



External Evaluation of the Geneva Centres, Switzerland

FINAL REPORT

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Rights Division

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Executive Summary

Introduction

This evaluation was commissioned by the Swiss Federal Department of Foreign Affairs (FDFA) and looks at the relevance, effectiveness efficiency and sustainability of the Geneva Centre for Security Policy (GCSP), the Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining (GICHD), and the Geneva Centre for Security Sector Governance (DCAF).

The evaluation will inform the drafting of the dispatch of the Federal Council to Parliament for the period from 2024 to 2027 and covers the period 2018 until February 2022.

Methodology

The evaluation is both summative and formative and has taken a mixed methods approach. Data collection was undertaken in a sequenced approach with initial inception interviews and a review of 64 documents informing the development of an online survey. The survey gathered both quantitative and qualitative data and was sent to 1058 individuals including staff and external stakeholders across all 3 organisations with a response rate of 52%. This was followed by 80 key informant interviews, 7 focus group discussions, and field visits to Sri Lanka and North Macedonia (in-person) and Iraq and Lebanon (both virtual).

Relevance

The work of all three Centres is seen as highly relevant by all external stakeholders. They are seen as not just Centres of Excellence but 'the' Centres of Excellence in their fields. GCSP in Executive Education and convening disparate stakeholders in the security arena; DCAF in security sector governance and reform and the GICHD in mine action, explosive risk reduction and management of ammunition. They are trusted experts with good technical knowledge and process skills who value partnership and learning. They are organisations valued for their neutrality and independence who provide a significant contribution to the achievement of Swiss Foreign Policy goals. They all have clear strategies, though these are evolving and the degree to which these are fully documented and 'marketed' to stakeholders varies. They are in general adaptable to the contexts in which they work and to unexpected changes in their operating environment such as the COVID 19 pandemic. Responses do vary but examples like GCSP's conversion to online provision of its Leadership course in 24 hours, GIHD's development of the Information Management System for Mine Action and DCAF's forthcoming lessons learned exercise of its governing board members' engagement in Afghanistan provide illustrations of good practice.

Effectiveness

The Centres have all evolved since their establishment and though they are all knowledge organisations they do slightly different things in their respective areas. All three have results based management systems in place, though all need to continue to develop and refine these in ways which are coherent to their services and objectives. Reporting from these systems suggests that all three are making good progress towards their strategic objectives though outputs are tracked more effectively than contribution to outcomes.

'Customers' or users are almost universally satisfied with their services and all three are viewed by external stakeholders as highlight effective. Internal staff are in general slightly more critical, though all three organisations are seen as good at managing change the two

larger organisations DCAF and GICHD are seen by some as being a little bureaucratic in their internal processes. All three organisations are seen as positively promoting gender and inclusion issues both internally in terms of their own staffing and working practices but also in influencing policies or delivering programmes which focus on these issues. However the sector as a whole still has some way to go to be gender transformative so efforts need to continue. Restrictions on employing staff in Geneva from certain countries can be a barrier on the Centres' ability to have a staff group that is as inclusive as they would like.

In general there are some questions as to the effectiveness of the governance and management structures of all three Centres. The evaluation recommends that all three review elements of these to ensure that the Council of Foundation, Bureau and Management Teams effectively fulfil their roles and that decisions are made efficiently and in an appropriately transparent and consultative manner. Good leadership, a coherent organisational structure and a collaborative and supportive culture are seen by staff as key to effectiveness.

All three centres have strong partnerships which seem relevant to their mandates. They have good connections with the Swiss government, though GCSP could increase its engagement outside of 'International Geneva' and look to capitalise on its network and further expand its reach through more customised courses, increased dialogue and potentially partnerships with like-minded institutions.

Efficiency

The degree to which internal systems are seen as effective varies across the three organisations. It is suggested that DCAF and the GICHD in particular look for opportunities to reduce bureaucracy. There were contrasting views as to the efficiency of IT systems with GICHD staff in particular being quite critical of the service provided and the speed in which new software was made available or updated. Given that IT services are provided to all three centres by GCSP and the other two organisations were very positive about Information systems it is suggested that a review is undertaken to understand the relevant issues.

