Independent External Evaluation

North Africa and Western Asia
Transformation Program (NAWAT)
2010 – 2014

Swiss Federal Department of
Foreign Affairs, Directorate of
Political Affairs, Human Security
Division

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Executive Summary

Relevance

The relevance of NAWAT (North Africa and Western Asia Transformation Program) in the MENA region is high. The building of a regional network of local experts across fault-lines to address conflicts with religious dimensions (the "Cordoba Now Forum" or CNF) and the promotion of the concept of "citoyenneté" was an extraordinary, significant and timely response, targeting one of the foremost driving factors of conflict in the transition processes in the region. When it became clear that actors inspired by a conservative Islam are of major importance to seizing or sabotaging the opportunities for democratic transition processes in the region, NAWAT started to reach out to "difficult actors" (a term mainly used to refer to representatives of various Salafi currents) to train and engage them in the "rules of the political game" and to enable their transition from "preaching" to "politics". In doing so, the program has responded quickly to the emerging needs of the local contexts. As "spring" turned into "winter", the situation in the MENA region has developed in diverse ways. NAWAT's design of Peace Promotion Workshops that include Salafi representatives and focus on the strengthening of peace initiatives and the building of arguments for the prevention of violence appear to be of high relevance today. In all its projects, the NAWAT methodology is remarkably adapted to the local cultural, religious and political sensitivities. The program enjoys a high credibility among local actors.

> ### Recommendations
> - The organisational structure enabling the **co-acting** of a Western governmental with a non-governmental actor – perceived as "local" in the MENA region – has enabled NAWAT to identify timely responses to volatile circumstances. It is recommended to continue working with the basic parameters of this format.

Effectiveness and Impact

The NAWAT program has achieved many important results over the past years. The participants included in NAWAT are connected to people who are in positions to influence local developments in conflicts that involve violence. Furthermore, religiously inspired actors are among the ones "making or breaking" the transitions to democracy in the region. NAWAT has been very successful in the provision of conflict transformation trainings to these key actors. The methodological inputs provided in the trainings are of the highest standards of conflict transformation practice today. The training materials are adopted to the local context and easily absorbed by participants. This evaluation finds that the level of learning among participants is significant. Also, NAWAT makes efforts to establish inclusive groups of diverse backgrounds from the region. The building of such groups is a difficult and time-intensive undertaking that requires extensive trust building measures. NAWAT has successfully operated with this methodology in many contexts.

In the course of the NAWAT workshops, a shared understanding is successfully built across important fault-lines of conflicts in the region. As a result, the groups formed by NAWAT have changed their narratives about the conflicts and, in the case of the CNF, operate as a "mediation space" for other participants to find rapprochements to local conflicts. Participants of NAWAT workshops also show a high application of this capacity built. The methodology of the diapraxis has been used in the case of the Salafi Detainees Project in Morocco with some success. Many members of the CNF have started to integrate the working principles of inclusivity

3

into their daily private and professional life. In Egypt and Tunisia, organisational structures have been created that allow CNF members to operate as mediators in local conflicts, and a summer school was created in Egypt to train other people in conflict transformation. Some Salafi participants are reported to have formed political parties as a result of their involvement in NAWAT, thereby making a transition from preaching to politics. Also, peace promotion initiatives and some dialogues have been launched by participants following NAWAT workshops, and a platform for the "de-extremisation" of youth was established with the help of influential leaders.

NAWAT does not systematically monitor the multitude of initiatives that are taken independently by local actors across all the countries of the MENA region, nor does it systematically provide technical support to them. As a result, it is methodologically impossible for this evaluation to determine whether NAWAT has had an "operational impact" defined as a socio-political change in the local contexts. It is quite possible that important interventions for the prevention of violence have happened that were not captured by this evaluation.

Recommendations

- The majority of participants involved in the NAWAT projects today do **not share a common reality** on the ground because they are flown in for workshops from different countries. The building of groups that can act jointly would appear to be an important strategic opportunity that could increase both the effectiveness and the efficiency of the NAWAT program and should be addressed in a future program phase.
- NAWAT does not currently have an **operational structure** that would allow the hands-on technical support to local conflict transformation initiatives in the field. The overwhelming focus of the design is on the production of research, the formation of inclusive groups and the deliberations that happen in these spaces. The operational capacity needed for the implementation of concrete activities is largely left to the individual ability of local actors. The program design of a future phase of NAWAT could build in an operational support structure to ensure operational opportunities are seized.
- There are some open questions with regards to the application of the principle of **inclusivity** of the NAWAT activities. While the CNF has a number of people representing liberal-secular and non-Islamic constituencies, most other groups formed by NAWAT have an overrepresentation of the conservative Islamic currents. There appears to be a shift of the NAWAT focus on fault-lines occurring within this segment of the MENA societies that could be better communicated and explained.

Sustainability

The sustainability of the individual capacity built by NAWAT is high among those stakeholders who have been repeatedly involved in the program, such as the members of the CNF. The personal transformation some individuals have undergone is probably irreversible, with a number of them entirely changing careers. NAWAT has certainly planted and watered the seed for the development of many long-lasting changes in participants' lives. It is however rather unlikely that any of the structures created, including the CNF, would be sustained entirely without external funding from Switzerland or other donors.

The sustainability of NAWAT in the Swiss administrative context would require further attention. In the current status quo, it is unlikely that any other internal or external individual could replace the key figures of the program if this should ever be necessary.

> **Recommendations**
> - A broader and more stable **integration of NAWAT** into the organisational structure of the HSD (Human Security Division of the FDFA) could be designed to increase the sustainability of NAWAT in the Swiss context.

Coherence, Synergies and Risk Management

NAWAT seizes a strategic Swiss opportunity by engaging actors who are "hard to reach" or effectively excluded from the international political arena. Targeting those who might otherwise take up arms is at the heart of any conflict transformation process and it is the mandate of the HSD to offer peaceful alternatives to security policies proliferating in the MENA region today.

There is no deliberate programming for synergies with the rest of the FDFA (Federal Department of Foreign Affairs) or the HSD in NAWAT. Other than the enabling of local peace actors as part of Swiss peace promotion policy, there are no operational measures or stated ambitions for the advancement of Swiss interests or goals in the program. In the same vein, NAWAT has largely operated independently from the rest of the FDFA, and operational synergies have been small. While Swiss peace policy is clearly noticeable in the spirit of NAWAT, the program is essentially a bottom-up process in which local stakeholders co-design its policy and action. This programmatic set-up can at times cause frictions with other Swiss governmental policies and interests.

One particular friction exists with regards to the NAWAT workshops called "Promoting Constructive Political Participation" (PCPP). The evaluation found that these workshops are a methodological adventure and an undertaking with specific political risks. Such activities would necessitate the establishment of a monitoring system in order to understand the results that are achieved. There are some apparent discrepancies in the communication of RPC (Desk Religion Politics Conflict at HSD) to the FDFA and the project proposals of the CFG (Cordoba Foundation of Geneva) with regards to the question of "capacity building" that is provided to this particular constituency.

In this context, there is a necessity to further assess how risks taken on behalf of the Swiss government are taken and managed by NAWAT. While NAWAT staff appears conscious and taking active measures to manage risks, there is a wish among representatives of the FDFA for a better communication, as well as a more cooperative spirit to ensure Swiss political positions and sensitivities are equally considered in the program.

> **Recommendations**
> - A better **working consensus** within the FDFA on the particular Swiss interests and goals in NAWAT should be established.
> - If specific synergies of NAWAT with other FDFA policy goals are desired, they would need to be integrated into the program design of the next phase. As such, it would then be important to define Swiss goals within NAWAT and make them transparent to all participants.
> - There is a need to study and monitor the – possibly **unintended – impacts** of PCPP projects in order to understand if and how these workshops are reaching the goal.
> - NAWAT will need to both **clarify and simplify the communication** about its program within the FDFA. This also applies to the management of "red lines".

Efficiency

As a result of "rolling planning" of NAWAT, the internal administrative structure and cooperation mechanisms between the CFG and the HSD are highly complicated. An efficient management of the program has therefore been difficult. Also, the current organisational set-up at the CFG does not allow the functioning of the staff to the best of their abilities. A reorganisation process at the CFG is necessary and already under way.

Still, there is a significant programmatic and financial inter-dependence between the CFG and RPC that holds risks for both parties. In the current condition, it is difficult for the CFG to establish an independent profile or to attract other donors, and job security for staff members at the CFG is rather low. For the HSD, there is a risk that any action of the CFG can be directly attributed to the Swiss government. Also, in the absence of CFG independence, the foundation could easily be perceived as a structure that serves the FDFA to outsource a political high-risk strategy.

> ### Recommendations
> - It will be necessary to define an administrative structure of NAWAT that allows for a **comprehensive management of funds** related to NAWAT according to defined program goals.
> - The **reporting system should be revised** so that the information provided is useful for the management of the program.
> - It would be beneficial for the CFG to work towards greater **programmatic and financial independence** from the HSD. To this end, there should be an agreement as to how – and how not – the HSD will contribute to an organisational development process at the CFG.
> - In the on-going reorganisation process at the CFG, it will be important to **define roles and responsibilities** to empower staff members to take effective decisions.

Gender and Conflict-Sensitivity

A program predominantly working with male beneficiaries could incorporate a very effective gender strategy. Together with the CNF, NAWAT has co-created a meta-narrative that questions the applicability of the concept of gender in the MENA region, yet it has not presented a workable alternative. In the meantime, and in its own operational set-up, NAWAT does not comply with HSD's standards on gender mainstreaming.

NAWAT program is characterized by a high conflict awareness and sensitivity and generally makes the necessary efforts to ensure that no harm is done to any involved stakeholders.

> ### Recommendations
> - The current gender policy co-produced with the CNF is **not inclusive** and should be rectified.
> - It would be beneficial for NAWAT to **reach out to external professionals** who have already been engaged in this particular conflict so as to avoid reproducing a debate that has already been extensively had elsewhere.
> - There are many competent and engaged women in the Arab world who could be integrated in NAWAT program. The **absence of women weakens the overall**

performance of the program because important contributions are missing.

NAWAT Program Design

This evaluation finds that in its current form, NAWAT is a **process** rather than a **program**. It is based on a methodology (the diapraxis), a regional focus (the MENA region) and an emphasis on particular conflicts (chiefly those involving Islam). NAWAT has not been designed with a comprehensive Theory of Change that would foresee a convergence of its activities towards expected results on the ground. With a rather high ambiguity in its program goal, NAWAT has been flexible to decide on operational activities on a case-by-case basis and in bottom-up consultations with the CNF according to needs emerging in the local context. As a result, the operational radius of NAWAT has been broad, and NAWAT has operated wherever an important political opportunity has been identified in the region of the MENA, as well as the Sahel. Against this background, this evaluation finds that NAWAT has operated with methodological consistency and in compliance with the objectives stated in the project proposals as approved by the HSD over the past four years.

NAWAT has been managed within HSD and according to the division's existing framework for the management of projects and funds (PCM). This evaluation concluded that there was a lack of consensus and clarity among the various staff members involved in NAWAT with regards to the organisational standards and procedures that were required during the program period.

Recommendations
• In the event of a future program phase, NAWAT staff should simply and clearly **communicate the architecture** of the overall program, thereby revealing its programmatic assumptions, operational procedures and decision-making processes. • This would include the **definition of a goal** that is recalibrated to the size of its implementers, a **Theory of Change** that explains how activities are conceptually linked, as well as the formulation of **expected outcomes** that indicate how the activities converge towards concrete change on the ground. • In doing so, the controlling bodies in the HSD will have to commit to **upholding the flexibility** for a process-design that allows NAWAT to adapt to local developments, as will – in all likelihood – continue to be an important requirement for a relevant and effective program in the MENA region. • A **monitoring system** should be introduced to provide information on important change indicators so as to make transparent if and how progress occurs on the ground. • The management of the NAWAT program would benefit from the **clarification of the standards** according to which programs are managed in the HSD, in particular the basic PCM requirements. This would enable them to manage their program according to both process and results-based standards.

Table of Contents

Independent External Evaluation
NAWAT Program

Tables

Figures

Independent External Evaluation
NAWAT Program

Common Acronyms and Abbreviations

CFG	Cordoba Foundation Geneva
CNF	Cordoba Now Forum
DDPS	Federal Department of Defence, Civil Protection, and Sport
EWWR	Early Warning Rapid Response (Egypt)
FDFA	Federal Department of Foreign Affairs
HSD	Human Security Division of the FDFA
MENA	Middle East and North Africa Region
NAWAT	North Africa and Western Asia Transformation Program
OECD/DAC	OECD Development Co-Operation Directorate / Development Assistance Committee
PCM	Project Cycle Management
RPC	Desk Religion, Politics, Conflict, HSD
ToC	Theory of Change
ToR	Terms of Reference (of this evaluation as drafted by the HSD)

Chapter 1: Background and Context

1.1 Evaluation Background

The Human Security Division (HSD) of the Federal Department of Foreign Affairs (FDFA) has since 2010 conducted activities under the so-called "North Africa and West Asia Transformation Program" (NAWAT) in several countries in the MENA region. NAWAT aims at engaging a diversity of actors in the strengthening of local capacities and mechanisms for non-violent conflict resolution. It is jointly implemented by the desk RPC (Religion, Politics, Conflict) of the HSD and the Cordoba Foundation Geneva (CFG).

