responsibility and decision-making still largely being based in Bern. It also means that Switzerland lacks the sufficient resources in Amman needed to engage in discussions focused on Yemen - which mainly take place in Amman, where the donors are located. While a team approach is needed, this should not preclude a clear division of roles which would directly improve efficiency in the management of the portfolio.

Switzerland is considered by the international humanitarian community to be an important player in the Middle East, and especially linked to the Syria crisis response and the Israeli-Palestine conflict. Programmes in the region are supported with expertise and know-how that is mainly concentrated in the regional office based in Amman.

Given the absence or weakness of WASH and Protection technical expertise in Yemen, it is important that SDC's Amman-based advisors now cover Yemen as part of their responsibilities.

The monitoring of interventions absorbs most of the time and resources of the staff based in Amman and some of the time of staff based in Bern. The large number of partners and diversity of interventions has adversely impacted the efficiency of monitoring and reporting activities and has also impacted the effectiveness of the interventions. Small scale interventions and a lack of coherence have also adversely impacted intervention results and the extent of change achieved.

A recurring finding of this evaluation is that Switzerland has not sufficiently allocated human resources to both monitor its interventions and engage strategically with key stakeholders or coordination and advocacy mechanisms. Expectations on what can be reasonably achieved should be aligned with the resources that have been made available.

Conclusion 4: Switzerland has not sufficiently allocated human resources to monitor its interventions. This burdens the program staff such that they cannot engage more strategically with the Yemen response. Expectations around what can be reasonably achieved should be aligned with available resources.

Until 2021, there were only two full-time Swiss staff members – one in Amman and one in Bern. A half-time Jordanian staff member has since been assigned to assist SDC's Yemen portfolio management. The team composition in Amman requires technical background and/or knowledge of the Yemen context. Only the recent appointment of a Swiss staff member has relevant expertise linked to one of the two Domains. Having this knowledge makes follow up and engagement more efficient and ensures staff members bring an added value beyond the pure project management tasks. There is a noticeable absence of a Yemen national assisting the Swiss project staff manage the portfolio who would assist Swiss staff members to understand political, cultural, and societal contexts on a day-to-day basis.

In the Bill to Parliament that sets out the strategic framework for SDC for the period 2021-2024, three interlinked roles are highlighted: donor, actor and advocate. The evaluation team is of the view – based on the feedback received – that it is important that advocacy at the global level is embedded in evidence and messages from the field since advocacy needs to be evidence-based. Switzerland has an opportunity, when taking the rotating chair at the UN Security Council, to advocate for a political and peaceful solution to the conflict in Yemen. In order to have evidence-based advocacy, it is important that the Swiss government's political division engages and coordinate with SDC colleagues in the region to ensure that Swiss presence and field evidence can be better leveraged in the dialogue.

3.3. Evaluation Area 3: Results of the Cooperation Strategy - Effectiveness

Conclusion 5: The results under both the WASH and Protection domains were negatively impacted by a fragmented approach to interventions, not considering sustainability and a resilience approach where feasible, and limited safeguards to ensure inclusion and access for the most vulnerable after completion of interventions.

Achieved results within SDC's WASH projects have been rated 'Satisfactory' in the annual reports of 2017 to 2021. The evaluation team is of the opinion that this rating does not adequately reflect several quality aspects that are not sufficiently developed under WASH interventions. The evaluation recognises the tangible outputs and results achieved under the WASH domain but sustainability, capacity, ownership by local communities, and the protection of sustained access to services by the most vulnerable were not sufficiently considered. Given the fragmented approach to interventions, including their spread across Yemen and different partners (and partners' reporting focussing on quantitative indicators) it is not possible to assess the extent to which SDC-funded WASH interventions have significantly impacted some geographic areas.

The scattering of interventions is also noticeable under the Protection domain. The results of SDC-funded interventions have been rated consistently as 'Satisfactory' until the Annual Report of 2021. Since 2021, the results are rated as 'Not Satisfactory', which in the view of the evaluation team corresponds best to the quality and lack of results under the protection domain. This is also in-line with the findings of the Inter-Agency Humanitarian Evaluation.

The absence of a link between interventions and advocacy efforts of Switzerland under the Protection domain was recognisable. Switzerland's overarching goals with respect to interventions under the Protection domain are unclear. Like the WASH domain, there was limited or no focus on sustainability and localisation of

interventions. Where local organisations were engaged their involvement in planning and strategic engagement was limited. This lack of localisation limits ownership and sensitivity to local cultural sensitivities.

With Switzerland taking a seat on the Security Council, it will be important to have clarity around advocacy conducted by the Swiss.

Switzerland's cooperation strategy aimed to:

- Provide comprehensive and holistic assistance to the most vulnerable
- Shift the emphasis of assistance from delivering relief to bolstering resilience and advocating for stronger effectiveness through linking relief and development.

With the introduction of two-year funding cycles, SDC expected this would improve sustainable services provision. However, it is evident the two-year funding cycles did not have the expected effect on the type of interventions that have been implemented. Lengthy approval procedures both in Switzerland and by authorities in Yemen were cited as challenges to have more long-term approaches to interventions. The evidence also indicates INGO-implemented interventions did not sufficiently consider processes or approaches that could have influenced sustainability and ownership at the community level.

Conclusion 6: Engagement with local actors and supporting evidence-based research has been limited. Strengthening this will assist interventions to be more responsive to the needs of the most vulnerable and will ensure a more localised response.

Because of the remote management approach, SDC staff have not been able to monitor and engage with partners closely around integration of long-term approaches where they are feasible. This approach also results in SDC not providing direct funding to national NGOs except for funding provided to the Sana'a Centre for Strategic Studies. SDC provides financial support to the Yemen Humanitarian Fund (YHF) which has as a priority the support for partnerships with local actors.

SDC also expects bilateral and multilateral partners to implement interventions in partnership with local actors. The evaluation team is of the opinion that capacity of national NGOs, broader civil society actors, or local authorities has not been sufficiently considered over the course of the five-year implementation of SDC's Yemen strategy. The team did not observe a gradual shift toward more responsibility and ownership by local actors. Rather, the relationship between national NGOs and INGOs remains sub-contractual. This observation is also valid for how national NGOs are supported under the YHF.

4. Recommendations

4.1. Strategic Recommendations

- **Recommendation 1. Implement the SDC Directorate decision to elaborate and implement a two-year transition program with a nexus approach as a cornerstone. (Conclusion 1, 3)**

Overarching

- During the transition have an inclusive consultative process to inform the next country program
- To inform learning initiate pilot interventions that:
 - Integrate localisation and sustainability
 - Include other Swiss government agencies (including but not limited to HRD)
- Work toward an approach where operational interventions, advocacy and engagement in peace-building processes are aligned
- Identify the areas where SDC, based on lessons learned and using its expertise and resources, can bring the most added value
- Identify SDC funding resources and expertise to support the transitioning process and the next country program

At the level of the Domains

- Maintain the Domains of Protection and WASH, but refine the focus of both Domains to ensure that outcomes are realistic and support the transition process
 - Maintain support for food assistance, but integrate this assistance into the results framework
 - Revise the results framework to include qualitative performance indicators and an approach for the measurement of sustainability, centrality of protection, localisation, and nexus programming
 - Have both quantitative and qualitative results reporting to inform the phasing out of interventions when no results on the ground are observed
- **Recommendation 2. Work with implementing partners to integrate transitioning objectives into current and future programming. (Conclusion 3, 4, 5)**

Integration of critical elements in programming

- Pivot to structural and sustainable solutions, where possible, especially under the WASH Domain
- Improve the evidence-based reporting on reaching the most vulnerable
- Ensure protection is central to all interventions and report systematically on progress made