The centres have a different mix of core and tied funding which links to the services they provide and their ability to generate revenue from sources outside of the Swiss Government. Overall the evaluation feels the mix is reasonable, recognising that core funding allows for greater flexibility and often supports innovation.

Staff in general perform effectively but satisfaction varies. Limited opportunities for career progression are cited by staff as an area they would like the centres to look at. Staff morale is low at the GICHD and it is important that this is addressed and the concerns and perceptions of staff listened to and understood.

Sustainability

None of the centres have a clear definition of sustainability though for the foreseeable future demand for their services is high, recipients are highly satisfied with what they receive and they are able to attract good staff and partner/experts to work with them.

All centres have shown an ability to generate external funding and should continue to do so, though it is important to recognise that part of their key value is their Swiss identity and so they need to ensure that this isn't compromised.

Housed in the impressive Maison de la Paix the three centres are seen as key components of 'international Geneva' but are different organisations who provide complementary but different services. Any further integration should be based on either a clear cost benefit analysis, or because the centres themselves can identify clear advantages in undertaking joint activities. The evaluation does suggest that there are regular meetings between the

Directors and senior management to ensure they are all aware of what the others are doing but these and to look for opportunities but that these should be informal, rather than mandated.

Summary of Key Recommendations

DCAF

1. Decide the extent to which DCAF needs to better understand, if not engage with, selected armed groups or hybrid security and justice providers.
2. Enable citizens to have a say in how security is provided to them in countries of intervention and build on DCAF's current research on how to apply people-centred approaches to SSR.
3. Engage more often and at more (complementary) levels with Swiss government stakeholders.
4. Redefine the focus and name of ISSAT's current "governing board" to avoid confusion and clarify its function.
5. Map out and delegate management related tasks that the Head of Resources Department has time and capabilities to oversee.
6. Seek ways to reduce the "bureaucracy" to its bare minimum. The organisation needs to retain agility to remain a valued partner in the field.
7. Bring coherence to DCAF's branding.
8. Conduct a human centred evaluation of DCAF's work at country level. As DCAF rolls out its new RBM framework, it would be useful to capture and analyse the perspectives of civilians in countries of intervention.
9. Display a deliberate intent to assess collaboration potential with others in the international Geneva ecosystem.

All Centres

1. To collectively review the provision of IT services and support provided by GCSP and how effectively the arrangement is working across all three centres and how it might be optimised.

Geneva Centre for Security Sector Governance (DCAF)

Findings

Relevance

Data gathered as part of this evaluation process suggests that DCAF is a highly regarded and appreciated actor on all matters of SSG/R, one that external stakeholders view as uniquely relevant and legitimate in its field.

To what degree does DCAF have a clear strategy/vision, which corresponds to its statutory mandate, donor expectations and operational environment?

Over 80% of the survey respondents deem that DCAF has a clear to very clear strategy/vision (responses in the range of 4-6). Satisfaction rates are even higher (over 90% survey respondents in the 4-6 range) on matters of relevance to DCAF mandate and matters of relevance to forthcoming SSG/R trends (over 90% survey respondents in the 4-6 range).