In January 2015, the HSD contracted *Stamm Prozesse – Enabling Creative Change* to conduct an external evaluation of NAWAT. The purpose of this evaluation was to review the activities that took place between 2010 and 2014, to assess the results achieved and to receive guidance for the design of the next program phase.

1.2 Program History and Context

Many countries in the MENA region have undergone fundamental transformations over the past four years. The first phase of NAWAT coincided with the so-called "Arab Spring" and the enthusiasm that came with it. In the following years, NAWAT operated in a diverse regional context with developments ranging from peaceful steps towards democratic change to extremely violent conflicts.

Against the background of this volatile context, NAWAT maintains that the polarization occurring at the intersection of religion and politics is a common obstacle to peaceful transitions in the entire MENA region. In particular, the program rationale is rooted in the observation that disputes around religious and secular worldviews in politics as well as religious-secular or religious-religious polarizations have increased over the past years and should be pro-actively addressed. A central element and common denominator of NAWAT activities has therefore been the ambition to reinforce so-called "locally owned" capacity and mechanisms to transform violent and potentially violent conflicts at the intersection of religion and politics. NAWAT activities often include so-called difficult actors who are not typically part of Western approaches to peacebuilding in the MENA region. The term "difficult actor" in the NAWAT context normally refers to Salafis whose peaceful engagement and role in the transition processes is being negotiated and questioned.

Chapter 2: Methodology

2.1   Evaluation Focus and Mandate

The thematic focus of this evaluation was the assessment of the activities that are referred to as NAWAT detailed in the project documents relating to the preparatory phase (November 2010 – May 2011), phase I (June 2011 – June 2013) and phase II (July 2013 – December 2014). As specified in the Terms of Reference (ToR, attached in annex I), in administrative terms this included a total of 16 projects, 9 activities and 14 contributions funded by the HSD over a period of four years.

This evaluation was mandated to provide an independent assessment of NAWAT's relevance, effectiveness, impact, sustainability, efficiency, coherence and synergies, as well as gender and conflict sensitivity, and to provide guidance from these findings to inform the design of the upcoming program phase.

The geographic focus of this evaluation was defined as "the MENA region". This could technically refer any country from which NAWAT has recruited participants for its projects, including but not limited to Egypt, Tunisia, Libya, Morocco, Mauretania, Lebanon, and Yemen. A particularity of NAWAT is that it engages RPC – and with it the FDFA at large – as a co-actor in the implementation of the program. As a result, a look into the internal procedures of the FDFA and the HSD was necessary in so far as this was conducive to the assessment of NAWAT performance according to the evaluation criteria specified in the ToR.

2.2   Evaluation Questions

The consultation process during the inception phase of this evaluation revealed very wide-ranging information needs about the program. Seven principal evaluation questions were formulated to cover the scope and objectives of this evaluation. These evaluation questions reflect the internationally recognized OECD/DAC evaluation criteria as laid out in the OECD/DAC Standards for Evaluating Peacebuilding Activities in Settings of Conflict and Fragility" [1] and are as follows:

	Line of Inquiry	OECD/DAC Criteria
1.	Has the NAWAT program been relevant to support the transformation of conflicts in the MENA region?	Relevance
2.	Has the NAWAT program reached its goal? Has it made an intended an observable change on the ground?	Effectiveness
3.	Has the NAWAT program contributed to socio-political change in conflicts in the MENA region?	Impact
4.	Has the NAWAT program built capacity and mechanisms that are self-sustained in the MENA region today?	Sustainability
5.	Has the NAWAT program operated in coherence with FDFA policies? Has it created synergies within the FDFA?	Coherence and Synergies
6.	Have economic resources provided to the NAWAT program been adequately converted into program results?	Efficiency
7.	Has the NAWAT program been designed and implemented in a gender and conflict sensitive way?	Gender and conflict sensitivity

Table 1: Overview of Evaluation Questions

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[1] http://www.oecd.org/dac/evaluation/evaluatingconflictpreventionandpeacebuilding.htm

2.3   Evaluation Phases and Data Collection

The evaluation was conducted over a period of two months in January and February 2015. The evaluation consisted of four sequenced evaluation phases as follows:
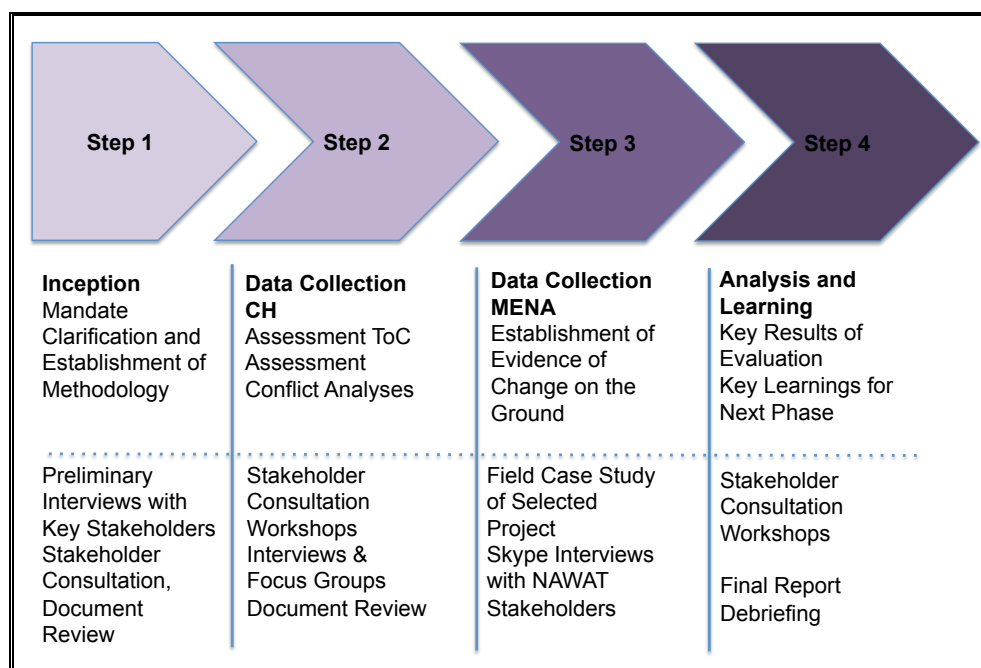
Step 1	Step 2	Step 3	Step 4
Inception Mandate Clarification and Establishment of Methodology	**Data Collection CH** Assessment ToC Assessment Conflict Analyses	**Data Collection MENA** Establishment of Evidence of Change on the Ground	**Analysis and Learning** Key Results of Evaluation Key Learnings for Next Phase
Preliminary Interviews with Key Stakeholders Stakeholder Consultation, Document Review	Stakeholder Consultation Workshops Interviews & Focus Groups Document Review	Field Case Study of Selected Project Skype Interviews with NAWAT Stakeholders	Stakeholder Consultation Workshops Final Report Debriefing

Table 2: Overview Evaluation Phases

Step one – the inception phase – included a document review, consultations with key program staff at the HSD and the CFG, as well as the drafting of an inception report. The phase concluded with a one-day workshop with the same actors. On this occasion, joint efforts were made to establish a generic Theory of Change (ToC) of the entirety of NAWAT activities. Establishing a rudimentary consensus on the definition of NAWAT was a necessary precondition for the data collection to assess NAWAT performance on the level of outcomes as was a specific requirement in the ToR. The workshop also served to jointly validate the proposed indicators of this evaluation for each evaluation question.

Step two – the data collection in Switzerland – included in-depth interviews with different stakeholder groups working with NAWAT in the Swiss context. This included a total of 23 interviews with representatives of the FDFA (Middle East and North Africa Division, and the HSD as well as former and current staff of the Swiss embassies throughout North Africa) and the Federal Department of Defence (DDPS). It also included external stakeholders who observe or cooperate with NAWAT as trainers or researchers, as well as external management and peacebuilding experts who do not have any involvement in NAWAT. The list of interviewees is added in annex II.

Step 3 – Data Collection MENA – included the in-depth study of two key components of NAWAT: On the one hand, the evaluation examined the workings of the Cordoba Now Forum (CNF), standing exemplarily for the NAWAT ambition to transform conflicts by confronting narratives in "mediation spaces" and thereby generate "publicly shared knowledge" with divided groups across fault-lines. The study of the CNF included an online survey with 13 members of the CNF as well as one focus group and three in-depth interviews with selected CNF members. Furthermore, the evaluation conducted a field study of the second key component of NAWAT, namely its ambition enable joint operational action across fault-lines.

NAWAT staff was asked to select among its various projects one activity that is representative to assess the program's results on the ground. The project selected was the "Salafi Detainees Project" in Morocco. The field study was conducted from 8 – 14 February 2015 in Casablanca and in Rabat by the evaluator. Data collection in Morocco included 12 individual in-depth interviews with various stakeholders of the project.

Step 4 – Analysis and Learning – consisted in the analysis of the data collected as outlined in steps 2 and 3. As a result of this process, the evaluation was able to provide twofold: 1) an independent assessment of NAWAT results as achieved on the ground of these two selected cases; and 2) the identification and assessment of important key themes covering the entirety of NAWAT activities. The preliminary findings were presented to the key stakeholders of NAWAT in a one-day workshop and jointly reflected upon. Following the workshop, the evaluator re-validated the results of the analysis against the background of the available secondary data (i.e. written documents of the program made available to the evaluator). This means that the empirical results and key themes were re-examined in light in the entirety of NAWAT activities.

The result of this iterative process is this evaluation report.

Chapter 3: Defining NAWAT

The first important task of this evaluation was to understand and define what NAWAT is – and what it is not.

3.1   Activities Implemented by NAWAT

In the terminology of RPC and the CFG, NAWAT is a **program** in the sense that it provides a thematic and geographic umbrella for the projects and activities jointly implemented by this operational partnership. This terminology does not correspond to the project cycle management logic applied by the Desk North Africa of the HSD and the CFG. They both administratively register a **project** under the name of NAWAT (sometimes referred to as the "core project") as well as numerous "associated" projects and "other activities" under different acronyms (such as "NPC", "PCPP" etc.). While there is consensus that some of these additional projects and activities are direct "off-spring" of the core project and are therefore understood as an integral part of NAWAT, there is a lack of clarity – and some level of controversy – with regards to others. NAWAT staff explains this complicated status-quo with the fact that NAWAT has been designed according to the dynamics of a "rolling planning" over the past four years.

The overall NAWAT program, considering all projects that are administratively associated with it, could roughly look like the chart on the right. Indicated in blue are the elements incurring in the "core project" that is called NAWAT. This forms the institutional basis of the program. The orange blocks show the names under which projects are implemented that are not called NAWAT. These appear to constitute the operational activities that are implemented with the structure created by the core project. They are understood to be an integral part of NAWAT by the program's architects.
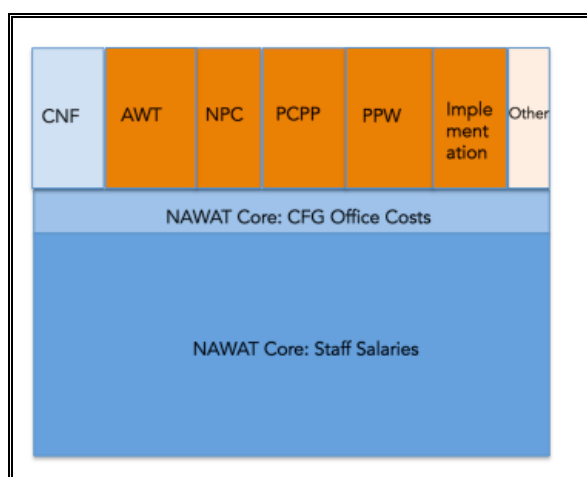

Table 3: Overview of NAWAT

The content of the overall NAWAT program is as outlined as follows.

Name	Activity	Budget in CHF	Period
NAWAT Core	The funding of the CFG, its organisational structure as well as staff salaries needed to implement projects.	1.8 million	4 years
CNF – Cordoba Now Forum	At the core of the first phase of NAWAT was the building of the Cordoba Now Forum (CNF). The CNF consists of members of diverse backgrounds from all over the MENA region who are committed to the peaceful transformation of conflicts with a religious dimension. It was built to enable the joint analysis of conflicts and to identify conflict transformation initiatives and to support their implementation. The CNF meets twice yearly and as such has grown to serve as a think-and-act tank at the service of NAWAT.	230'000	4 years
AWT – Arab World in Transition	This project included the production of 8 research papers on the Arab World in 2012/2013. This research aimed to produce "shared knowledge" and to identify concrete action to be taken by NAWAT	260'000	1 year

	and other stakeholders. The 8 research papers were published in one consolidated publication and are available (in Arabic).		
NPC – New Political Cultures	NAWAT organized two events in 2012 called "Forum on New Political Cultures in North Africa and Middle East". They convened some 60 activists, researchers, bloggers and actors of mobilizations of diverse backgrounds from several MENA countries. The objective was to develop a common understanding and to explore the similarities and differences in the expressions of political change.	180'000	1 year
PCPP – Promoting Constructive Political Participation	This line of activity is also referred to as the "Salafi" projects. Three workshops were held between 2012 and 2014. Salafi parties and movements from different countries as well as independent experts and academics from the Arab region are joined with Evangelical and Protestant participants from the West. The idea of these workshops is that political groups with a religious background are successfully integrated into the political spheres, respecting the "rules of the game" such as democratic dialogue and commitment principles and values of inclusiveness, political participation and pluralism.	240'000	3 years
PPW – Peace Promotion Workshops	Two workshops were held in 2013 and 2014 with religious actors (many of them the Salafi participants of the PCPP workshops), as well as traditional and civil society actors. Some 25 participants from the MENA and Sahel regions were trained in the promotion of peace initiatives, as well as doctrinal arguments for the prevention of violence. This aimed at identifying entry points for future peace promotion initiatives in the region.	160'000	2 years
CFG support to local project implementation	On some occasions, staff of the CFG provided assistance to local actors to support concrete operational projects on the ground. The two main projects included an activity in Egypt called EWWR (Early Warning Rapid Response) and the "Salafi Prisoner's Project" in Morocco.	140'000	4 years
TOTAL		**3'010'000**	

The accounting allows for an approximate indication of how funds were invested into activities at the CFG. Over the past four years, 55% of the costs incurring at NAWAT were used to covering program salaries. A significant pro-bono contribution – not funded by the HSD – came from the director of the CFG. 12% of the funds were spent for the running of the office structure of the foundation in Geneva. This structure was necessary to implement different kinds of operational activities, accounting for 33% of all NAWAT costs if all the various credit proposals are taken into consideration.