Localisation approach

- Develop a localisation approach, building on the strengths of local actors (including their contextual knowledge, long-term presence in communities and cost-efficiency)
 - Consider partnerships, where possible within the localisation approach, with women-led local NGOs to support protection and the rights of women and girls and put these central to all interventions
 - Ensure capacity-building of local actors takes a long-term perspective with local NGOs driving their own organisational strengthening process
 - Identify the resources needed to support an effective and efficient localisation approach
- **Recommendation 3. Work towards decentralization of the program with more regular presence in-country, increased contextual knowledge and engagement with other actors, including national and local authorities. (Conclusion 2)**

Bern/Amman

- Move toward decentralization of the program with a program office based in Amman
- Set a timeline for the decentralization of the Yemen program to Amman

- Ensure alignment between SDC's level of engagement and available human resources
- Support the Yemen program through the recruitment of thematic experts

Yemen

- Engage national staff on a more permanent or consultancy basis in Yemen to strengthen contextual knowledge, project monitoring and the localisation approach
- Take steps – during the transition phase and in coordination with other donors (security conditions permitting) – to have a full-time office presence in Yemen
- Increase the frequency and duration of monitoring visits by SDC Bern program staff and experts
- Develop – jointly with like-minded donors – an engagement strategy with the national authorities
- Develop long-term relationships with local actors and organisations, including research centres, local organisations and networks linked to the focus of the country program

- **Recommendation 4. Work with local partners and other like-minded actors to implement evidence-based research informing Switzerland's advocacy and operations. (Conclusion 6)**

- Implement evidence-based research to better inform interventions and advocacy
- Identify and develop strategic partnerships with local actors for research purposes
- Support joint research initiatives with other donor agencies
- Undertake own advocacy and coordinate efforts with other donors at a high level to advocate for a peaceful political solution to the Yemen conflict

4.2. Operational Recommendations

- **Recommendation 5. WASH Domain – Maintain the WASH Domain in the transition strategy but with a stronger focus on water resources management, consider sustainability where feasible, integrate Swiss thematic expertise, and protect the access of the most vulnerable persons after completion of the intervention. (Conclusion 3, 5)**

At the community level

- Tailored capacity strengthening of local and community-level structures and institutions to support a resilient water resources management system
- A community empowerment approach to water governance and management with representation of community stakeholders and participatory decision-making
- Systems for local water committees to ensure they remain accountable and transparent to persons of concern, particularly regarding decisions on water fees and the spending of fees collected
- Community level protection mechanisms to ensure the most vulnerable are not cut-off from the water network and can reach out, provide feedback, and be heard
- Interventions at the community level to ensure inclusivity so that no one is left behind and all households are covered

At the level of the implementing partners

- Place protection of the most vulnerable central in the design and implementation of interventions
- Follow up on the quality of interventions and consider sustainability in the planning and implementation to support effectiveness
- Empower persons and community-based organisations with poor access to WASH services to design and manage their own solutions,
- Support community ownership and community-managed operations and maintenance
- Conduct power dynamics and context analysis (political economy, socio-economic and cultural analysis) for the targeted areas, instead of general higher-level analysis
- Link gender to cultural and social analysis to understand the dynamics of power and the context to support tailored WASH activities to empower women
- Reduce the risk of water shortages and water resources management conflicts between individuals and within communities by considering potential disputes at the design stage

- Develop an exit strategy to support sustainability in coordination with related water authorities

At the level of SDC

- Consider the secondment of a WASH expert to support the WASH sector with high level expertise to support innovative solutions with a focus on water resources management
 - Develop a portfolio of interventions with a reduced number of partners and activities supporting synergies between the WASH interventions to increase impact
 - Introduce an area-based approach with innovative WASH interventions that could be modelled as best practice for implementing resilience-based projects in a protracted crisis context
 - Address the climate crisis through disaster risk reduction and emergency preparedness under SDC-funded interventions
 - Include qualitative indicators and milestone indicators in the Domain results framework, including indicators on sustainability and localisation
 - Support effective nexus programming by combining humanitarian assistance with longer-term development approaches, including through:
 - Long-term hygiene projects promoting - based on analysis of the context and culture - a behavioural change approach
 - Area based WASH interventions and seeking synergies with the protection domain and where relevant with food security
- **Recommendation 6. Protection Domain – Maintain the Protection Domain but integrate a focus on women and children under International Humanitarian Law advocacy and direct Protection services, implementing a localisation approach. (Conclusion 3, 5)**

At the community level

- Women, children, and other marginalised groups have a voice to express their needs and priorities
- Support for community-based protection services emphasizing the role of local organisations where possible
- Continued engagement and advocacy with authorities and non-state actors on respect for international humanitarian law

At the level of the implementing partners

- Develop contextual and cultural appropriate approaches to address protection concerns for women and children while adhering to international standards.
- Strengthen further the partnership with organisations such as the ICRC to work on IHL and to advocate for access to hard-to-reach areas
- Work with authorities to increase understanding of obligations under IHL, protection needs.
- Support the mapping of protection services for women and children
- Emphasize the role of local organisations and actors in leading on protection work
- Work with local actors – mainly women and child-focused organisations
- Support women's organisations to become advocates for the protection of women and children
- Implement an effective localisation approach where women's organisations take ownership and responsibility to plan and implement strategies to support the protection of women and children

At the level of SDC

- Have a narrower focus and identify areas in support of the protection of women and children
- Integrate this focus in financial support for direct protection services provided by local actors
- Work with a consortium of women's organisations to strengthen their capacity and knowledge in protection and advocacy
- Focus on the protection of women and children in raising awareness of IHL
- Work with all parties to the conflict to respect and safeguard the protection of women and children
- Use evidence and contextual knowledge to inform advocacy with the authorities, in coordination mechanisms and in international fora

- Coordinate with other donor agencies to engage with the Protection Cluster to address weaknesses and gaps, as identified in the IAHE final report

Recommendation 7. Outside both Domains: (Conclusion 1, 3, 5)

i. Strong advocacy supporting a peaceful solution to the conflict; ii) Maintain the focus on food security but with a resilience and sustainability approach iii) Review the Yemen Humanitarian Fund to assess opportunities to support resilience and nexus programming.

Supporting a peaceful solution to the conflict

- As part of the new strategy clarify Switzerland's priorities areas for advocacy and engagement in supporting a peaceful resolution to the conflict
- During the transition strategy develop the foundation for a more Whole of Government Approach to Switzerland's engagement

Support food security through multilateral actions

- Maintain the focus on food security but supporting a resilience and sustainability approach with protection of the most vulnerable central in the interventions
- Transition people from food assistance to self-reliance through accessing economic and employment opportunities where possible
- Maintain cash for work programmes to assist productive assets in communities to support economic recovery
- Develop a livelihoods programme that enables people of concern to have sustainable access to income and employment opportunities instead of short-term cash for work
- Have an agreed pathway to replace in-kind assistance with cash assistance and be accountable for progress made
- Implement a transparent process to ensure that food assistance is targeting and reaching the most vulnerable persons in need instead of relying on a blanket approach

Review of the Yemen Humanitarian Fund

- Undertake jointly with OCHA and donor countries, a review of the YHF to assess:
 - Targeting
 - Localisation
 - Integration of sustainability
 - Nexus programming
 - Centrality of protection
- Engage with OCHA on strengthening the effectiveness of the humanitarian fund in line with the conclusions and recommendations made by the IAHE

Annexes

Annex 1 – Terms of Reference

Evaluation of the Swiss Cooperation Strategy Yemen 2017-2022

Background

SDC's presence in Yemen has been limited in time. Opened in 2011, including as a response to opportunities for closer engagement with countries across the Arab world, the SDC program office in Sana'a had to be closed in 2014 due to security risks and all Swiss staff had been evacuated as early as spring 2013. Since the closure of SDC's presence in Yemen, the programmatic engagement had been managed from Headquarters in Berne with a predominant focus on contributions to multilateral organizations. Missions to Yemen were undertaken in an irregular manner (1-2 times a year). The set-up was adjusted in late 2019, when SDC deployed an SHA team member to Amman with the aim of supporting the implementation of programs, and of increasing the exchange with other donors, the UN, and with implementing partners based in the Jordanian capital. The deployment was also meant to ensure a more frequent presence in Yemen, facilitated by the opening of the Amman – Sana'a flight route. The aim of undertaking more frequent trips was soon thwarted with the onset of the Covid-19 pandemic and airport closures in Jordan. Trips to Yemen resumed only in September 2021.