Figure 24: Survey responses on clarity of DCAF strategy/vision

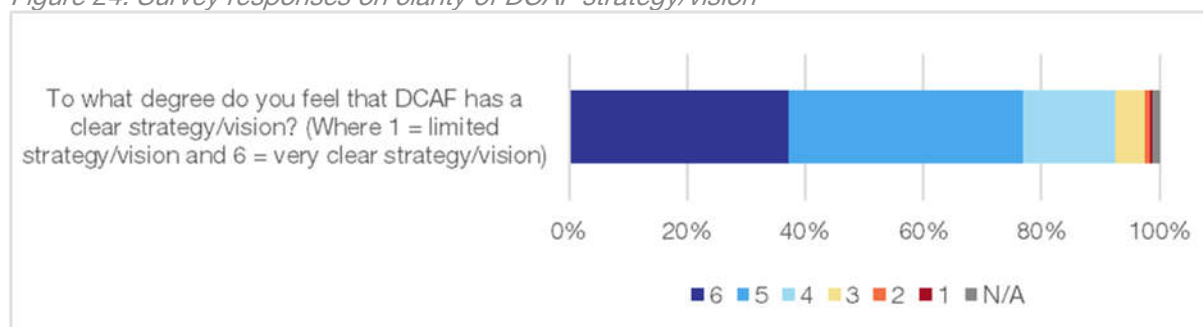
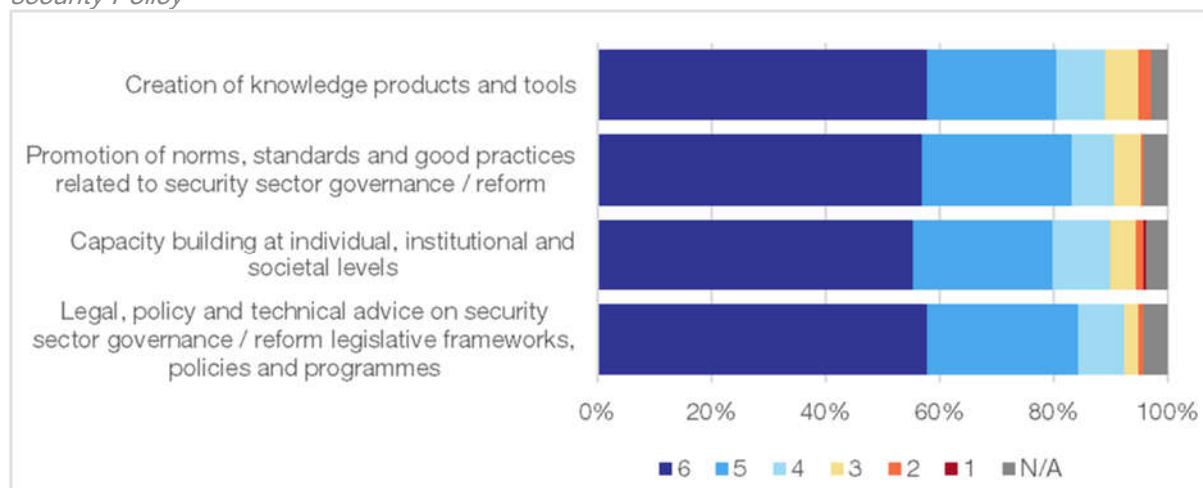


Figure 25: Survey responses on relevance of services DCAF provides to current and future trends in security Policy



(1 = limited relevance and 6 = highly relevant)

The KIIs and FGDs realised as part of the evaluation process provide further evidence that DCAF personnel share a clear sense of the Organisation's unique strategy and vision, in line with its mandate. In both Geneva and in the field, they deem the organisation's unique value builds on i) complementary levels of stakeholder engagement, ii) complementary levels of engagement on substantive matters, iii) complementary forms of engagement through different mechanisms.

- Engaging with all relevant SSG/R stakeholders in a complementary manner:

DCAF's work is best understood as a multilevel stakeholder engagement process on matters of SSG/R. It combines interventions with a broad range of i) national stakeholders at country level, including but not limited to parliament, oversight bodies, civil society (to some extent, see below page 45), media actors, armed actors, intelligence and security personnel, private sector and private security companies, thinktanks and research institutes. DCAF routinely engages with all these actors and has legitimacy in doing so, unlike other SSG/R players who specialise in engaging with civil society or governance actors, but do not possess the broad coverage that DCAF has.

Similarly, at regional and international stakeholders, DCAF has access to ii) major policymakers in key donor capitals and multilateral organisations through its governance structure, as well as iii) strong engagement with multilateral and regional organisations such as the OSCE, the African Union, the EU or the UN.

No other SSG/R organisation has such a broad a complementary scope of engagement and the convening power that comes with it.