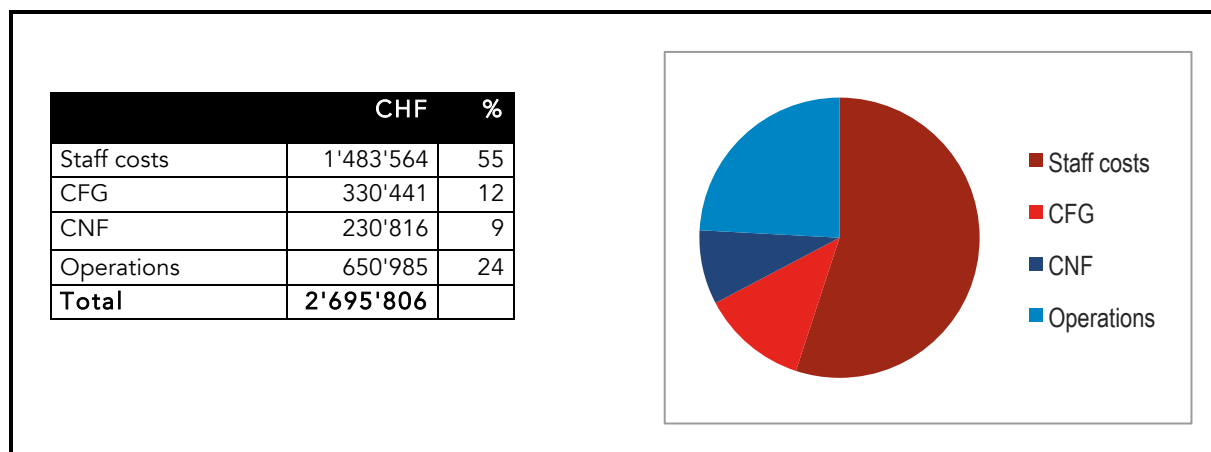|	CHF	%
Staff costs	1'483'564	55
CFG	330'441	12
CNF	230'816	9
Operations	650'985	24
Total	**2'695'806**	

Table 4: Overview Cost Structure NAWAT

Independent External Evaluation
NAWAT Program

Hereby, the scope of this evaluation is defined. In terms of budgets, this covers 93% of all the cost that the HSD transferred to the CFG for the implementation of the NAWAT program over four years. However, there are other activities that NAWAT has conducted in the same time frame. They were not covered because it was beyond the capacity of this evaluation. Excluded from this study are for example projects implemented in Switzerland as well as many smaller interventions in which the director of the CFG was involved. Also excluded are activities undertaken by the CFG in the Sahel region.

3.2   NAWAT Program Design

A program in project cycle management (PCM) terms is conventionally defined by the fact that all activities are conceptually linked in a Theory of Change and that there is a designed convergence of those activities towards expected results on the ground (outcomes). The question therefore is: Are these NAWAT projects connected in a coherent program design, and if so, how? The evaluator did not find a comprehensive program design conceptually linking all the activities of NAWAT that takes the shape of a written document. This evaluation has reviewed some 50 NAWAT documents consisting of concept notes, project proposals, intermediary and final reports. Some of them state common visions but varying objectives, some state (different or similar) Theories of Change, and some report particular outcomes. What is missing is an explanation of the **architecture of the overall program,** i.e. the logic that connects all projects and shows how they would eventually add-up to creating an "impact" on the ground. Also, the evaluator did not find any monitoring instruments in place that would report on the overall progress of NAWAT towards particular outcomes.

The coherence of NAWAT lies in its **process design**. This means that NAWAT consistently works with three basic parameters with which all its activities are planned. The first parameter is the application of the methodology of the **diapraxis**, a mediation technique that locates the potential for change in the concrete reality on the ground and engages diverse actors with diverging viewpoints in a joint process towards the resolution of that particular conflict. The second parameter of NAWAT is the application of this methodology to conflicts with a **religious dimension**, in particular those involving Islam. The third parameter that connects all NAWAT activities is the geographical context of the **MENA region**. In operational terms, the concrete conflicts addressed, workshop formats designed and participants invited are decided on a case-by-case basis and in consultations with the CNF. The NAWAT process logic combined with the functioning of the CNF has therefore provided the "bottom-up container" that has guided the design of NAWAT activities. The operational radius of NAWAT is very broad. The overall objective of NAWAT has been defined "to reinforce the locally owned capacity and mechanisms, including the support for local initiatives, for transforming violent, or potentially violent, political conflicts with a religious dimension" in the MENA region. From a design perspective, it is therefore legitimate for NAWAT to cover any context and occasion where an important political opportunity for the application of the methodology is identified.

With the operational freedom this provides, such a program design is a near perfect textbook set-up for operational conflict transformation work – **and** it is in contrast to the working standards applied in an administration accountable to the results-based management according to OECD/DAC. The status quo of NAWAT as a process largely managed bottom-up and intuitively has consequences that are discussed throughout this report.

Independent External Evaluation
NAWAT Program

Chapter 4: Relevance

Has the NAWAT program been relevant to support the transformation of conflicts in the MENA region?

4.1   Working Across Fault-Lines of Conflict

A program is likely to be relevant if it has identified and addressed the **key driving factors of conflict** and manages to integrate **key actors** fuelling these conflicts into a conflict transformation process. The NAWAT program was initiated just before the "Arab Spring" took over the MENA region with the hopeful prospects for a democratic transition. As a result, it was ready to support conflict transformation needs before they even manifested in the MENA region. The building of a regional network of local experts with specific competence and expertise to address conflicts with religious dimensions (later called "Cordoba Now Forum" or "CNF") was an extraordinary, significant and timely response targeting one of the foremost driving factors of conflict in the transition processes in the region. In response to the "spring" climate, the idea of building a regional support structure for consensus building and the promotion of the concept of "citoyenneté" across society fault-lines has been a highly relevant undertaking.

As the first democratic elections took place in some countries in the MENA region, it became clear that actors inspired by a conservative Islam are of major importance when it comes to seizing or sabotaging the opportunities for democratic transition processes in the region. In this context, NAWAT has started to reach out to "difficult actors" (a term mainly used by NAWAT to refer to representatives of various Salafi currents) to train and engage them in the "rules of the political game" and to enable their transition from "preaching" to "politics". In doing so, the program has responded quickly to the emerging needs of the local context. In some countries like in Egypt, Islamist actors suddenly found themselves no longer in the position of a supressed minority but in the one of governmental representation and power. In this respect, it appears that the CNF – and as a result NAWAT – has had difficulties shifting its perspective and narrative from the one supporting "excluded" groups to the one holding them accountable in their new position as governmental actors. How NAWAT policy is formed and the risks attached to its "bottom-up" design are discussed in Chapter 7: Coherence and Synergies.

Over the years, as spring turned into "winter", the situation in the MENA region has developed in diverse ways. With the war in Syria, the "security paradigm" is re-introduced with some prominence, and the established security apparatus or "deep states" of the former regimes regain public support (both in the West and in the MENA region). The extent to which there still is a "democratic process" in which formerly excluded groups could legitimately participate varies greatly. The overall theme in the region today is not the nuances of democratic participation but the violent and successful mobilisation of some of Islamic currents against the entirety of the democratic idea. To this end, NAWAT's design of Peace Promotion Workshops that include Salafi representatives and focus on the strengthening peace initiatives and the building of arguments for the prevention of violence appear to be of high relevance. At the same time, in its current composition, the CNF has probably lost some relevance as a sounding board because power and politics have shifted back towards security aspects.

In all likelihood, the presence of religiously inspired actors in the political arena will remain a conflict factor in any future development. In any sense or form, a conflict transformation program that targets those conflicts and their key actors in order to prevent violence makes a relevant

contribution to a peaceful transition. It is noteworthy that NAWAT's flexible process design has probably been one of the key enabling factors to quickly respond to local needs and to adapt the program accordingly.

4.2   Appropriateness of Methodology

One basic component of the program is its methodological approach to conflict transformation based on what is termed "diapraxis". In this, the NAWAT approach is both new and innovative. With this methodology, NAWAT is consistent in its bottom-up design, grounding most of its actions in a consultation process with trusted local experts of the CNF functioning as a sounding board. This inductive action process is time consuming, but it is has also been a necessary pre-condition for NAWAT to be able to anticipate and identify regional conflict developments. Of particular importance to its relevance is the program's communication and action framed according to the local cultural, religious, political and societal characteristics – something that is noted by NAWAT stakeholders as exceptional (especially when involving a Western governmental actor). The program structure with the HSD and the CFG as co-actors allows both parties to identify relevant issues and connect policy debates between the European and MENA contexts. This "hybrid identity" formed by a Western, governmental and a – perceived local, Eastern – non-governmental actor appears to be a key enabling factor for the identification of relevant, adapted and timely responses to this complex context in the MENA region. The architects of NAWAT therefore enjoy a very high credibility with local actors for their integrity, competence and cultural sensitivity.

Chapter 5: Effectiveness and Impact

Has the NAWAT program achieved its goals? Has it made an intended and observable change on the ground?

To measure the effectiveness and impact of any program according to the OECD/DAC standard, a **program goal** needs to be specified to define, in concrete terms, the change towards which all the program's activities should converge. In other words: one must know where he is heading in order to know if he has arrived. Also, a **Theory of Change (ToC)** is needed, outlining how the program's activities and processes are designed to reach its goal. In other words: one must know how he intends to get there. Lastly, a program needs to define **expected outcomes.** These are the milestones on the way that indicate whether one is making the estimated progress towards the goal. These are the methodological standards that are applied to conflict transformation projects today and they are outlined in detail in the OECD/DAC guidelines.[2] In order to proceed, this evaluation therefore needed to "a-posteriori" reconstruct NAWAT as a program according to a results-based logic so as to respond to the requirements of the OECD/DAC standards as requested by the ToR of this evaluation.

5.1   NAWAT Goal and Theory of Change

In the first phase of NAWAT, according to the project document, it is stated that the goals of NAWAT were the threefold:

1. Develop and implement research/action and conflict transformation initiatives
2. Enhance the impact of CNF's work and achieve a sustainable future development
3. Build a productive Network / Community of researchers / conflict transformation actors with specific expertise on conflict with a religious dimension on the MENA and on Islam in Europe

One helpful specification coming from project cycle management (PCM) for peacebuilding projects is that a goal is commonly referring to a **changed situation on the ground** that a program aspires to achieve. The difficulty with the NAWAT goals specified here is that they describe operational activities but not changes that NAWAT pursues. In order for this evaluation to measure outcomes, NAWAT staff would have to indicate how, for example, this community of conflict transformation actors/researchers would be operating towards the achievement of the NAWAT goal if and when such capacity was built successfully. As such, these goals do not provide guidance for decision-making towards the convergence of change and cannot be validated by the evaluation on an outcome level.

In the course of this evaluation, the CFG suggested to work with the following goal statement for NAWAT:

> The overall objective of NAWAT is to reinforce the locally owned capacity and mechanisms, including the support for local initiatives, for transforming violent, or potentially violent, political conflicts with a religious dimension and to herewith contribute to 1) peaceful transformations in the NAWA region; 2) peaceful coexistence in regions affected by the "Arab Spring", including the Sahel.[3]

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[2] These standards were initially imported from the project cycle management (PCM) practice in conventional development projects. In order to do justice to the complex and non-linear dynamic of conflict transformation projects, the standards were adapted. The ToC is a useful tool in this regard because it captures a dynamic process while aiming for a clear goal. In doing so, the ToC can prevent process-oriented work from losing the strategic connection to the goal. At the same time, a ToC does not create a linear "cage" (as would a "logical framework") in which no process adaptations would be allowed.