The initial SDC program in the country focused entirely on migration and the country program was meant to be an institution-wide thematic pilot. Strategic guidelines for the program have not been finalized, and following the withdrawal of staff and subsequent office closure by 2014, SDC commissioned a portfolio and strategy review that subsequently led to the design of the new country strategy 2017-2020. The review, inter alia, concluded that

- The existing approach is coherent with national priorities, yet the quality of the results framework is insufficient
- The single focus on migration corresponds to a niche-strategy and value added is generated through a combination of project implementation and policy dialogue
- The absence of a program office questions that added value and the program's overall focus.
- The future program is to respond to humanitarian needs of the Yemeni population with Wash as a main priority. Synergies with other Water / Wash projects in the region need to be sought.
- The M&E of multilateral partners needs to be strengthened
- The remote management of the program is to be addressed by the division as a whole.

The cooperation strategy 2017-2020 was adopted in late 2016 with an entirely humanitarian budget and focus and two domains of intervention: Protection and Wash. The annual budget was defined at CHF 9 Mio, which included also a budget for WFP (and remote management) of CHF 1.5 Mio outside the two domains. The strategy foresaw a remote management modality for the program from Berne. With the intensification of hostilities and expansion of the conflict in Yemen, the actual programmatic focus started to expand and shift increasingly. Currently, the annual budget starts at CHF 12 Mio (of which around CHF 8 Mio. for H-Cash, and CHF 4-4.5 Mio for Multi-Bi contributions) with around CHF 1-2 Mio added from the reserve funds annually.

A **mid-term review** of the cooperation strategy in mid-2019 concluded that the transfer of a program officer from Berne to Amman shall facilitate the identification of new programmatic opportunities, allow for more opportunities to engage in policy dialogue, for synergies with other SDC programs run out of Amman, for a stronger approach on SGBV, and for increased donor and UN dialogue. With the widening of the conflict and the prolonged suspension of in-country travels, the SDC directorate decided in 2019 to extend the country strategy by one year in 2021 and in mid-2021, the MENA-H division decided to extend the strategy for another year until the end of 2022.

The Way Forward

Looking ahead, it is necessary to evaluate the current program for Yemen taking into consideration a number of significant institutional and contextual developments during the last years. These include:

- The adoption of the new Dispatch to Parliament on international cooperation (2021-2024)
- The reorganization of SDC and the institutional move towards increased synergy between different international cooperation and political instruments, including in protracted crises.

- The increased importance of Amman as a hub/substitute for donors and other stakeholders engaged in the Yemen humanitarian response and political processes.
- Switzerland's political role and set-up with regards to Yemen, as the initiator of the Oerlikon Group, its expected membership in the UNSC for 2023-2024; the appointment of a Special Envoy for the Middle East; and the side-accreditation of the Embassy of Switzerland in Muscat for Yemen.
- Switzerland's role as a host/co-host for high-level political dialogue and humanitarian conferences on Yemen.
- The protracted nature of the conflict, its increasingly regional dimension, and the political implications related to a gradual shift in territorial control.
- The external Inter-agency humanitarian evaluation published in 2022
- Increasing criticism from different stakeholders regarding the humanitarian response in Yemen, in particular with regards to its scale and its limited tangible improvements for the Yemeni people.

Description of the Mandate

The overall goal of the evaluation is to assist SDC management and other FDFA stakeholders in their strategic decision-making with regards to Switzerland's engagement in Yemen.

The aim of this mandate is to assess the relevance, coherence, efficiency, and results with regards to the strategic objectives as defined in the CS. The evaluation shall lay the foundation for the definition of the new Cooperation Program in Yemen 2023 – 2026. The following evaluation areas and key questions shall guide the focus of the evaluation:

Evaluation Area 1: Context Analysis and Relevance

- How well does the CS (strategic orientation, overall goal, domains of intervention and transversal themes) reflect the priorities of the partner country and the policies of the Dispatch on Switzerland's International Cooperation?
- To what extent are the projects / program portfolios relevant, coherent and appropriate for achieving the results of the CS regarding its domains of intervention?

Evaluation Area 2: Implementation of the CS and its portfolio

- How efficient is the portfolio management of the SDC team? What are the team's contributions to an optimal achievement of results?
 - How appropriate is the set-up in terms of management and decision-making with regards to the implementation and steering of the CS?
 - How are steering decisions for the cooperation strategy made if results or disbursements of projects / programs differ considerably from planning?
 - How appropriate are team composition and competences of the relevant staff?
 - How appropriately is thematic expertise considered for the steering of projects / programs and the CS?
- To what extent is the process management of the CS monitoring system relevant and efficient, in order to provide evidence-based data/information for accounting for results and CS steering?
 - How SMART are the domain indicators?
 - How are the transversal themes monitored and progress reported?
 - How reliable and credible are the data provided by the CS monitoring system?
- Which role does SDC play within the donor community, and for the different domains of intervention? Which is the added value of Switzerland's support in Yemen?

Evaluation Area 3: Results of the CS

- Which contributions of the Swiss Cooperation portfolio become visible at the output and outcome level? Which internal and external factors enhance or hinder aid performance and results achievements?
 - To what extent have the Swiss portfolio results (outcomes) of the different domains and transversal themes been achieved?
- Which innovations generated by field experience have been scaled up through policy dialogue, alliances, networking and dissemination?

- Which actions have been taken to facilitate bridging between short-term relief, recovery activities and long-term development?

Methodology and Tasks

The methodology for the evaluation involves desk review, field visits, and interviews with SDC staff and other stakeholders. Specifically, the international consultant shall perform the following task:

1. Coordinate the evaluation process, gather and analyze important information and data, provide methodological elements, and assume overall responsibility for the integrity and quality of the result.
2. Take into consideration the different strategic decisions made in relation to the CS (Mid-Term Review, Annual Reports).
3. Conduct interviews with staff of the different federal entities involved, the concerned staff in Berne/Amman/Muscat, representatives of other donor countries, implementing partners, UN representatives, authorities, and other institutions.
4. Prepare an inception report following an initial review of relevant documentation and initial interviews. The inception report shall present initial findings from the first round of interviews and desk review; a conceptual framework for the evaluation; and the key evaluation questions and methodology. The inception report shall also present a timeline for the evaluation process, its strengths, weaknesses and limitations and the means used to address these limitations. The evaluation should suggest a tentative structure of the final report. The Inception Report should be written in English and should not exceed 15 pages excluding annexes.
5. Lead the field mission to Yemen and Jordan. The mission consists of the validation of the results of the inception report and of gathering additional information through a mutual learning process. The field mission consists of peer exchange, interviews, project visits, and exchanges with peers, federal staff, implementing partners and donor representatives.
6. Provide a debriefing at the end of the field mission for relevant staff in Amman and Berne.
7. Take the lead in writing a draft and final evaluation report of not more than 30 pages (excluding annexes), assume responsibility for a coherent structure, its quality, and present the main findings and recommendations covering all evaluation areas to SDC management and relevant FDFA staff.