- Engaging on all essential SSG/R substantive matters:

DCAF possesses a robust and well-rounded portfolio of expertise on matters of SSG/R, that spans across a broad spectrum of SSG/R thematic areas: may it be working on improving oversight and accountability in the extractive industry, parliamentary oversight, police reform, intelligence reform, Ombuds institutions. This includes a very positively perceived track record working on mainstreaming gender in SSG/R.

- Engaging through complementary funding, operational and policy instruments:

In practice, the organisation engages through a range of bilateral and multi-donor funding instruments. DCAF has pooled funding instruments to work on matters of accountability in the extractive sector in Nigeria, Ghana, Mozambique, Peru, Myanmar and DRC², as well as a dedicated Trust Fund for North Africa. Further, the organisation has a highly praised dedicated standby capacity to provide donors and multilateral actors with policy and operational support on matters of SSG/R (International Security Sector Advisory Team, ISSAT). Other forms of engagement may involve policy partnership and convening power on matters of accountability for private security companies (leading to the creation of a stand-alone International Code of Conduct Association for Private Security Service Providers, ICoCA) and provision of policy and research services to multilateral organisations, in particular to the UN Security Sector Reform Unit (SSRU) and the OSCE.

DCAF's policy work and applied research both build on the organisation's practice with a view to capture emerging best practice and share with other actors, as well as implement applied research initiatives to constantly improve the organisation's practice.

To what degree is DCAF's strategy in line with Swiss Foreign Policy objectives?

Both internal and external interviewees highlight the importance of the Swiss government continuous support to DCAF over the past twenty years as a key factor in the organisation's

² Security and Human Rights Funding Mechanism

legitimacy and unique value-add in the field. Respondents deem that the Swiss unfaltering support to DCAF has enabled the organisation to:

- Focus on, and invest in, relationships and partnerships in the long-term.

DCAF can afford to focus on substance and relationships. Several interlocutors have spoken to the quality of DCAF's engagement in the Balkans, where a significant number of interlocutors have engaged with the organisation over the years, have moved to different parts of the security sector, and give DCAF unparalleled access across the region.

Similarly, as the COVID pandemic rolled out in 2020-21, DCAF's investment in relationships allowed the organisation to continue and deepen engagement in places where trusted partnerships were already in place, despite all prevailing restrictions. DCAF's investment in relationships has been a key factor in its ability to influence change on matters of SSG/R over the years.

Field-based partners and national DCAF personnel interviewed in this evaluation all speak to the organisation's localisation lens. In comparison to other SSG/R stakeholders, they deem DCAF is very sensitive to matters of national ownership, invests more time and resources in understanding a given problem set as a prelude to intervention, and builds processes and suggestions around needs expressed by the partners.

"There is no judgment. They (DCAF) don't impose what they want to do."

Kll in the field

Continuous Swiss support and core funding has noticeably allowed the organisation to focus on relevance and effectiveness, over matters of visibility. External interviewees repeatedly commented on how DCAF always manages to be present and feed advice, expertise and elements of language into relevant SSG/R discussions at regional and policy level (including but not limited to the EU and African Regional Organisations), whether or not it gets credit for it.

- Become an organisation that is both international in its reach and Swiss in its values.

Compared to other SSG/R actors, DCAF's "Swissness" is perceived as a key element of success. DCAF benefits from strong perceptions of impartiality and trust derived from technical excellence working in a political space, without being a political entity itself. DCAF is not perceived as a vested organisation that serves political interests, unlike other bilateral or multilateral stakeholders. This is noticeably the case for countries such as Mali, Burkina Faso and Iraq, where DCAF enjoys a unique perception of impartiality in the midst of regional and global players who seek to shape the SSR according to their own strategic interests and preferences.

This allows DCAF to remain engaged in most contexts, including when others need to pull out or abide by restrictions decided upon by other states. The organisation is very much perceived as embodying the principles of the rule of law, multilateralism and neutrality highlighted in the 2020-23 Swiss foreign policy strategy.

To what degree is DCAF's strategy in line with the policy aims of other key identified funders?