The challenge with this goal is that is so broad that it does not exclude anything. As noted before, the strategic advantage of such a broad goal is of course the programmatic freedom to manoeuvre in any direction. The disadvantage is that is impossible to measure any progress towards its achievement. Also, the NAWAT goal is formulated on such a high level of societal change that it will be impossible for any evaluation to **attribute** any changes observed on that level to a particular activity of the program. If NAWAT should be re-designed as a coherent program in a future phase, it will be important to **recalibrate** the goal so as to correspond to the actual size and influence of its implementers, their teams and budgets.

Although NAWAT does not have a coherent ToC to explain how its activities would converge towards specific changes on the ground, it was necessary to specify a ToC that would explain what kinds of outcomes any individual NAWAT activity would likely produce if the methodology was successfully applied. This evaluation proceeded with a minimal consensus with NAWAT staff on such a methodological ToC. The evaluator makes the following suggestion that could capture the working assumptions of NAWAT based on a process design (in bold expected results):

> "By building **inclusive groups** of key actors in religiously loaded conflicts, individual **narratives change** and a **shared group understanding** about the conflict emerges. This allows the group to function as an incubator and **joint implementer** of conflict transformation initiatives across fault-lines of the conflict. By training these key actors in conflict transformation techniques, they are enabled to **take relevant and timely action individually or as a group so to mitigate tensions** when conflicts occur. By implementing these initiatives, **conflicts are peacefully resolved** and **inclusive political solutions** become more likely."

In an illustrated form, the ToC of NAWAT would be based on two inter-related pillars, one operating on an assumption of **individual change** and the other focusing on **group change**.

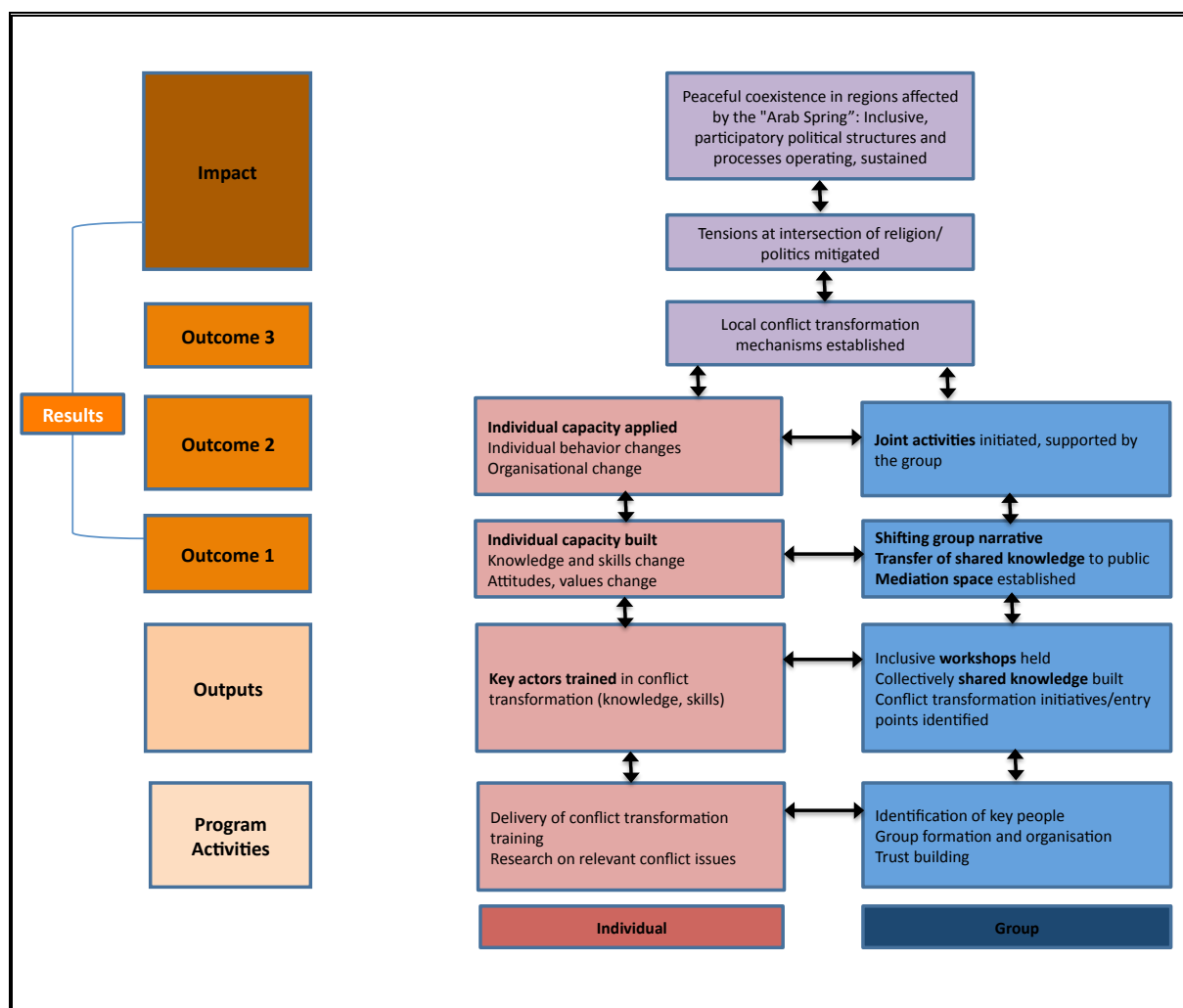Independent External Evaluation
NAWAT Program

Figure 1: Theory of Change – Revised NAWAT Program Logic

On this basis, it now became possible for the evaluation to proceed with the empirical study and verification of outcomes, i.e. finding answers to the question whether such expected changes have actually occurred in reality in any of the projects that were implemented by NAWAT.

5.2   Program Outputs

Key Actors Successfully Trained in Conflict Transformation?

The criteria based on which NAWAT selects its workshop participants is not transparent. In the case of the CNF, the members unanimously decide on the involvement of new participants, but it is not clear how the CNF was formed initially and according to which criteria members today choose their new colleagues. Most CNF members are not "key" people in a methodological sense because they do not appear to have significant decision-making roles in conflicts. However, they are, on occasions, well placed to reach out to people who have such authority. With regards to the participants involved in other projects, they are largely "key" to the conflicts because NAWAT assumes that they would resist or be unqualified to participate in a democratic process. Some of those actors have a history or direct involvement in current or former conflict constellations that might also involve violence, and NAWAT projects seem to be based on the assumption that there is a risk that they would turn to further violence if they cannot make their voices heard. Certainly, NAWAT is unique in its ability to build a bridge for a Western

governmental actor to conservative Islamic actors in the MENA region. NAWAT has probably worked with over 100 stakeholders over the years and this evaluation cannot provide any information on individual profiles of the people involved in NAWAT. The program does not currently have any members from Syria.

In most of the NAWAT activities, these local actors are trained in various conflict transformation methodologies and related topics, such as the mechanisms of political participation. A review of the workshop documentations as well as the online survey with CNF members confirms that NAWAT training activities are generally of high quality. The methodological input provided to the CNF is of the highest standards of conflict transformation practice today. Also, external trainers engaged for the CNF have a strong record in this field. Their inputs were validated by workshop participants and highly appreciated. NAWAT training materials appear to be well adapted in the context they are trying to address and they "share the same language". This evaluation was not able to review all training documentation of NAWAT, but it can be assumed that other training formats in other projects are of equally high quality.

There are some questions with regards to training inputs provided in the format of the PCPP workshops with Salafi participants that this evaluation could not clarify. The project proposals and the CFG documentation "Promoting Constructive Political Participation of New Faith-Based Political Parties in the Arab Region" published in March 2013, suggest that this training focuses on discussions about the challenges faced by Salafi parties when entering the political arena, on how to develop political strategies and build coalitions in order to mitigate polarization, and on the potential role Salafi parties could have in becoming actors in peace promotion. Also, the project proposals speak of the provision of doctrinal arguments to Salafis to support non-violence. In any other context, such activities would be called "capacity building". Within the FDFA however, the communication of NAWAT is that no capacity building is provided to Salafis, but that there is a dialogue with them on "red lines" aiming to build understanding and respect for the democratic rules. This evaluation could not resolve what appears to be a discrepancy in the communication of NAWAT. Another question relates to possible unintended impacts of the PCPP workshops: How is the engagement of a governmental actor in doctrinal arguments with Salafis conducive to the building of respect for the separation of religion and politics – a theme at the heart of the current conflicts? PCPP credit proposals have been approved by the HSD, and the State Secretariat of the FDFA has given support to this line of activity. The PCPP project was not empirically studied by this evaluation and no judgments can be made about how messages are framed to participants, what is understood, what is learned and how behaviours change as a result. Due to the heightened political sensitivity, it is of importance for NAWAT to start monitoring the changes that occur among participants in terms of skills, knowledge and attitudes as a result of the training.

Inclusive Workshops Held, Shared Knowledge Established?

A common feature of all NAWAT activities is that they aim to form inclusive groups with those key actors across fault-lines of religiously loaded conflicts. The data suggests that NAWAT is successfully working with this principle. The CNF, for example, consists of a group of people representing a broad spectrum of the societies in the MENA region with regards to the criterion of religion, geographical location, and academic/actors profiles. Similarly, in the Salafi Detainees Project in Morocco, an inclusive "comité de suivi" was established across religious and political denominations. In doing so, each participant is confronted with "the other" and their perspectives on the conflicts. The formation and training of such diverse groups is a very

delicate, time-consuming and difficult undertaking that requires intensive trust building and networking activities. As such, the CFG and RPC reportedly invests months of difficult preparation and operates with competent, dedicated teams to achieve this diversity.

There are limitations with regards to the inclusivity of groups formed. NAWAT does not claim to be representative of all parts of society, but to act across particular fault lines as relevant to the conflict that is addressed. The Peace Promotion Workshops (PPW) overwhelmingly includes the conservative Islamic current, although other participants are also invited according to the workshop protocols. In the case of the CNF, the conservative, Islamic current is also overrepresented. In comparison, women, Christians, the liberal-/seculars and "the West" have a very small representation at the table. Nationalists and the security establishment are absent. Because the CNF is so important for the design of activities of NAWAT, the imbalance is noteworthy. A particular case in point is NAWAT's debate on gender, which illustrates how the bottom-up process with the CNF may produce a closed feedback loop with unintended, biased results (see Chapter 9: Gender and Conflict Sensitivity).

With regards to the application of inclusivity, special attention would have to be given to the further evaluation of the Promoting Constructive Political Participation (PCPP) workshops. The question is why the concept of inclusivity is not applied in these workshops? The participants are primarily Salafis. There are external participants representing other worldviews, but they are represented as academic experts or are "religiously inspired" politicians such as Evangelicals from the West. Evangelicals in this sense are "like minded" actors who will invariably appear as role models. Again, it would be important for NAWAT to introduce a monitoring system that will answer the questions of unintended impacts. How will the program ensure that this group formation will not reinforce the conviction of Salafi actors that their political participation should be based on religious belief? In this regard, this evaluation considers the PCPP workshops a political and methodological undertaking of considerable risks that requires follow-up and monitoring by NAWAT. In the absence of empirical data, this evaluation cannot assess the extent to which the PCPP is in line with the HSD policy.

In all activities, the groups involved in NAWAT engage in an intense process of understanding the different conflict realities and the various perspectives that are held by different group members. Workshop protocols capture some of the essence of the analysis. Members of the CNF described the process of the generation of "shared understanding" in detail. This appears to have been successful to the extent that CNF members today note the very high convergence of the viewpoints of CNF members who initially would not have been willing to sit around the same table.

5.3   Outcomes

Individual Capacity Built?

The empirical data collected by the evaluation suggests that the level of individual capacity that is built in the various NAWAT workshops is high. CNF participants report a high degree of learning on the relevant topics. The knowledge and skills that were strengthened by NAWAT ranges from theoretical and conceptual background on conflict transformation, to process design, mediation techniques and tools as well as country expertise. Moreover, personal awareness was built in many important respects:

Independent External Evaluation
NAWAT Program

"I have learnt that the other is not exactly as marketed by the media, and that working with a diverse team is stronger than working with a group of the same orientation. I have learnt that what is considered fundamental might be secondary for others."

The fact that nobody should be excluded was an entirely new idea for me. I became more flexible and accept to listen to those with opinions opposite to my convictions. It even became part of my thinking, so I became more open in my work and able to change and develop. I developed new visions for my society that I didn't have before."

In direct conversations, some of the members of the CNF have shown an extraordinary personal awareness and ability to reflect on conflict dynamics. This evaluation cannot make any statements about the success of the capacity built of other NAWAT projects. CNF members have mentioned that the repeated training and the reiteration of particular messages during CNF meetings twice a year as an important ingredient to sustaining the knowledge. It is likely that one-off events in the form of isolated workshops with various audiences and training content are less successful in building this capacity.

Group Narratives, Knowledge Transferred to Public, Mediation Spaces?

It is difficult to assess the extent to which the group narratives have shifted. First, there is no baseline or monitoring data available that would allow the comparison of the data collected to a status quo ante. Second, it appears that beyond the CNF no other "stable" groups have been formed in the course of NAWAT that also have identities as groups. It is beyond doubt, however, that workshops across fault-lines are very rare in the Arab world, and that there are not numerous possibilities for diverse actors to even meet. In a climate of auto-segregation, NAWAT is an exception, in particular among the international actors. Most of the actors of the international community interact with "their" constituency, i.e. Western actors normally with the liberal, secular currents and Arab states with the various Islamic groups.