Annex 2 – Funding Analysis

Analysis of Yemen SDC Funding post-2017

The Yemen funding allocation post-2017 totalled CHF7,336,788. This figure was calculated by collecting the sum of values made available from data input into the file titled 'YEM Projects starting 2017 for Evaluation CS-2', minus the values which had a start date prior to 2017.

Additionally, under the subheading of 'Multi Bi Projekte', Multi-OCHA expenditure of CHF1,400,000 was not included given there was no concordant Yemen project to which that funding was tied. Furthermore, it should be noted that CHF1,500,000 of funding, under 'WFP FAC II Tranche MENA', with domain, 'Contribution Multi 2018', has been categorised as 'Miscellaneous' (outside the Domains) for the purpose of this analysis. Where funding has been split 50% Wash and 50% Protection, then the relevant sums have been split equally between their respective domains. For example, out of the CHF3,000,000 of the 'JEMEN OCHA YHF Humanitarian Fund 2021', CHF1,500,000 therefore has gone to Wash in this analysis, and CHF1,500,000 has gone to Miscellaneous (Outside the Domains).

The total allocated budget expenditure from the data made available, as previously stated, is CHF77,336,788. This has been cross-checked with inputs from the table, disregarding data inputs with a start date pre-2017 as discussed.

In terms of the total allocated budget, we see Table 1 below:

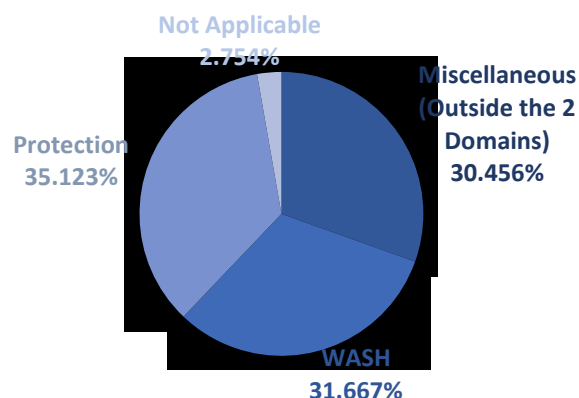
Domain	Amount	Percentage of Total Budget
Miscellaneous (Outside 2 Domains)	CHF23,553,490	30.456%
WASH	CHF24,490,205	31.667%
Protection	CHF27,163,093	35.123%
Not Applicable	CHF2,130,000	2.754%
	CHF77,336,788	100.000%

Additionally, this can be differentiated by implementation partner, as indicated by Table 2:

Implementation Partner	Amount	% of Total Budget
UN Agencies	CHF53,487,521	69.162%
ICRC	CHF7,825,000	10.118%
NGOs	CHF15,859,267	20.507%
Other (SHA Direct Action)	CHF130,000	0.168%
Other (Private Sector)	CHF35,000	0.045%
	CHF77,336,788	100.000%

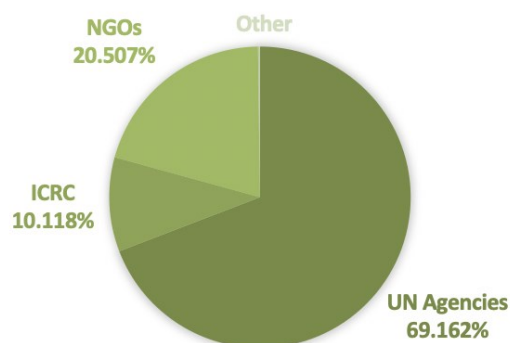
Graphically, Table 1 can be displayed as shown below:

YEMEN BUDGET EXPENDITURE ANALYSIS (BY DOMAIN)



Graphically, Table 2 can be displayed as shown below. Note that given the negligible sums which 'Other' account for, they are challenging to represent through this graphical format. Here, 'Other', represents both SHA Direct Action and Private Sector, accounting for a shared CHF165,000, or a combined 0.213% of the total budget.

YEMEN BUDGET EXPENDITURE ANALYSIS (BY IMPLEMENTATION PARTNER)



Annex 3 - List of Resources

SDC

- Swiss Cooperation Strategy for the Republic of Yemen. 2017 – 2020.
- Annual Report Light 2017. With Planning Part Year 2018. + Management Response.
- Annual Report 2018. With Planning Part Year 2019. + Management Response.
- Annual Report 2019. With Planning Part Year 2020 + Management Response.
- Annual Report 2020. With Planning Part Year 2021 + Management Response.
- Annual Report 2021. With Planning Part Year 2022 + Management Response.
- Humanitarian Mission to northern Yemen. 19 to 26 March 2022.
- Dispatch on Switzerland's International Cooperation 2017-2020. Key points in brief.
- Switzerland's International Cooperation Strategy 2021-24.
- Mid Term Review Cooperation Strategy 2017 – 2020. Report. 10 July 2019.

Yemen Children and Armed Conflict Group of Friends

- Yemen CAAC meeting with interested embassies in Amman. 17 October 2019.
- Concept Note. Group of Friends on Children and Armed Conflict (CAAC) for Yemen.
- Draft HoD Statement 24 February SDC Comments
- Group of Friends (GOF) Yemen. 28 May 2020. PPT presentation.
- High level meeting of the Yemen Children and Armed Conflict (CAAC) group of friends at Ambassadors' level. September 19, 2021. Moderation by EU and Swiss co-chairs.
- Meeting Minutes. 28 May 2020. (set up of Group of Friends decided)
- Meeting Minutes. CAAC Group of Friends. 24 February 2021.
- Meeting Minutes. CAAC Group of Friends. 7 October 2020. (First meeting)

High Level Pledging Conferences

- Draft Concept Note 190211 (11 February 2019). Panel discussion on the hunger crisis in Yemen. (Moderated by M. Bessler. SDC-SHA.
- Yemen Conference 2022. High-Level Pledging Event for the Humanitarian Crisis in Yemen. 16 March 2022. (Co-hosted by Sweden and Switzerland) (+High-level side event supporting Yemen's women and girls)
- High Level Pledging Event for the Humanitarian Response in Yemen. Geneva, 25 April 2017. Concept Note.
- Yemen Conference 2021. High-Level Pledging Event for the Humanitarian Crisis in Yemen. March 2021. (co-host Switzerland, Sweden, UN)
- Rede BRIC: High-Level Pledging Event for the Humanitarian Crisis in Yemen. March 2021. (Redner: Ignazio Cassis)
- High-Level Pledging Event for the Humanitarian Crisis in Yemen. Opening Session. 2019. Statement by Federal Councillor Simonetta Sommaruga. Vice-President of the Federal Council. Co-Chair of the Conference.
- High-Level Pledging Conference for the Humanitarian Crisis in Yemen, Geneva, April 2018. Speech by Mr Ueli Maurer, Vice President of the Federal Council, Head of the Federal Department of Finance, Switzerland.
- Yemen Pledging Conference Report – 2017.
- Yemen Pledging Conference Report – 2018.
- Yemen Pledging Conference Report – 2019.

SDC Dienstreisebericht Jemen

- Jemen von 01.05 – 12.05.2016 / Jemen von 18.05 – 25.05.2017 / Jemen von 13.04 – 20.04.2018 / Jemen von 16.03 – 23.03.2019 / Jemen von 17.01 – 27.01.2020
- KMZ Mission with focus Security to Sana'a. 02-09 December 2021. Mission report.
- Mission Report – Sana'a Yemen. 4-8 December 2021.

Humanitarian Senior Officials Meeting on Yemen

- SOMI - Brüssel, 13 Februari 2020

- SOMII – 12 November 2020. Virtual Meeting. Concept Note.
- SOMIII – 1 June 2021. Co-Chairs' Summary

Implementing Partners Documentation

DRC

- Responding to the WASH needs through a community based approach in Hajjah and Dhamar. Credit proposal. 7F-10069.01.
- Yemen, DRC Community- Led Education, Awareness & Response (CLEAR) – 2018-2020. SDC Administrative End of Phase Report.
- Final Narrative Report. 1 June 2018 – 31 October 2020. Funded by SDC and Dutch Embassy. (Hajjah and Dhamar Governorates)
- Additional Credit with prolongation of project duration. 7F-10069.01.

Geneva Call

- Improving the Respect of Humanitarian Norms by Armed Actors in Yemen. Final Report to SDC and The Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Reporting period: November 2018-December 2020. (*no budget*)
- Credit Proposal. Improving the Respect of Humanitarian Norms by Armed Actors in Yemen No. 7F-09795.02.
- Credit Proposal. From Rhetoric to Reality / Enhancing Civilian Protection in Yemen. No. 7F-09795.03. 01.07.2021 – 31.12.2022

Humanity & Inclusion

- Technical Assessment of the Algomhori hospital. Al Hajjah.
- Credit Proposal. No. 7F – 10294.01. Contribution of SDC: CHF 1.3 million
- HI Proposal. **Comprehensive response to improve access to health services for vulnerable persons affected by the conflict in Yemen.** 1 July 2021 – 30 June 2023. SDC Contribution 1.300.000 CHF. DG ECHO: 4.883.540 CHF (4.500.000 EUR).

ICRC

- Credit Proposal. No. 7F-10718.05. ICRC Operations Appeals 2021: Additional Allocation Yemen. From 01.01.2021 to 31.12.2021. CHF. 1.4 million.
- Credit Proposal. No. 7F- 10718.04. ICRC Operations Appeals 2021: Allocation 2021. From 01.01.2021 to 31.12.2021. CHF 5 million. (multi-country. No Budget)

Medair

- Entry proposal. No. 7F-10486. Essential nutrition, health and Wash assistance to vulnerable and conflict-affect populations in Yemen. 15.04.2020 to 15.07.2023.
- Medair project proposal.
- Medair Interim Report 1. Period I: 16 July 2021 to 30 November 2021. Date 31 January 2021.

NRC

- Entry Proposal. No. 7F-10070. Sustainable WaSH Response for disease outbreak and conflict affected people in Yemen. From 01.08.2018 to 30.06.2023.
- Credit Proposal. No.7F-10070.01. WASH / Cholera Response for Conflict Affected People in Yemen. Phase 1. 01.08.2018 to 31.07.2020. (Budget included) (CHF 1,542,768)
- Additional Credit. No.7F-10070.01. 01.07.2020 to 31.12.2020. (additional credit of 642,000)
- SDC End of Phase Report. Phase 1. 01.08.2018 to 30.04.2021. WASH / Cholera Response for Conflict Affected People in Yemen. (No budget)
- NRC Report. WASH / Cholera Response. (No budget)

Sana'a Center for Strategic Studies

- Project Proposal. Monitoring Humanitarian Aid and its Micro and Macroeconomic Effects in Yemen: A program to improve outcomes.
- Credit Proposal. No.7F-10550.01. 01.11.2020 to 31.10.2021. CHF 96,864. (includes budget)

Solidarités International

- Credit Proposal. Health through sustainable WaSH. 01.10.2020 to 30.09.2023. CHF 1,814,500.

UNDP

- Swiss Contribution to the Peace Support Facility. Phase 1. 01.08.2019 to 31.12.2020. No.7F-10175.01.
- UNDP Project Document Revision.
- UNDP Peace Support Facility for Yemen. Annual Report 2020.

UNFPA

- Credit Proposal. No. 7F-09796.03. Phase 3. My safety, Our future MSOF: The protection of women and girls from gender-based violence (GBV) in Yemen. From 01.07.2021 to 30.06.2023. CHF 2.5 million. (co funded other donors)
- Credit Proposal. 7F-09796.02. From 15.10.2019 to 30.06.2021. CHF 2 million.
- SDC End of Phase Report. The protection of women and girls from gender-based violence (GBV) in Yemen. Covering the period 15.10.2019 to 30.06.2021. (Start of the project 15.07.2017 with scheduled duration 14.07.2024)

UNHCR

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Annex 4 – Selection of Projects and Partners for Data Collection Phase

Partner	Domain	Location	Comments
DRC	Wash	Hajjah, Dhamar	7F-10069.01 Yemen DRC WASH needs in Hajjah+Dhamar
NRC	Wash	Amran, Sana'a, Lajh, Ta'iz	7F-10070.01 (Cholera, Covid) 7F-10070.02.01 (WASH)
HI	Wash	Hajjah, Sana'a, Taiz	7F-10294.01 YEM HI Access to health services
UNFPA	Protection	Whole of Government Selected: Amran, Hajjah, Sana'a	7F-09796.02 YEMEN UNFPA My Safety our Future 7F-09796.03 YEMEN UNFPA My Safety our Future
UNHCR	Protection	Whole of Yemen Hajjah	7F-10333.01 UNHCR Earmarked Contributions 2019-2022
WFP	Food Security	Whole of Yemen	In-Kind Distribution

Implementing partners - For interview in-country (no site visits) – Yemen

WFP	Miscellaneous	Whole of Yemen	7F-03297.57.01 - WFP Yemen ICSP for 2020 7F-03297.65.01 - 2021 WFP MENA-H Add.YEM H-Cash
ICRC	Wash, Protection	Whole of Yemen	7F-10718.04/05 Operations Appeal 2020
UNOCHA	Miscellaneous	Whole of Yemen	7F-07382.13.01 - JEMEN OCHA YHF Humanitarian Fund 2021
Geneva Call	Improved respect for humanitarian norms Enhancing civilian protection	Whole of Yemen	7F-09795.02.01 - YEM, Geneva Call, Improv. Respect Hum. Norms 7F-09795.03.01 - YEM, GC, Enhancing civilian protection
SI	Wash	Al Hodeidah, Ta'iz	7F-10086.01 Yemen SI Health through sustainable WASH
UNDP	Protection, Peace Support Facility		7F-10175.01 Yemen, UNDP Peace Support Facility
SCSS	Miscellaneous		7F-10550.01 YEM SCSS Sana'a Center Strategic Studies
Medair	Wash	Ad Dali'	Based on AR 2021 only in Ad Dali' 7F-10486.02 YEM Medair Wash, Nutrition & Health

Annex 5 – In-Country Schedule

Swiss Humanitarian Aid Unit Program Review and Monitoring Mission

Sunday 15 May

Time	Location	Activity
10.00 – 11.00	Embassy of Switzerland	Meeting regional protection adviser
11.00 – 12.15	Embassy of Switzerland	Meeting with Dutch Cooperation Office (humanitarian team) on Yemen
12.30 – 13.30	TBC	Lunch
15.00 – 16.00	Embassy of Switzerland	Meeting with Sana'a Center for Strategic Studies

Monday 16 May

Time	Location	Activity
09.00 – 12.30	Travel Amman to Sana'a	
14.00 – 14.30	Transfer	Airport -> DRC Guesthouse
14.30 – 15.30	DRC Guesthouse	DRC Security briefing
16.00 – 17.00	UNCAF	Meeting with Head of OCHA - confirmed
19.00	DRC Guesthouse	Informal dinner with DRC

Tuesday 17 May - Hajjah – with DRC

Time	Location	DAY AND TRANSPORTATION WITH DRC
09.00 – 10.00	Sana'a	Meeting with SCMCHA - confirmed
10.00 – 13.30	Sana'a to Hajjah	Road travel with DRC
14:30 – 17:00	Hajjah	IDP site visit with UNHCR
18.00 – 19.00	Hajjah	Meeting with SCMCHA Hajjah