As is reported by the members of the CNF and NAWAT staff, significant changes have occurred in the CNF over the years. The narrative in the group today is framed by tolerance, harmony and amicability. The group has in fact started to operate as a "moral support structure" that today encourages a group of "like-minded" people who are otherwise often isolated with their peace messages in their respective communities. An indicator of the convergence of the narratives is that there is consensus among CNF members that there needs to occur a "refreshment" of the group with new members joining, i.e. an expansion of the shared narrative because "there is a risk that we are getting bored because we don't have any disagreements anymore". Reportedly, the CNF today also has had opportunities to function as a "mediation space" for external initiatives. In the case of Yemen it is reported that two people from conflicting backgrounds have been invited to the CNF and, in doing so, have been able to find a rapprochement on a particular conflict they were involved in.

While the generation of shared knowledge seems to be successful within the CNF – and likely other groups, too – the transfer of this knowledge to the outside public is more difficult. In the course of the NAWAT program, ten action research papers were produced with a view to creating a "shared understanding" of particular conflict issues that could then be transferred to the larger public. The CNF members have been actively engaged in the production of these papers and it is noted that they have probably been important for the formation of shared knowledge. Also, much of the work NAWAT has done with Salafi actors over the years has emerged in the context of this research process. The production of these research outputs is a

Independent External Evaluation
NAWAT Program

time and resource intensive component of the program. This evaluation has identified a need to clarify who the target audiences of those papers are and what kind of information it is that the audiences would need. In any case, the "beneficiaries" of these research outputs were not found to be among the stakeholder groups consulted by this evaluation. The stakeholders of the FDFA have indicated that they generally do not read the NAWAT research outputs, and neither do local program stakeholders in Morocco nor external stakeholders interviewed. Also, many of the research papers were very quickly overtaken by events because of the rapid developments in the region. It would be worthwhile assessing more interactive, dynamic alternatives to keeping the groups' shared knowledge alive over time.

Individual Capacity Applied and Used?

There is indication that the training has not just led to an increase of knowledge but that there are actually behavioural changes that result from people's participation in the NAWAT projects. For example, participants report that they have started to accept listening to others and have gained "neutrality", and as result have developed a flexibility to deal with other opinions in a conversation. As a result of this, they have started managing personal relationships both in the private and in the professional domain in a different way. NAWAT reports also indicate that the PCPP workshops have led to changes among Salafis in their perceptions towards "the other" as well as to changes in their own political discourses and behaviours. No empirical data was collected by this evaluation in this regard.

Some CNF members have provided in-house trainings in their organisational context, others have reached out academically with particular messages that aim to transform conflicts. Many participants have started to make efforts to integrate a conflict transformation logic into their professional activities, which includes for example reaching out to "difficult" actors in the local contexts.

> "I used to exclude representatives of the ministry of internal affairs from work because I considered them corrupted. I discovered the mistake, and I knew that I need to follow a gradual integrative approach and include everyone. My participation in CNF has opened new work spaces for me."

Some CNF members have also reported how their positions towards particular political currents have changed. Almost 1/3 of the CNF participants have received concrete offers or developed their own structures to mediate in conflicts and have established themselves as professionals in this domain. To this end, some members of the CNF have changed their career entirely and are now working full-time in the field of conflict transformation.

(Joint) Conflict Transformation Activities Initiated, Implemented?

The CNF did not jointly implement any conflict transformation activities other than the "Salafi Detainees Project" which included, in the "comité de suivi", four of the Moroccan CNF members. The CNF however has extensively functioned as an "incubator" for many conflict transformation ideas of its members or external participants, and there is documentation of intense discussions to this end in the CNF meetings. Many CNF members report that on an individual basis they are or have been involved in concrete mediation activities in their local context. An Egyptian member has initiated a project called "Early Warning Rapid Response" and a "Summer School" on conflict transformation in Egypt was also established with the involvement of a CNF member. It is unlikely that these activities can be solely attributed to

NAWAT program. Most of the members of the CNF have been selected because of their capacity and potential to work in conflict transformation, and they have as such been attractive partners for many international actors and have received training from various programs. However, NAWAT has certainly played an important role in consolidating these dynamics.

NAWAT reports also suggest that the PCPP workshops have yielded important actions taken. In particular, two new political parties have been crated, one in Morocco and one Mauretania, by members who have participated in the "Salafi workshops"; these parties are reportedly engaged in a transition from Da'wa (preaching) to politics. This evaluation is not in a position to assess how the political platform is used in by those actors in relation to conflicts in their context.

As a result of the PPW workshops, NGOs have reportedly launched peace promotion activities. Also, a Amazigh-Islamist dialogue was initiated during a PPW workshop, as well as an Arab-African dialogue. NAWAT reports that a platform to address the issue of de-extremization of youth with the help of influential leaders was launched. No further information could be collected on these initiatives by the evaluation.

Local Conflict Transformation Mechanisms Established?

Egypt is a case in point where a local conflict transformation mechanism has been established with the EWWR initiative. The Moroccan case study below exemplarily shows how a concrete intervention that emerged from NAWAT is working and possibly creating results on the ground. There is no indication of other concrete "mechanisms" that have resulted from the NAWAT program. It is important to note that NAWAT program does not provide any monitoring data to report or follow-up on individual projects that are initiated by local workshop participants and the results achieved on the ground. Because the program design foresees the empowerment of local initiatives, any such projects would not "run under the Swiss flag" but in the name of the local organisation or individual. As such, the visibility of NAWAT as a Swiss program is – by design – very low. As a result, it is very likely that there are other results and initiatives that have taken place but have not been capture by this evaluation due to a lack of data provided by NAWAT or this evaluation.

5.4   Impact

Has the NAWAT program contributed to socio-political change in conflicts in the MENA region?

Tensions at Intersection of Religion Politics Mitigated? Inclusive Political Structures Sustained?

From the empirical data available, there is no evidence to suggest that the NAWAT program has had a direct and attributable impact on structural changes that occurred in the region during the program period. In order for this to happen – and to be observed – there would have to be significant evidence on the outcome level that conflict transformation mechanisms have been established and were actually used in the local context.

It is likely, however, that individual actors included in NAWAT have had important roles as actors for peace in decision-making processes that would otherwise have led to violence. The RPP matrix in the case of Morocco is a good example to show how linkages to a socio-political level could be strengthened in order for NAWAT to create significant longer-term changes. It also has to be noted that NAWAT has been working with a very high ambition to reach "impact", a

change that would probably require a more focused and substantial investment of resources into one particular location and conflict.

5.5 Salafi Detainees in Morocco

The empirical case selected by NAWAT to study the achievements of its program was the Salafi Prisoner's Project in Morocco. The project is very well documented by the CFG and this evaluation will therefore not describe it in further detail. The story in short is that following September 11th, the Moroccan government has imprisoned several thousands of citizens, many of them of Salafi background, with little or no evidence for their (planned) involvement in terrorist activities. Human rights activists in Morocco noted the injustice early on, but no concerted action has been taken. In the course of the action research papers produced by NAWAT, one Salafi Sheikh who himself had served a sentence in prison "peer reviewed" one of the papers. The CFG members noted his high awareness and special conflict transformation capacities, and as a result the Sheikh was invited to a CNF forum, where he met other members from Morocco. There, it was decided to launch an initiative based on the working principles of NAWAT, i.e. with the methodology of the diapraxis. As a result, a "comité de suivi" (CS) was formed with the Moroccan members of the CNF as well as relevant human rights activists representing a wide spectrum of society. All involved stakeholders confirm that this was an extraordinary group of people who would never have met – let alone acted together – without the intervention of CFG (who operated as the interface to NAWAT on the ground). One staff member of the CFG accompanied the CS and provided the necessary technical support to set-up a conflict transformation process. At first, the CS focused on establishing a "shared knowledge basis" among themselves. It then decided on a roadmap to work towards the release of Salafi detainees. A first meeting was held with some 40 diverse stakeholders who were relevant to bring this initiative forward. According to the CS and other participants interviewed, it was the first time the issue of Salafi detainees was discussed in Morocco in a constructive, non-controversial way. The discussion was apparently well facilitated, confidence was established and contacts across fault lines were built. In the words of one human rights activist: "For the first time, the Salafis trusted us to take action on their behalf". However, the CS found it difficult to proceed with further action due to various reasons. On the one hand, a – non-related – public argument ensued between (another) Salafi Sheikh and a liberal-secular academic. The CS, due to its contacts and the already established "mediation space", saw it necessary to mediate in this conflict in order to be able to proceed with the detainees project. This "side-mediation" was successful in the sense that the CS facilitated an agreement with both parties that the two actors would bring their mutual public accusations to an end. Taking up the issue of the detainees again, a meeting with the Ministry of Interior brought the initiative to a halt. The minister had asked the CS to provide personal guarantees for each detainee that would be released – a responsibility the CS members could not take. No detainees were released as a result of the initiative taken.

However, there are unintended secondary results that this evaluation found. The contacts established in the CS are still working today in the sense that some actors consult each other if there is operational necessity. Also, one of the CNF members of Salafi background has politically established himself in the course of this initiative, thereby making a "Salafi peace voice" heard. This was of importance for example after the recent events at Charlie Hebdo in Paris, where this CNF member prominently took position against violence.

The RPP matrix below shows the different activities and changes that resulted from the initiative, as well as the linkages across the sectors that could have been explored to create socio-political impact.
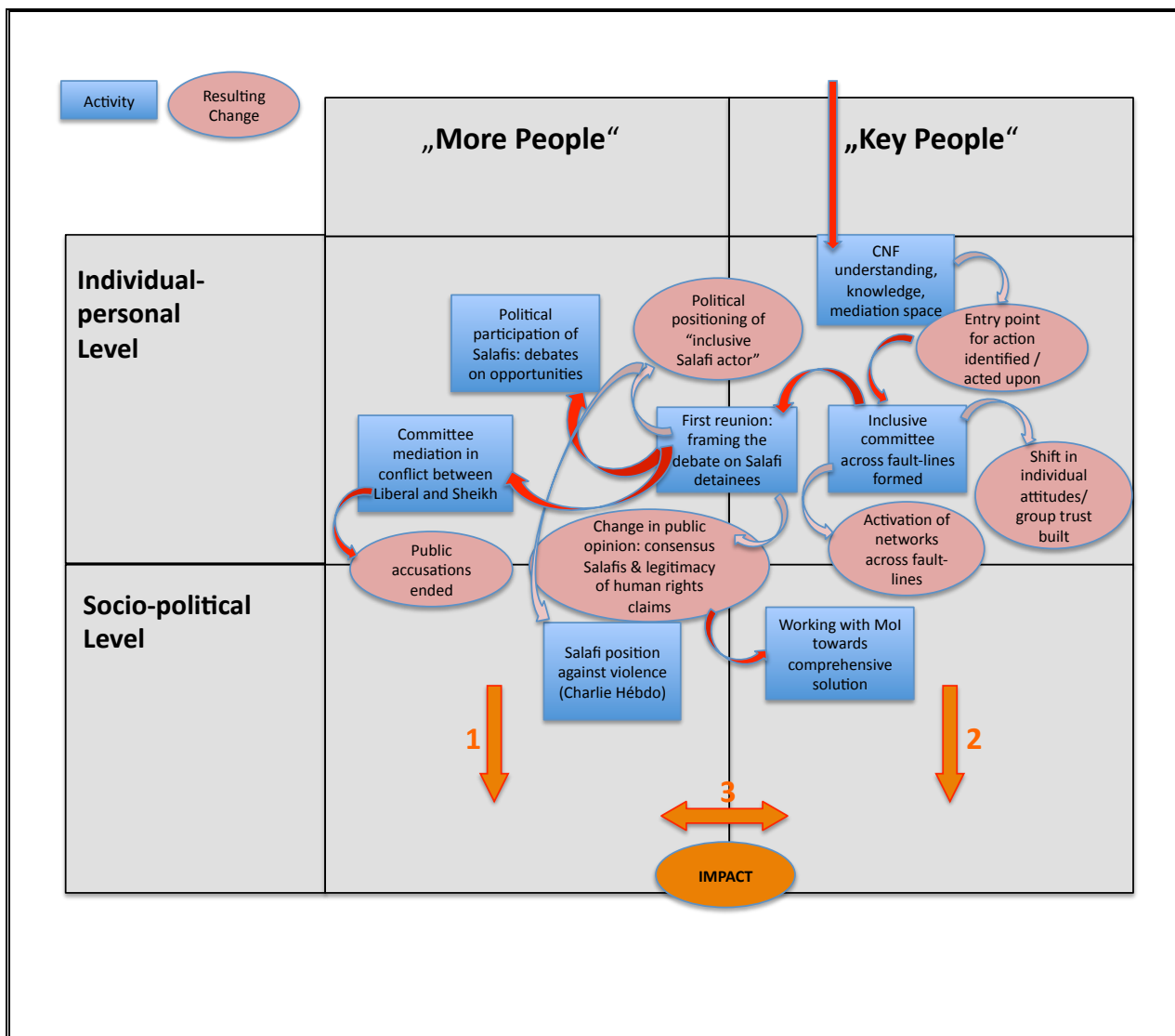

Figure 2: RPP Matrix Detainees Morocco

A particular difficulty that was identified by the members of the CS was the fact the lack of operational capacity. None of the members of the CS was able to devote his or her time entirely to this project. Little administrative support was provided by the CFG. The staff member of the CFG was managing a "double portfolio" in this process, one in Geneva as a program manager for NAWAT and one in Morocco in support of the initiative. Also, the CS was quickly politicized, with one of its members – who is also a member of the CNF – being involved in a political party that had pursued political interests of his party.

The Moroccan project also illustrates another particular challenge for NAWAT, namely how to deal with people who do not explicitly take a stance against violence. Some local stakeholders and former detainees reported that they have distanced themselves from the initiative because it did not exclude people who played a "double game". The thin line to be walked in this context is illustrated by the fact that one of the main interlocutors for the CS, the former spokesperson of the Salafi detainees, has recently left to Syria and has died in the war. Non-violence is a clearly

formulated red-line of NAWAT. The communication and application of this policy by external partner organisations is an important issue to be addressed by the program.

In conclusion, the Moroccan initiative for the detainees was a successful application of the "diapraxis" model introduced by NAWAT and shows the appropriateness and potential of this methodology to intervene in conflicts. There was a lack of operational structure to follow-up, but it is unlikely that such capacity would have entirely changed the course of action. The forces working against a solution of the detainees' case were overwhelming. In the absence of a local operational structure, the application of the conflict transformation action is largely left to the capacity of individuals who cannot rely on an operational budget or the necessary technical support. It goes without saying that in the event of a concrete mediation opportunity arising, there is no time to start writing a proposal, and submit a case to a lengthy consultation with the CNF, the CFG and the HSD. One important conclusion from the Moroccan case study is that NAWAT would have to strengthen its operational structure in order to seize political opportunities when they present themselves.

Chapter 6: Sustainability

Has the NAWAT program built capacity and mechanisms that are self-sustained in the MENA region today?

The data collected by this evaluation through the case studies revealed that the stakeholders who participated in NAWAT activities show a **high degree of embodiment** of conflict transformation knowledge and skills. In general, the creation of awareness as a result of the participation in NAWAT appears to be a personal and irreversible process for those participants who were "ripe" for such a transformation, as one person described his own process. In particular, participants of the CNF and the members of the Moroccan "comité de suivi" that was responsible for the execution of the Salafi Detainees Project have reported that they try to strategically include a conflict transformation logic in their work context today. A human rights activist from Morocco specified that she has been encouraged by the initiative to reach out across fault-lines in another case so as to form a broad coalition before a particular human rights claim was taken up.

Some members of the CNF have entirely changed their **professional careers** and work today in the field of conflict transformation. While they also have been exposed to such capacity building outside NAWAT, this program has reportedly "planted the seed" because it introduced the idea of a "reaching out to the other side" before peacebuilding became an industry in the MENA region with which one can earn a living. In this regard, some members of the CNF are professionally working in the field of mediation in the MENA region today. It is acknowledged that their participation in the CNF has contributed to their basic understanding of conflict transformation work, and that important access to networks and contacts has been established. This enables them to do effective operational work in the region today. Many participants of the CNF also report that they have adapted or initiated organizational processes that integrate conflict transformation as a cross-cutting perspective. In doing so, they have established themselves as resource persons for conflict transformation work in their local contexts and are acknowledged as such.

In terms of conflict transformation mechanisms, the Moroccan case study does not appear to have established a more permanent structure to deal with the issue of Salafi detainees (or any other human rights claims) that goes beyond the personal contacts and network that have been created through the project. The various stakeholders agree, however, that such contacts could be re-activated quickly, if the opportunity for joint action presented itself. In the Egyptian and Tunisian context, **local mediation organisations have been established** by CNF members and are likely to be in a position to sustain such activities through the structures they have created.

Participants of the CNF agree that it would be unlikely that the **network of the CNF** would continue to be operational if the funding by the CFG ceased. While their cooperation is already taking other forms, such as personal consultations and invitations to workshops or conferences in the particular organizational contexts, it is unlikely that participants would invest the time and resources to uphold their functioning as a "mediation space" in the absence of an external donor.

This evaluation has no empirical data to make statements on the sustainability of the activities of other projects that were implemented under the NAWAT headline. The recurring experience of meeting with the same or a comparable group of participants in the same setting is however of

importance to the sustainability of the capacity built. Members of the CNF for example describe that a mediation space and a shared knowledge about conflicts has only emerged due the fact that "it was clear that we would meet again, so we had to make an effort". Also, people have stressed that conflict transformation as it was presented to them in the context of NAWAT is very unusual in the MENA region, and that they were at first sceptical about the validity and practicability of such ideas. A recurring meeting structure with the same actors also allows NAWAT staff to monitor the application of capacities in a systematic way and to make sure opportunities for concrete interventions in conflicts are seized.

The sustainability of the NAWAT program in the **Swiss administrative structure** is somewhat more of an open question. NAWAT is a personal program that is closely tied to the well functioning cooperation of the two key persons at the HSD and the CFG, as well as their personal networks. By all means, this is not unusual, nor harmful, and would not normally be of concern (nor business) to anyone other than the involved parties. However, it appears unlikely that any staff member on either side of this organisational structure at the HSD and the CFG would be in a position to replace the key figures if this should ever be necessary. Inevitably, and due to structural reasons, there is concern that this cooperation has created a certain level of mutual dependency that would lead to a discontinuation of the NAWAT program if one of the architects of the program decided to pursue professional alternatives elsewhere. From the point of view of a federal administration, a broader and more stable integration of NAWAT into its operational structure would probably mark an important step towards the sustainability of the program.

Chapter 7: Coherence and Synergies

Has the NAWAT program operated in coherence with FDFA policies? Has it created synergies within the FDFA?

7.1   Policy Coherence

NAWAT operates in the region of the MENA with religiously inspired actors, in particular Salafis, and with "difficult actors" who might have a history or direct involvement in conflicts that involve violence. Switzerland remains one of the very few countries with a policy framework that allows an engagement with such difficult actors. In this sense, **NAWAT seizes a Swiss strategic opportunity** or USP (a "unique selling position"), namely the possibility to uphold a dialogue with those who are difficult to reach or actively excluded from the international political arena. Targeting those who might otherwise take up arms is the very basic logic of conflict transformation and it is the mandate of the HSD to offer peaceful alternatives to security policies. As such, RPC advocates in support of peaceful national and international governmental action in the MENA region and NAWAT has been feeding into this work by providing RPC with valuable first-hand analysis and experience from the ground. With its methodological framework, NAWAT is in line with the Swiss political tradition and ambition to operate in conflicts as an intermediary. To this end, there is a basic consensus among the actors of the FDFA consulted by this evaluation for a Swiss policy that engages difficult actors in a political dialogue.

NAWAT, however, is not just a Swiss program. NAWAT programmatic action emerges from ideas generated by the CNF or external participants invited to those workshops. Actors from the MENA region co-design the NAWAT policy and action together with the CFG and RPC. This evaluation could not clarify how exactly decisions are taken and by whom. What is clear is that the primary purpose of NAWAT is to operate under the Swiss Peace Promotion policy and to enable a "locally grown" peace agenda – so long as the Swiss red-lines are not crossed. **Frictions with other Swiss governmental policy** can therefore occur.

7.2   Synergies

There is **no deliberate programming for synergies** or integration of "Swiss goals" in the NAWAT core documents. While Swiss activity lines were considered in phase I of the program, phase II has focused on a consolidation of the program in the MENA region. The integration of NAWAT into the broader Swiss foreign policy context takes place at the level of RPC, which is represented as co-actor in NAWAT. The functioning of RPC within the HSD/FDFA is not in the scope of this evaluation. However, it is important to note that as long as other Swiss strategic interests and goals in the MENA region are not stated and actively programmed for within NAWAT, they are not going to be transparent nor considered by other parties involved in the program. In that sense, the evaluation has not found further information on how NAWAT actively aims to create synergies with other Swiss actors, such as the peace policy section III of the HSD, the mediation desk, the Middle East and North Africa Division of the Directorate of Political Affairs or the Swiss Agency for Development Cooperation.

The data collected by this evaluation shows that the primary "synergy" is the facilitation of contacts and entry points for stakeholders of the FDFA by NAWAT, as well as some project support at the HSD that has resulted from this. In the Egyptian case, the Human Security Advisor also functions in a capacity building role to one of the CNF members who is in the process of

building an organisation to mediate in local conflicts. Beyond these cases, NAWAT appears to operate rather independently from the rest of the FDFA. There were no reports of particular political or operational synergies that have been realized. Generally, what is reported is a difficulty to understand the purpose and goal of NAWAT. The communication of NAWAT is considered complex and academic, lacking a pragmatic view on concrete realities that could be acted upon. There is a wish for a better consultation mechanism, pro-active information and a better involvement in the risk assessment of NAWAT. The written outputs produced by NAWAT, both in terms of project documents and academic output, are not widely read by the members of the FDFA. With regards to the CNF, its members are unknown to many actors of the FDFA, and there is an impression among some actors that NAWAT actively "protects" them for fear that they could be "instrumentalized" by the Swiss government. This is a fear that CNF members themselves do not share. Quite to the contrary, all of those consulted by the evaluation would appreciate and be interested in closer contacts with the FDFA. It is noteworthy that opinions about NAWAT – and likely other projects – are often formed by re-stating what one has heard from others, and relatively few stakeholders of the FDFA have actually had a personal experience with NAWAT that would allow the formation of a personal assessment.

7.3   Risks and Red Lines

The main arena for friction is the NAWAT engagement of conservative Islamist actors, and activities undertaken with so called "participatory Salafis". These projects, referred to as the Promoting Constructive Political Participation" (PCPP), have reportedly been formally endorsed by the Secretary of State of the FDFA. Although there is general acknowledgement that a well-calculated risk is worth taking, there is some concern that the actors representing the FDFA in NAWAT do not fully consider all the implications of their work. The general opinion is that a "mistake" of NAWAT would have far-reaching consequences for the entire landscape of the Swiss engagement and reputation. To this end, there is a sense of distrust towards RPC that Swiss "red lines" would not be respected. This is connected to the lack of clarity in NAWAT's program design. As long as the goal of NAWAT program remains broad and vague, doubts are nourished that the Swiss political position is not considered nor clearly stated in direct contact with those actors. As such, if NAWAT engaged Salafis in doctrinal discourses and the strategizing for political success, these activities would be considered not in line with the Swiss policy framework.

The data collected by this evaluation suggests that NAWAT staff is conscious and takes active measures to avoid passing the "red line", e.g. by the screening of particular NAWAT participants by the DDPS. This evaluation however could not review this practice on a case-by-case basis. This evaluation did not find a clearly agreed upon definition within the FDFA that would indicate where its "red line" in the engagement with difficult actors precisely is located. As such, it appears to remain at the discretion of the involved parties to negotiate "red lines" on a case-by-case basis and based on the perceived risks and interest that are involved.

Chapter 8: Efficiency

Have economic resources provided to the NAWAT program been adequately converted into program results?

8.1   Coordination of NAWAT within the HSD

In the course of this evaluation, questions about the standards in place for project cycle management (PCM) in the HSD were raised. In particular, the evaluation noted a lack of consensus among staff members involved with the NAWAT program in the HSD with regards to the division's definition of a "program", a "project" or an "outcome", and whether or not the HSD requires its programs to be designed and reported against a Theory of Change. In an attempt to contribute to the clarification of these questions, the evaluator requested access to the respective regulations available at the HSD. The only document available was the "Wegleitung Wirkungsorientierung in der AMS" that was drafted in 2014 but has not been formally endorsed by the leadership body of the HSD. As a result, staff members involved with NAWAT at the HSD have dealt with PCM tasks in diverse ways and based on individual competences acquired elsewhere. The results were time-consuming discussions to find a common language as well as inefficiencies that could not be resolved at this level of the hierarchy.

Such PCM discussions circle around the basic conundrum of a process versus a results-oriented paradigm. NAWAT is predominantly managed with a process perspective. This is very much in line with internationally recognized best practice in conflict transformation, which suggests strong process logic as a necessary element to effectively respond to the dynamics of conflicts. In this paradigm, merit is primarily given to the quality of a response and its ability to timely transform a dynamic in itself. The focus then is not per se on monitoring outcomes in the sense of societal, structural change that results from it. When this evaluation was commissioned at the end of 2014, however, reference was made in the ToR to the OECD/DAC standards, and explicit expectations for an evaluation of the program's outcomes and impact were formulated. NAWAT, however, had been initiated in 2010, at a time when such results-oriented program designs were apparently not prominently in place in the HSD. Credit proposals at the time did not require a Theory of Change, and quite evidently the budget to NAWAT was assigned over four years without anyone insisting on a particular definition of outcomes.

It therefore appeared impossible to do justice to NAWAT by solely applying results-based evaluation standards, and this evaluation has tried to meander between the two paradigms so as to respond to the demands of two "masters". This kind of conceptual work that translates a process-based design into PCM standards would normally be the responsibility of the organisation managing the funds.

8.2   Management of NAWAT at the CFG

The evaluation did not have the opportunity to assess the efficiency of the working processes at the CFG in situ. Based on interviews with staff members and a review of the program reports, several themes were brought to the attention of the evaluator, but they would need validation from independent sources with the respective access and capacity. It is important to note that the CFG has recently embarked on an organizational development process that refocuses its strategic orientation as well as internal processes and resource allocation. The findings of this

evaluation confirm that this is both an indispensible and a promising endeavour for the CFG at this point in time.