Wednesday 18 May

Time	Location	DAY AND TRANSPORTATION WITH DRC & UNFPA
08:00 – 11:30	TEAM 1 Hajjah City	Visit of safe space UNFPA – to be confirmed <i>Transportation with UNFPA</i>
11:30 – 14:00	TEAM 1 Hajjah City	Field visit with HI Al Jamouri Hospital
08:00 – 14.00	TEAM 2 Al Sharaq district / Hajjah Governorate	Field mission with DRC – urban and rural/remote (Wash) Transportation with DRC
14.00 – 17.30	Return to Sana'a	Return with DRC to Sana'a - confirmed

Thursday 19 May

Time	Location	Activity
07.00 – 13.00	Sana'a Governorate	Field mission with NRC in Sana'a / Husn district

		07.00 – 09.00	Sana'a to Al-Husn district	Travel to Al-Husn district, Sana'a governorate
		09.00 – 09:15	Al-Husn district	Tour of Al-Husn Solar water system, Sana'a governorate
		09.15 – 10:00	Al-Husn district	Meeting with water user committee of Al-Husn water supply system, Sana'a governorate
		10.00 – 10:45	Al-Husn district to Sana'a city	Interaction with a few Al-Husn water system beneficiary households
		10.45 – 13:00	Sana'a city	Return to Sana'a city (with debrief in the car)
13.00 – 14.30	NRC office	Meeting and Debriefing with NRC management - confirmed		
15.30 – 16.30	UNCAF Café	<i>Meeting with RC / HC Office</i>		
17.00 – 18.00	UNCAF Café	Meeting with UNHCR Protection staff		

Friday 20 May

Time	Location	Activity
10.00 – 11.00	UNCAF	Debriefing with UNFPA (Deputy Country Director, Senior protection staff) - confirmed
11.00 – 12.00	UNCAF – WFP	WFP Deputy Country Director - confirmed

Saturday 21 May

Time	Location	Activity
09.00 – 10.00	SCMCHA office	Debriefing with SCMCHA - confirmed
12.30 – 16.30	Airport	

Amman Schedule

Sunday 22 May

Time	Location	Activity
12.00 – 13.00	Sweden	Meeting with Swedish Cooperation Office on Yemen - confirmed

Monday 23 May

Time	Location	Activity
09.00 – 10.00	ECHO office	Meeting with ECHO on Yemen - confirmed
11.00 – 13.00	Swiss Embassy	Hybrid workshop style meeting with National NGOs (partners of SDC Implementing Partners)

Annex 6 – Overview of stakeholders interviewed

Position	Institution
Head of MENA Division	SDC Bern
Program Coordinator Yemen	SDC Bern
Former Yemen Program Coordinator	SDC Bern
Water Adviser	SDC Bern
Protection Adviser	SDC Bern
Gender Adviser	SDC Bern
Head of Cooperation Middle East	SDC Amman
Program Officer	SDC Amman
Protection Regional Adviser – based in Amman	SDC Amman
Water Regional Adviser – based in Amman	SDC Amman
(former) Program Officer – based in Amman	SDC Amman
Roving / Deputy WASH Cluster Coordinator	UNICEF
WASH Cluster Coordinator	UNICEF
Special Assistant to the Head of Office	OCHA
Deputy Country Director	WFP
Humanitarian Analyst and Head of Hodeida sub-office	UNFPA
Deputy Country Director	UNFPA
Assistant Representative for Protection	UNHCR
External Relations Officer. UNHCR	UNHCR
Senior Field Coordinator Officer, UNHCR	UNHCR
WASH Coordinator Sana'a area, WASH Project Officer	NRC
Country Director	NRC
Country Director	DRC
Country Director	HI
Country Director	Geneva Call (Aden based)
Authorities	
SCMCHA Sana'a	
SCMCHA Hajjah	
Local Organisations	
Executive Director	Sana'a Center for Strategic Studies
Executive Director	Yemen Women Union
Workshop with local organisations: Yemen Women's Union, Al-Zahraa Foundation, Building Foundation for Development, Deem Organization, Sustainable Development Organization	
CBI Officer, Programme Officer, Project Manager	RADF
Director Hospital	Al Jamouri Hospital
Regional	
Regional Program Manager (Humanitarian Affairs & Nexus)	Embassy of Sweden, Amman
Regional Program Manager Yemen	Embassy of Sweden, Amman
Regional Humanitarian Coordinator Syria, Yemen, and Region	The Netherlands
Head of Office	ECHO
Head of Humanitarian Affairs and Stabilization unit	Federal Foreign Office Germany
Head of Cooperation with Yemen	German Embassy in Amman
Senior Operations Officer	World Bank
Senior Water Resources Specialist	World Bank

Management Response

Management Response of the Evaluation of the Cooperation Strategy Yemen 2017 - 2022

1) Introduction

The objective of Cooperation Programme evaluations (formerly Cooperation Strategy) is to assess the performance of Swiss international cooperation and its alignment with regards to national development priorities, including the dispatch on international development cooperation. In doing so, evaluations support the different entities involved in their strategic and operational steering and in improving aid effectiveness.

This evaluation has been commissioned by the MENA-H division in late 2021. It has been conducted by a team of external consultants (Martine van de Velde, Abeer Al Absi). For the field visit that was part of the evaluation, the external consultants were joined by two SDC staff as peers (Simone Troller and Chantal Neuweiler).

The evaluation of the Cooperation Strategy Yemen 2017-2022 was conducted between February and September 2022. The evaluation process could not fully follow the planned schedule as hostilities between conflict parties escalated in early 2022, which led to a postponement of the field visit by several months. Cooperation Programme evaluations follow a standardised mix of evaluation questions. For the purpose of this evaluation, a selection of evaluation questions was defined in order to keep the process manageable, focused, and relevant.

2) Appreciation of Report and Evaluation Process

We thank and commend the evaluation team for the timely submission and good quality of the Final Evaluation Report of the Cooperation Strategy Yemen 2017-2022. The evaluation report has been consulted within the FDFA and commented on by SDC in Amman and Bern, and the Embassy of Switzerland in Maskat.

We are satisfied with the reflection of the consolidated comments in the final report and thank the evaluation team for their patience in conducting this evaluation and in providing SDC with critical insights and reflections of our work in Yemen since 2017.

We are satisfied with a number of key findings and we support in particular the overall conclusion that SDC's approach and strategy have been relevant in the context of humanitarian needs and conflict in Yemen. Alongside the more critical findings, these conclusions will inform the future direction of SDC's and other FDFA actor's engagement in Yemen.

We would like to thank the team specifically for the detailed nature of the recommendations made. These reflect the multi-layered aspects of the conclusions obtained and the efforts towards translating the findings into recommendations. These are particularly helpful as guidance with regards to the implementation of future initiatives. Our management response primarily responds to the overall recommendation (in bold) and does not reflect the same level of detail.

As a lesson learnt, and testimony of how an evaluation shapes the direction of international cooperation, the findings of this evaluation already fed into SDC's strategic decision on evolving its program in Yemen into a decentralized, development-humanitarian-peace nexus program over the coming two years.