It appears that the essentials of the CFG structure were created during its cooperation process with the HSD that includes but is not limited to NAWAT. The strategic orientation of the CFG is therefore closely linked to the HSD and the NAWAT program. This has made it challenging for the CFG to develop a clear profile and to operate according to its own strategic priorities. Furthermore, the development of an organisation with a functioning, efficient management requires a professional background and profile with strong organisational skills. As such, doing conflict transformation work in the MENA region and building an organisational structure in Geneva are two very different tasks. The director of the CFG has a unique and acclaimed professional background with regards to the former, but the current organisational set-up at the CFG does not allow him to function to the best of his ability. In an optimal – imagined – structural setting, he would allow himself to move from an all-encompassing operational responsibility to a pioneering leadership role, thereby enabling others to be operational on his behalf. This set-up would necessarily include the empowerment of program managers to ensure that the programs of the CFG are focused and doable within the limits of the available resources. This means that program managers will have to take effective decisions and implement activities in their own right, an authority that they do not currently appear to have. The managerial and administrative functions that are now the responsibility of the director would then also have to be taken over by staff members with the competent profiles. In this process, clearer and shorter decision-making processes would help to increase the efficiency of the work at the CFG.

It has to be noted that it is also quite possible to imagine an entirely different organisational set-up that would allow the director to effectively pursue his mission without the structure of a foundation around him. Such options could also be considered and brainstormed.

The CFG is also in the process of creating a more independent financial structure with a more diversified donor network. It is important to know that the requirements for results- and impact-oriented program management at the HSD are low in comparison to standards applied by other Western donor agencies. To this end, the director and those staff members with program responsibilities at the CFG will probably find it necessary to engage in a capacity building process to deepen their PCM competence so that they can successfully attract alternative international donors.

Repeatedly, it was stated that the CFG has "lost" important NAWAT staff members after having invested considerable resources into building their conflict transformation skills. From a global perspective, the fact that these staff members now work at the Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue (HD) is an efficient and positive development. HD provides an operational structure that allows those members to bring their unique conflict transformation competence into the field in a way that they could not have done at the CFG. It is a pointless endeavour to deplore the strengths of a competitor. Instead, the most promising way forward for the CFG would probably be to focus on the identification of a clear profile that builds on its unique strengths, and to adopt a "business model" that operates most efficiently in that particular niche. In doing so, the CFG and NAWAT need to adapt their strategy to an environment where the peace industry that once was a niche for a few "missionaries" is now a diversified market in which money is earned and spent professionally.

Independent External Evaluation
NAWAT Program

8.3   Coordination of NAWAT between the HSD and the CFG

As was discussed in detail in Chapter 3: "Defining NAWAT", the current administrative set-up of the program is complicated and misleading. The excessive and, in terms PCM largely unimportant - reporting system engages enormous resources at the CFG that should be available for programmatic work.

NAWAT is designed as a regional program, operating with actors from numerous countries in North Africa and the Middle East. Lately, the program has started to expand to the Sahel and the Gulf, engaging in two other complex regions that are new terrain for the program and its staff. It is very impressive that this small program can cope with such a broad radius with such a small team.

At the same time, there is indication that a strategic re-focusing could produce a more efficient mix between the quantity and quality of action taken by NAWAT. In other words: one has to consider the trade-off between a short-term presence in numerous locations and a higher quality presence in fewer locations. In the absence of a field presence that can take responsibility for an operational follow-up, there is concern that not enough capacity is currently available to support the valuable initiatives that emerge from NAWAT because too many locations are being targeted at the same time. The outsider's impression is that new locations are enthusiastically taken on board because of high ambitions to realize political opportunities, and that NAWAT staff feels called to intervene whenever and wherever there is a demand. This is a result of the broad scope of the program design: in the absence of a clear strategic focus on long-term change that NAWAT aims to make in selected local contexts, no strategic opportunity can a prior and safely be excluded, thus putting pressure on the program to act in all cases. In the current situation, program staff at the CFG is overloaded and the quality of the cooperation with the HSD has shown some inefficiency as a result of it (see below). Future decisions on interventions should be made in due consideration of the human resources that are available.

The current operation of NAWAT largely based on a "hybrid" working relationship between two individuals, one at RPC and one at CFG. NAWAT, beyond doubt, is a labour of genuine commitment, a program rooted in both partners' remarkable devotion to the cause, their competence and embodiment of those values. The flipside of this coin is that there are particular concerns with regards to the CFG's independence from the HSD. The director asserts the mutual respect on which his cooperation with RPC is based, as well as his freedom with regards to programmatic choices. However, there currently is high financial dependence on the HSD, which contributes roughly 90% of the CFG's operational budget. This orientation towards the HSD is also symbolized by the fact that important decisions on CFG activities are taken jointly with RPC – and not with internal staff or board members – thereby disempowering the staff at the CFG. In light of (always possible) re-shifts of policies at the HSD or personal fluctuations, job security at the CFG is currently low. The risk of such a hybrid structure is mutual. In the current set-up, sceptical outsiders would easily find evidence to call the CFG a "camouflage", i.e. a non-governmental container to outsource a high-risk governmental program. Also, a diversification of partners who could operate in NAWAT jointly with the HSD could create more efficiency simply due to the fact that the "market logic" would require partners to work according to higher efficiency considerations.

Chapter 9: Gender and Conflict Sensitivity

Has the NAWAT program been designed and implemented in a gender and conflict sensitive way?

9.1 Gender

At the onset of the Arab spring, the hopes for more equality within the Arab societies were high. At the same time, in the transitions towards democratic systems, the rights and the status of women are currently renegotiated, constituting a complex and emotionally loaded fault line of conflict in the MENA region today.

The NAWAT core documents state that the program does "gender mainstreaming" but do not provide any further details on how this is done. Based on a broader document review, this evaluation concluded that the NAWAT approach to gender is largely developed in deliberations with the CNF. In any case, the evaluator could not find any other conceptual or methodological guidance on this issue.

NAWAT documents suggest that gender should not be explicitly singled out, nor should it be applied as a distinct transversal norm (i.e. as practiced internationally under the headline gender sensitivity). Much rather, NAWAT advocates for a comprehensive framework based on the values of inclusion, citizenship and democracy, thereby aiming at the transformation of all sorts of injustices and inequalities that prevail in the societies of the MENA region. Such a transversal lens would then include criteria for all subcategories of society, such as for example age or race in addition to gender. NAWAT also makes reference to the stress field orient versus occident, and the risk that "the cause of women could be instrumentalised in tensions between secular and Islamist or between old and new generations". Also, there is concern in NAWAT that the situation of women in Islam is misrepresented and misunderstood in the West. The underlying tone of the NAWAT documents is a determination to protect Arab societies from gender norms "parachuted" onto them by the West and a desire to "correct" those approaches that seem culturally inappropriate.

Programmatic work on gender has been done in NAWAT in the form of an action research paper on the role of women in Islamic movements, as well as in frequent discussions on women's issues during the CNF meetings in various smaller formats. The CNF meeting in December 2014 addressed the issue of gender more systematically, focusing on the polarizations between secular and religious actors in the international gender debate as well as on the potentials of a rights-based approach to gender in the Arab world. More concrete terms might be defined for NAWAT's work with Salafis, but no such information was available. The project documents on PCPP solely state that NAWAT would "challenge Salafis to think in a pragmatic way about gender and other minority issues" (sic).

This evaluation thus found NAWAT engaged in a meta-narrative about the concept of gender, its perception and (in)applicability in the MENA region. But there were no details found as to what such an alternative, "comprehensive" approach to gender based on inclusion, citizenship and democracy would look like in reality.

In its own operational reality, NAWAT works with an overwhelming majority of stakeholders that are men. The workshops held with Salafis have a primarily male audience. In the CNF, there are two (until recently one) women among the 15 members. Recognizing this imbalance, NAWAT program staff has repeatedly encouraged CNF members to suggest female participants to be

invited into the network. In interviews with CNF members it was explained that the CNF has not really found it important to include more women because other issues were given a higher priority. Another CNF member explained that there was a lack of women in the Arab world with the necessary professional background and freedom to travel so as to participate in the CNF.

Working mainly with male beneficiaries can be a component of a very effective gender strategy. In fact, a significant shift in behaviours and attitudes is required from men – not just women – in order to make progress towards equality in the Arab world. NAWAT thus works closely with those actors who will inevitably undergo a deep transformation process in the future.

From the outsider's perspective the impression is that the formulation of the NAWAT gender approach takes place in a closed feedback loop. The NAWAT gender policy is developed in a "bottom-up" process with the CNF which largely lacks the participation of women, it lacks the equal representation of the West (which, in a program co-implemented with Switzerland and a conflict that involves "Western concepts" would perhaps deserve a role), and it lacks adequate representation of the secular-liberal current – to name just three of the "minorities" who would probably contrast the current narrative. The result is that NAWAT has established a norm (if not a policy) that carries a rather defensive, conservative narrative on gender and that in operational terms, the program itself does not "walk its talk" to provide an example for the new approaches it proposes. In doing so, NAWAT risks reproducing the power structure that is at the heart of the gender conflict. In conclusion, this evaluation finds it unlikely that NAWAT currently complies with the HSD's norms on gender.

9.2   Conflict Sensitivity

NAWAT is characterized by a high conflict awareness and political, cultural and religious sensitivity in the MENA region. The systematic consultation process with trusted local experts from the region as well as the joint implementation philosophy generally ensure that action is taken in a way that is respectful of sensitivities in the MENA region so that "no harm" is done to any stakeholders involved. Also, consultations with Swiss embassy staff in the region have at times led to a re-evaluation of particular NAWAT activities to prevent harm to participants. Particular attention is also given to "red lines" that define the radius of the CFG, i.e. when it comes to global political constellations and the involvement of international actors that could be harmful to the reputation and integrity of the CFG and its staff in the Arab world.

"Local" in a joint implementation context also means that risks and "red lines" of all involved stakeholders are clearly defined and acknowledged. Conflict sensitivity therefore also applies to the requirement that the FDFA and the Swiss people at large should not be harmed as a result of this program. This is of particular concern because NAWAT works with "difficult" actors, some of whom have a history or direct involvement in current or former conflict constellations that might also involve violence. The risk management is discussed in Chapter 7: Coherence and Synergies.

Appendix I: ToR of Evaluation

Schweizerische Eidgenossenschaft
Confédération suisse
Confederazione Svizzera
Confederaziun svizra

Federal Department of Foreign Affairs FDFA

Directorate of Political Affairs DP
Human Security Division:
Peace, Human Rights, Humanitarian Policy, Migration

Terms of Reference: External Evaluation
North Africa and Western Asia Transformation Program 2010-2014

1.   Summary

The Human Security Division of the Swiss Federal Department of Foreign affairs mandates an external, formative evaluation to evaluate the *North Africa and West Asia Transformation Program*. The program has been implemented in cooperation with the Cordoba Foundation of Geneva (CFG) since November 2010. The evaluation will have to be completed until 23.02.2015 and is expected to produce recommendations for the design and implementation of the next programme phase and projects.

2.   Background, context of the evaluated interventions

In line with the constitutional commitment to promote the peaceful coexistence of peoples, Switzerland expanded its peace promotion activities from 2004 and strengthened its efforts aimed at transforming violent or potentially violent conflicts involving different value systems, religions and values. Since 2010, the Religion-Politics-Conflict desk (RPC) has engaged in a process with its partner the Cordoba Foundation of Geneva on conflict transformation in North Africa and West Asia[1] (MENA). The North Africa and West Asia Transformation Program (NAWAT) seeks to promote a peaceful coexistence between groups referring to different worldviews by means of functioning conflict resolution mechanisms. For this aim, NAWAT addresses (to) violent or potentially violent conflicts, tensions and polarizations (religious-secular, religious-religious) at the intersection of religion and politics and/or involving political actors with religious reference who might be perceived as "difficult actors" by enhancing local conflict transformation capacities and mechanisms. NAWAT was set up in 2010with a preparation phase and is now ending its second phase. A number of projects directly linked to NAWAT were also implemented with the cooperation of CFG.

Although the specific objectives of the two phases (additionally to the preparation phase) of NAWAT and the related projects are different, they all contribute to the vision of a peaceful coexistence between groups referring to different worldviews by means of functioning conflict resolution mechanisms. The stated objectives of NAWAT II are defined as following:

1. The capacity of conflict transformation actors and networks is enhanced; mediation spaces are established and consolidated.
2. Collectively shared understanding of conflicts at the intersection of religion and politics is produced and disseminated.
3. Local conflict transformation initiatives, that are locally and internationally relevant, are supported, accompanied, co-implemented or implemented.

The table in the annex summarizes all projects and activities (16 projects, 9 activities and 14 contributions) to be taken into consideration in the scope of the evaluation, although the focus should be the two first phases and the preparation phase of NAWAT - and on the related projects, activities and contributions insofar as they are products of the core-NAWAT program - as well as the Cordoba Now Forum.