Recommendations on cooperation program

Recommendation 1		
Implement the SDC Directorate decision to elaborate and implement a two-year transition program with a nexus approach as a cornerstone		
• During the transition have an inclusive consultative process to inform the next country program • To inform learning initiate pilot interventions that: - Integrate localisation and sustainability - Include other Swiss government agencies (including but not limited to HRD) • Work toward an approach where operational interventions, advocacy and engagement in peace-building processes are aligned • Identify the areas where SDC, based on lessons learned and using its expertise and resources, can bring the most added value • Identify SDC funding resources and expertise to support the transitioning process and the next country program ----- • Maintain the Domains of Protection and WASH, but refine the focus of both Domains to ensure that outcomes are realistic and support the transition process • Maintain support for food assistance, but integrate this assistance into the results framework • Revise the results framework to include qualitative performance indicators and an approach for the measurement of sustainability, centrality of protection, localisation, and nexus programming • Have both quantitative and qualitative results reporting to inform the phasing out of interventions when no results on the ground are observed		
Fully agree	Partially agree	Disagree
We fully agree with this recommendation and the elements for the future cooperation program listed above. An alignment and synergies between operational interventions, advocacy, and peace-building engagement will be sought among all entities in the Federal Administration. The implementation of such a strategic direction will take time, and the foundations will be laid during this transition program. It is important to take into consideration that not all Swiss government actors may prioritize an engagement in Yemen and decision-making is left with each government entity. Full alignment may thus not always be possible.		
Measure	Responsibility	Deadline
Cooperation Program for transition period 23-24, builds on and expands existing program, takes into consideration points listed above and follows a consultative process.	SDC Bern	By early 2023

Recommendation 2		
Work with implementing partners to integrate transitioning objectives into current and future programming		
<u>Integration of critical elements in programming</u> • Pivot to structural and sustainable solutions, where possible, especially under the WASH Domain • Improve the evidence-based reporting on reaching the most vulnerable • Ensure protection is central to all interventions and report systematically on progress made <u>Localisation approach</u> • Develop a localisation approach, building on the strengths of local actors (including their contextual knowledge, long-term presence in communities and cost-efficiency) • Consider partnerships, where possible within the localisation approach, with women-led local NGOs to support protection and the rights of women and girls and put these central to all interventions • Ensure capacity-building of local actors takes a long-term perspective with local NGOs driving their own organisational strengthening process • Identify the resources needed to support an effective and efficient localisation approach		
Fully agree	Partially agree	Disagree
We agree with the recommendation that the transition program should start to systematically include sustainable approaches to Swiss interventions in the two domains. We further agree that protection needs to be a cornerstone in all interventions, including in our multilateral contributions, which require adequate steering. As shown in the IAHE findings, there have been wide-ranging inclusion and exclusion errors in the humanitarian response in Yemen, which underscore the need for improved targeting of aid. Direct partnerships with local organizations will be pursued when possible, taking into consideration constraints due to the absence of an in-country presence, of national staff, and limited human resources.		
Measure	Responsibility	Deadline
Swiss partners are from the outset of a new initiative / new phase informed about and reflect SDC expectations with regards to localization and integration of sustainable approaches.	SDC Amman	Continuous
Swiss partners are provided with sufficient time and resources to undertake analysis on local power and conflict dynamics as well as exclusion/inclusion issues to inform project approaches	SDC Amman	Continuous
Advocacy messages on sustainability and centrality of protection with regards to multilateral partners are defined and used in dialogues.	SDC Amman / Bern	Continuous
Develop a localization approach for SDC engagement in Yemen	SDC Bern / Amman	By end of second quarter 2023

Recommendation 3		
Work towards decentralization of the program with more regular presence in-country, increased contextual knowledge and engagement with other actors, including national and local authorities.		
<u>Bern/Amman</u> • Move toward decentralization of the program with a program office based in Amman • Set a timeline for the decentralization of the Yemen program to Amman • Ensure alignment between SDC's level of engagement and available human resources • Support the Yemen program through the recruitment of thematic experts <u>Yemen</u> • Engage national staff on a more permanent or consultancy basis in Yemen to strengthen contextual knowledge, project monitoring and the localisation approach • Take steps – during the transition phase and in coordination with other donors (security conditions permitting) – to have a full-time office presence in Yemen • Increase the frequency and duration of monitoring visits by SDC Bern program staff and experts • Develop – jointly with like-minded donors – an engagement strategy with the national authorities • Develop long-term relationships with local actors and organisations, including research centres, local organisations and networks linked to the focus of the country program		
Fully agree	Partially agree	Disagree
SDC agrees that the current set-up for the Yemen program is no longer adequate considering the size and nature of the program as well as its growth over the past years and SDC ambitions for its development in the medium term. Additionally, the relevance of Amman as a Yemen hub for donors, humanitarian and development partners, as well as for political stakeholders has continuously increased over the past years and key discussions on Yemen have moved to Amman, and away from capitals. SDC is committed to decentralizing its Yemen program. In a first step, operational decision-making should be transferred to Amman. A national staff position in Amman has already been added to the team for the transition period 2023-2024, following the decision by the SDC Directorate. A longer-term decision on staffing levels and a possible in-country presence will be made only following a decision in line with the new message on international cooperation 25-28. The strengthened presence in Amman will allow more regular and longer missions to Yemen and for an increased role in donor coordination and dialogue. Further, the hiring of a liaison officer in Sana'a will facilitate engagement with authorities and other stakeholders, as well as program monitoring.		
Measure	Responsibility	Deadline
Prepare for gradual decentralization of the Yemen program to Amman; develop decentralization options by February 2023	SDC Bern	November 22 – August 23
Implement measures that facilitate regular in-country presence, as well as strengthened contact with local stakeholders, dialogue with decision-makers, and program monitoring (option of joint guesthouse; hiring liaison officer).	SDC Bern/Amman	Ongoing

Recommendation 4		
Work with local partners and other like-minded actors to implement evidence-based research informing Switzerland's advocacy and operations. (Conclusion 6)		
• Implement evidence-based research to better inform interventions and advocacy • Identify and develop strategic partnerships with local actors for research purposes • Support joint research initiatives with other donor agencies • Undertake own advocacy and coordinate efforts with other donors at a high level to advocate for a peaceful political solution to the Yemen conflict		
Fully agree	Partially agree	Disagree
We agree with the key recommendations outlined above. Evidenced-based research is highly relevant, in particular to inform longer-term engagements and applying development approaches. Joint research initiatives with other donors are a useful approach and will be explored. Likewise, thematic missions with in-house advisors will support the Yemen team in making programmatic decisions based on thematic expertise. The hiring of external consultants will likely be a challenge given the restrictive operating environment. International Cooperation may support through its engagement political processes that lead towards a peaceful solution to the Yemen conflict. The roles and responsibility between SDC, the PHD and the political Directorate as well as the Special Envoy MENA need to be taken into considered with regards to high-level advocacy aiming to support a political solution.		
Measure	Responsibility	Deadline
Identify areas for evidence-based research to inform future engagement and/or to inform programmatic and steering decisions.	SDC Amman / Bern	Continuous

Recommendation 5
Maintain the WASH Domain in the transition strategy but with a stronger focus on water resources management, consider sustainability where feasible, integrate Swiss thematic expertise, and protect the access of the most vulnerable persons after completion of the intervention
<u>At the community level</u> • Tailored capacity strengthening of local and community-level structures and institutions to support a resilient water resources management system • A community empowerment approach to water governance and management with representation of community stakeholders and participatory decision-making • Systems for local water committees to ensure they remain accountable and transparent to persons of concern, particularly regarding decisions on water fees and the spending of fees collected • Community level protection mechanisms to ensure the most vulnerable are not cut-off from the water network and can reach out, provide feedback, and be heard • Interventions at the community level to ensure inclusivity so that no one is left behind and all households are covered <u>At the level of the implementing partners</u> • Place protection of the most vulnerable central in the design and implementation of interventions • Follow up on the quality of interventions and consider sustainability in the planning and implementation to support effectiveness • Empower persons and community-based organisations with poor access to WASH services to design and manage their own solutions, • Support community ownership and community-managed operations and maintenance • Conduct power dynamics and context analysis (political economy, socio-economic and cultural analysis) for the targeted areas, instead of general higher-level analysis • Link gender to cultural and social analysis to understand the dynamics of power and the context to support tailored WASH activities to empower women

- Reduce the risk of water shortages and water resources management conflicts between individuals and within communities by considering potential disputes at the design stage
- Develop an exit strategy to support sustainability in coordination with related water authorities

At the level of SDC

- Consider the secondment of a WASH expert to support the WASH sector with high level expertise to support innovative solutions with a focus on water resources management
- Develop a portfolio of interventions with a reduced number of partners and activities supporting synergies between the WASH interventions to increase impact
- Introduce an area-based approach with innovative WASH interventions that could be modelled as best practice for implementing resilience-based projects in a protracted crisis context
- Address the climate crisis through disaster risk reduction and emergency preparedness under SDC-funded interventions
- Include qualitative indicators and milestone indicators in the Domain results framework, including indicators on sustainability and localisation
- Support effective nexus programming by combining humanitarian assistance with longer-term development approaches, including through:
 - Long-term hygiene projects promoting - based on analysis of the context and culture - a behavioural change approach
 - Area based WASH interventions and seeking synergies with the protection domain and where relevant with food security

Fully agree	Partially agree	Disagree
The recommendation is in line with Switzerland's thinking on the upcoming transition program. WASH as a domain name will be replaced by Water to reflect the broadened approach that includes a longer-term approach, and to reflect an engagement at both the systemic as well as community levels. Water scarcity and an integrated approach in water resource management will guide our engagement. The Leave-no-one-behind agenda will drive implementation at the community level to ensure that the most vulnerable have access to essential services. That said, implementation may be hampered by an increasingly restrictive operation environment outside the control of SDC or implementing partners. Synergies between the Protection and Water Domains will need to be strengthened in the future transition program, alongside a stronger conflict prevention approach, and more explicit integration of cross-cutting themes such as gender, DRR, and governance. SDC will second a Swiss SHA expert to support the Water Cluster as of December 2022. The secondment will support the Cluster coordination effort, and in particular, its ambitions to take on a more evidence-based and systematic approach towards the sustainable use of groundwater in Yemen. Additionally, SDC will engage with other donors in the new development / humanitarian nexus architecture to support our approach.		
Measure	Responsibility	Deadline
SDC ensures the integration of a humanitarian-development-peace nexus in its Water Domain portfolio at the strategic as well as operational level.	SDC Amman / Bern	Continuous
Regular portfolio analyses will support increased coherence within portfolio	SDC Amman / Bern	Continuous

Recommendation 6		
Protection Domain – Maintain the Protection Domain but integrate a focus on women and children under International Humanitarian Law advocacy and direct Protection services, implementing a localisation approach.		
<u>At the community level</u> • Women, children, and other marginalised groups have a voice to express their needs and priorities • Support for community-based protection services emphasizing the role of local organisations where possible • Continued engagement and advocacy with authorities and non-state actors on respect for international humanitarian law <u>At the level of the implementing partners</u> • Develop contextual and cultural appropriate approaches to address protection concerns for women and children while adhering to international standards. • Strengthen further the partnership with organisations such as the ICRC to work on IHL and to advocate for access to hard-to-reach areas • Work with authorities to increase understanding of obligations under IHL, protection needs. • Support the mapping of protection services for women and children • Emphasize the role of local organisations and actors in leading on protection work • Work with local actors – mainly women and child-focused organisations • Support women's organisations to become advocates for the protection of women and children • Implement an effective localisation approach where women's organisations take ownership and responsibility to plan and implement strategies to support the protection of women and children <u>At the level of SDC</u> • Have a narrower focus and identify areas in support of the protection of women and children • Integrate this focus in financial support for direct protection services provided by local actors • Work with a consortium of women's organisations to strengthen their capacity and knowledge in protection and advocacy • Focus on the protection of women and children in raising awareness of IHL • Work with all parties to the conflict to respect and safeguard the protection of women and children • Use evidence and contextual knowledge to inform advocacy with the authorities, in coordination mechanisms and in international fora • Coordinate with other donor agencies to engage with the Protection Cluster to address weaknesses and gaps, as identified in the IAHE final report.		
Fully agree	Partially agree	Disagree
SDC agrees with the recommendations contained, in particular the need for a narrower thematic focus and the prioritization of specific groups in protection programs. We further agree with the need to establish links and synergies between operational activities supported by Switzerland and its advocacy engagement and messaging. Localized protection and advocacy approaches are essential for acceptance by communities and authorities and will be supported with a do-no-harm approach and taking into account organizational capacity levels. Likewise, systems strengthening, including on protection services, will guide our transition approach. The Peace dimension will be added to the Protection Domain for the Transition program 23-24, to adequately reflect the Peace & Human Rights Division's planned engagement in the security sector. Collaboration and partnership with local actors will be sought, bearing in mind constraints due to the absence of an in-country office and of national staff.		
Measure	Responsibility	Deadline
Agree on priorities and approaches for the new Protection & Peace Domain; design rationale / theory of change with regards to synergies between operational and advocacy engagement in the Domain	SDC Amman / Bern PHRD Bern	till second quarter 2023

Recommendation 7		
i) Strong advocacy supporting a peaceful solution to the conflict; ii) Maintain the focus on food security but with a resilience and sustainability approach iii) Review the Yemen Humanitarian Fund to assess opportunities to support resilience and nexus programming.		
<u>Supporting a peaceful solution to the conflict</u> - As part of the new strategy clarify Switzerland's priorities areas for advocacy and engagement in supporting a peaceful resolution to the conflict - During the transition strategy develop the foundation for a more Whole of Government Approach to Switzerland's engagement <u>Support food security through multilateral actions</u> - Maintain the focus on food security but supporting a resilience and sustainability approach with protection of the most vulnerable central in the interventions - Transition people from food assistance to self-reliance through accessing economic and employment opportunities where possible - Maintain cash for work programmes to assist productive assets in communities to support economic recovery - Develop a livelihoods programme that enables people of concern to have sustainable access to income and employment opportunities instead of short-term cash for work - Have an agreed pathway to replace in-kind assistance with cash assistance and be accountable for progress made - Implement a transparent process to ensure that food assistance is targeting and reaching the most vulnerable persons in need instead of relying on a blanket approach <u>Review of the Yemen Humanitarian Fund</u> - Undertake jointly with OCHA and donor countries, a review of the YHF to assess: - Targeting - Localisation - Integration of sustainability - Nexus programming - Centrality of protection - Engage with OCHA on strengthening the effectiveness of the humanitarian fund in line with the conclusions and recommendations made by the IAHE		
Fully agree	Partially agree	Disagree
Switzerland will take on a more active role in supporting a peaceful solution to the conflict in Yemen, including through its seat at the UNSC. The lead for such a role lies with the State Secretariat and the Peace & Human Rights Division, including through the position of the Special Envoy MENA. This role will thus not necessarily be undertaken by international cooperation actors within the FDFA. Explicit synergies will be sought with international cooperation activities during the Transition program 23-24, with a view of informing advocacy, and of contributing through operational activities to a more conducive environment for conflict resolution. SDC has initiated and will continue to hold a closer dialogue with the YHF Fund Manager, including on IAHE findings and concerns. Switzerland will seek a seat on the advisory board as soon as the human resource situation allows it. As a Co-Chair of the Working Group on country-based pooled funds, it will advocate inter alia for a stronger localization approach, as part of its global priorities. Depending on the Fund's further direction and development, an external review may be appropriate. Switzerland has been and will continue to actively advocate for a resilience and sustainability approach in addressing food insecurity in Yemen, both at strategic level, via its team in Rome, and at the country level.		
Measure	Responsibility	Deadline
Integrate a triple-nexus approach in the Transition Cooperation Program 23-24 and inform cooperation partners about nexus approach and expectations.	SDC Bern / Amman	Until end of 2022

Continue to engage closely with YHF with view to strengthen its performance and implement recommendations from IAHE	SDC Amman	Ongoing
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Bern, January 16 2023

Lisa Magnollay
Co-Head of MENA Section
Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation / FDFA