3.   Rationale, objectives and scope of the evaluation

The objective of the current mandate is to design and implement an external evaluation of NAWAT taking into consideration its related projects, activities and contributions. It is the first external evaluation that encompasses all activities linked to NAWAT. The evaluation should determine the extent to which programme activities contributed to the achievement of the strategic goals of HSD in particular those

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[1] The region is named „North Africa and West Asia" in the programme but „Middle East and North Africa" in HSD. For purpose of simplicity the acronym MENA is used in this document.

November 24, 2014

included in the Federal Council's Message concerning the continuation of measures relating to civilian peacebuilding and the promotion of human rights 2012-2016 as well as those of the Swiss National Council's special credit for North Africa (2011-2016) as specified in the Swiss North Africa Program (SNAP) and the strategy 2013-2016 for Religion, Politics and Conflict approved by the Human Security Division. The evaluation should also be formative. The evaluation is expected to produce recommendation for the steering of the programmes and projects. HSD will take into consideration the findings of the evaluation and share them with the Cordoba Foundation Geneva for the next phase, including lessons learnt, and for future projects linked to NAWAT.

The independent evaluation has the following objectives:

- Analyse the **relevance** in the MENA context and within the Swiss North Africa /Middle East Engagement of the NAWAT programme and connected projects, taking into account Swiss competencies, instruments and comparative advantage. (Concretely: NAWAT's contribution to conflict transformation in the areas of capacity building, the facilitation of mediation spaces, the development of collectively shared understanding and the conceptualization and implementation of local conflict transformation initiatives in the MENA region.)
- **Identify and assess** the performance of the programme **at the level of outcomes.** The aim is to determine whether outcomes can be directly attributed to the named supported projects.
- Identify **opportunities** and provide **recommendations** on the direction to take and possible changes to be reflected in the next phase.

4. Questions for the evaluation

The following questions should be addressed by the evaluation team. The questions can be discussed.

What was the Impact of the project?
- What Impact do the projects including the Cordoba Now Forum have in regard to the transformation processes in the MENA region?

How relevant are the goals of the projects in the MENA context?
- Were the projects' goals and objectives in view to promote peaceful coexistence between groups holding different worldviews relevant?
- Were the projects compatible with the Swiss North Africa Program (SNAP) and the strategy of RPC (2013-2016) and how relevant were their contribution to the strategy?
- Are the programme activities in the field of the desk Religion, Politics, Conflicts relevant to the needs of the societies in the MENA region?
- Were the instruments and strategies used appropriately to achieve the outcomes?
- Have appropriate and sustainable (national / local) capacities been built?

How effective is NAWAT's methodology in the NAWA contexts and in general?
- How well does NAWAT's methodology to improve the capacity of conflict transformation in the region?
- Has the NAWAT programme and especially the Cordoba Now Forum been able to achieve their objectives?[2]
- How effective were the projects overall?
- To what extent can generated outcomes be attributed to HSD-supported projects?

How effective was the controlling and the steering of the project by FPIII?
- Was the project's oversight and controlling through HSD by the RPC Desk/FPIII appropriate?
- Was the monitoring and steering of the programme and the projects efficiently organized?

[2] Section Peace Policy III (FP III) is responsible for implementing the special programme for North Africa and the Middle East, as well as for the thematic area Religion, Conflict and Politics.

November 24, 2014

How efficiently did NAWAT perform in Switzerland and abroad?

- Resource efficiency (investment in relation to outcome) of NAWAT's activities taking into account the specific contexts: Were available funds used economically?
- Did the project partners work efficiently and according to the state of the art?
- How adequate are the structures of the Cordoba Now Forum?
- How adequate is the ratio between the Swiss funding of these structures (Salaries, running costs etc.) and the funding of the actual activities?

Other questions:

- Were gender aspects appropriately reflected in the programme?
- How sustainable are the effects of the programme and what are the ongoing positive effects of past projects?
- Did HSD find the appropriate project partners for the implementation of the programme?
- What is the regional breakdown of the programme (Impact, costs)?
- Is the financial source (MENA) appropriate to the programme and would a diversification of funding sources be recommendable?

5.   Methodology and process

The working group will suggest an evaluator to the steering committee after analysis of the offers sent by the evaluator. The offer will include a detailed schedule and budget. Upon selection by the steering committee, the chosen evaluator will receive the projects and programme documents and elaborate the theory of change as well as evaluation methods, in close collaboration with the responsible person of FPIII. This will be summarised in an inception paper that will be sent to the working group and steering committee. Feedback and comments will be taken into account in the draft report.

The evaluation method will be based on the evaluation principles as defined by OECD-DAC and the evaluation standards of the Swiss Evaluation Society (SEVAL Standards). The evaluation includes desk study and a series of interviews in Bern, and Geneva. HSD explicitly welcomes a critical evaluation of all aspects and actors of the project including HSD itself.

6.   Team requirements

The evaluator must be independent, have sound experience and a proven record of knowledge of the thematic issues and the geographic area. Moreover the evaluator should be familiar with conflict transformation in the MENA region. The evaluation team should be fluent in English, in French and if possible in Arabic.

7.   Schedule

Estimated timeframe for activities

Activity	Team Leader
Study of documentation, Inception paper and Interviews	8 days
Drafting of preliminary report	2 days
Debriefing	1/2 day
Drafting of final report	1 day
Presentation of final report	1/2 day
TOTAL	**12 days**

November 24, 2014

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Confederazione Svizzera
Confederaziun svizra

Federal Department of Foreign Affairs FDFA

Directorate of Political Affairs DP
Human Security Division:
Peace, Human Rights, Humanitarian Policy, Migration

Deadlines for evaluation process

Activity	Deadline
Offer by evaluator	December 12, 2014
Selection of evaluator by FDFA	December 19, 2014
Inception paper	January 31, 2015
Draft report and debriefing in Berne	February 16, 2015
Final report	February 23, 2015

8.   Expected deliverables

The evaluator is expected to deliver a technical and financial offer comprising the important elements of the suggested evaluation as well as the evaluation's methodology based on the present ToRs. The offer should also clarify the evaluator's expertise in the evaluation of projects designed to support conflict transformation processes in the MENA region, especially when conflicts are characterized by a mixture of religious and political factors.

The evaluation shall be carried out in accordance with the evaluation standards of the OECD-DAC and the Swiss Evaluation Society (Seval). After selection of the evaluator, the evaluator will be mandated to carry out the evaluation. An inception paper will describe the exact methodology of the evaluation and will show that the evaluator has understood the theory of change. The evaluation report, written in English, is to be delivered after the completion of the evaluation, and should not exceed 20 pages, plus annexes. The evaluation report should include the following:
- Executive Summary
- Evaluation Methodology
- Findings
- Recommendations and lessons learnt
- Identification of future opportunities
- Annexes

9.   Other Information

The documents to be provided to the evaluation team consist of all projects documents (Project Proposals, interim and final reports of selected projects, Final report, RPC Strategy 2013-2016, SNAP, Evaluation MENA, Evaluation CFG, and HSD internal credit proposals). Additionally documents produced by CNF such as weekly updates, articles, action research papers among others will be provided as well.
The contacts at the HSD involved in the evaluation are:
Steering Committee:
- Konstantin Obolensky, Deputy Head of Division
- Roland Steininger, Head of FPIII
- Lukas Schifferle, Chief of Staff Office

Working Group:
- Claudia Marti, North Africa
- Nicolas Masson, North Africa
- Jean-Nicolas Bitter, RPC
- Anaël Jambers, RPC (Coordination)

November 24, 2014

10. Annex: Overview of projects and activities directly linked to NAWAT

Name	Project Start	Project End	Extension until
Cordoba Now	01.11.2010	31.03.2011	31.05.2011
NAWAT[3] Phase I	01.06.2011	31.05.2013	30.06.1013
NAWAT Phase II	01.07.2013	31.12.2014	
Projects and Initiatives covered by the core program			
8 Meetings of the Cordoba Now Forum (NAWAT Phases I & II)			
2 Action-research papers (NAWAT Phase II)			
Egyptian "Tahrir Observatory" initiative	2011		
Workshop in Tripoli and Proposal for a national body in charge of reconciliation in Libya	29.02.2012	29.02.2012	
Contribution to the Conference on military judiciary and transitional justice in Benghazi and Proposal for a national body to regulate the possession of arms in Libya	10.06.2012	11.06.2012	
Contribution to HD Centre Conference with the Elders of Libya (Local Mediation and Future Challenges) in Tripoli	16.10.2012	18.10.2012	
Workshop in Tripoli on the challenges of political transition in Libya + Field mission	04.11.2013	10.11.2013	
The Role of Broadcasting Media in Depolarization during the Constitution Drafting Process in Libya	May 2014	June 2014	Suspended due to local context
Field mission + participation at a conference of the Arab Spring in Tunis	15.12.2011	17.12.2011	
Field mission in Tunisia to explore the possibility to engage with Ansar ash-Sharia	2013		Suspended due to local context
Weekly Updates on the MENA/SAHEL regions	28.06.2013	Present	
Contribution to the Summer School in Egypt with adapted Training material	August 2014		
Assistance to Asbahi to formulate a project to accompany the National Dialogue in Yemen, in partnership with the Berghof Foundation	2013		
Associated Projects and Initiatives			
Training workshop for Cordoba Now Forum I & II	01.04.2011	30.09.2012	
Arab World in Transition (8 Action-research papers)	01.05.2011	31.07.2013	
New Political Cultures Forum I	01.09.2011	15.11.2011	
New Political Cultures Forum II	20.12.2012	31.12.2012	
Promoting constructive political participation in North Africa I	01.09.2012	30.09.2012	
Promoting constructive political participation in North Africa II	20.02.2013	31.03.2013	
Promoting constructive political participation in North Africa III	8.10.2014	10.10.2014	
Process of national consultation on the issue of Salafi detainees in Morocco	15.03.2013	31.07.2013	
Workshop: Early Warning and Rapid Response Mechanisms in Egypt	20.02.2013	15.04.2013	
Peace Promotion Workshop I	10.09.2013	30.09.2013	
Peace Promotion Workshop II	8.12.2014	14.12.2014	
Other activities related to NAWAT scope and contribution to external events related to NAWAT scope			
Training Workshop on conflict transformation in Istanbul for the Saudi Almountada Charity	02.04.2014	06.04.2014	
Training session on "Peace Mediation: from conflict to cooperation", 7th ICP International Summer Academy, Caux	12.08.2014	16.08.2014	
Publication of "The work of goodness: A comprehensive approach to human security"	2011		

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[3] The program was renamed to NAWAT in 2011

November 24, 2014

Publication of "The Quest for Peace in the Islamic Tradition"	2013		
Publication of "The Salafiscape in the wake of the Arab Spring"	2014		
Contribution to the WPA/Uni Basel MAS on conflict transformation	2010	2012	
Contribution to the Heceteppe MA on conflict transformation in Istanbul	2013	Present	
Contribution to the Eighth Nyon Process Meeting, in Tunis	06.06.2012	08.06.2012	
Contribution to the Ninth Nyon Process Meeting, in Cordoba	21.01.2013	23.01.2013	
Contribution to the fourth Maghreb Forum, in Marrakech	16.02.2013	18.02.2013	
Contribution to the Sharq Forum Round Table on "Middle East: The difficult transition", in Geneva	27.03.2014	28.03.2014	
Contribution to the workshop on "World Islamic Scholars Initiative for Peace, Moderation and Common Sense", in Istanbul	17.07.2014	19.07.2014	

November 24, 2014

Appendix II: List of Interviewees

INTERVIEWS NAWAT EVALUATION

FDFA

		Position
RPC	Jean-Nicolas Bitter	Senior Advisor Religion, Politics Conflict, HSD
	Anaël Jambers	Programme Officer Religion, Politics, Conflict, HSD
Desk NA	Claudia Marti	Senior Programme Officer North Africa, Deputy Head Middle-East and North Africa, HSD
	Nicola Masson	Programme Officer North Africa, HSD
Other DHS	Roland Steininger	Head of Section, Peace Policy III, HSD
	Claude Wild	Head of Division, HSD
HSAs	Kim Sitzler	Human Security Advisor, HSD, Egypt
	Corina Berger Megahed	Human Security Advisor, HSD, Libya
	Esther Keimer	Human Security Advisor, HSD, Tunisia
SDC	Rim Hajji	National Programme Officer, Democratic Process and Human Rights/Processus, Swiss Embassy, Morocco
AMON or other PD	Pierre Combernous	Former Swiss Ambassador to Tunisia
	Francis Piccand	
	Wolfgang Amadeus Brühlhart	Assistant State Secretary for Middle East and North Africa Division
	Markus Leitner	Swiss Ambassador to Egypt
VBS	Christian Duc	Head of Anti-Terrorism Coordination, Swiss Federal Department of Defence

CFG

		Position
Staff	Abbas Aroua	Director CFG
	Anne Grobet	Programm Coordinator NAWAT

Program Stakeholders (internal)

		Position
CNF	Hesham Ghafar	
	Abdelali Hamidine	
	Mokhtar Benabdallaoui	
	Mohamed Abdelouahab Rafiqui (Abu Hafz)	
Salafi Case Study	Names provided only to HSD for conflict sensitivity reasons	

Other Stakeholders, External Experts

		Position
CSS	Owen Frazer	Programme Officer CSS
	Simon Mason	Senior Researcher CSS
	Susanne Baumann	Executive Coach

Independent External Evaluation
NAWAT Program