DCAF's strategy, to the extent that it places a strong focus on governance reforms as a key condition to transforming a given country's security sector, is very much in line with the policy aims of its western donors. This niche explains the extent to which the organisation has been able to successfully diversify its funding sources³ without venturing out of its original niche of SSG/R. DCAF's other key identified funders include Canada, the European Union, Germany,

³ As of 2021, Switzerland's core contribution amounts to about half of DCAF total funding.

the Netherlands and Norway (a multiyear strategic partnership and funding agreement), Sweden (core funding contribution), and the United Kingdom.

To what degree is there evidence that DCAF has been able to adapt its strategy to key changes in its operating environment?

The organisation is now two years + into its new strategy. The evaluation process suggests that a lot of work went into strategy development, deemed as a key process to translate policy into a reform focused agenda, on both policy and programmatic fronts.

The constant adaptation and search for improvement has to a large extent become part of the organisation's DNA,⁴ and features prominently in most if not all interviews realised as part of the evaluation process. The Senior Management Team is credited for continuously encouraging staff to keep anticipating new trends and ensuring the organisation remains relevant in its thematic work and approach. Internal and external respondents alike state that DCAF has a much stronger focus on learning than most other organisations they know.

By now DCAF is credited with robust policy research that allows the organisation to i) keep abreast of new trends and developments, ii) draw evidence from the field and feed it back to the community of practice, as well as iii) feed evidence back into programme design. A recent example is the completion of a series of seven case studies on armed forces and conflict prevention in the Sahel region, which will be shared with DCAF's donors and partners, and lend itself to a series of engagements with the broader SSG/R community of practice, including in the field.

To ensure its continued relevance despite operating in a fluid environment, the organisation has embarked into a significant change process over the past five to six years, with a view to build on its policy successes and become an organisation that is more field-focused and spend more resources directly engaging with key constituents in countries where SSG/R is needed. This transition may have laid bare some weaknesses in internal processes, which the organisation sought to address through a robust level of internal reforms (see Efficiency section below).

Feedback gathered through the evaluation process suggests that DCAF sometimes is slow to respond to changes in its operating environment, to the extent that decision-making authority seldomly lays in the field. Several external respondents have pointed out that key decisions and orientations most often need to be referred back to Geneva HQ, which may slow things down and sometimes hinder DCAF's ability to be as agile as required, in otherwise fluid environments.

To what degree is DCAF viewed as a 'Centre of Excellence' with a clear niche/value add compared to other organisations working in its operating environment?

The external stakeholders interviewed as part of the evaluation process suggest that DCAF not only is a, but the "Centre of Excellence" on matters of SSG/R.

Their consistent feedback is that DCAF stands out as an organisation with a unique breadth and width of engagement on matters of SSG/R. They view DCAF as a unique actor which enjoys high levels of legitimacy in the field, as well as from relevant policy actors at national and multilateral level. ISSAT governing board members routinely turn to the organisation to draft written policy and operational guidance for their own personnel. This includes the UN, which has benefited from DCAF's support in the drafting of the first-ever Secretary General's

⁴ A majority of interviewees commented on past examples of the organisation's intrinsic adaptability culture and how it led to major initiatives such as ISSAT (building on consultations with the OECD), the Montreux Document and subsequent ICoCA, the cybersecurity portfolio and so on.

Report on SSR (2019), or the World Bank which has mandated DCAF to lead the development of its first ever policy guidance on “SSR and prevention of violent conflict.”

External interviewees credit the organisation with an ability to deliver at consistently high-quality levels on a wide range of complementary aspects of the work, may it be training, policy guidance, operational technical assistance, as well as when it comes to its convening power. Further, interviewees could not identify any other SSG/R organisation that enjoys such high collective access to multilateral stakeholders through their operational, research work and governance structure. This gives DCAF a significant added value in terms of impact, and enables the organisation to shape policy at multilateral and key country policy level, unlike most organisations active in SSG/R.

Respondents attribute DCAF’s uniqueness as its ability to deliver the “full value chain of SSR,” be relevant in all SSG/R processes, including in places where the organisation has no prior track record.

Donors and external partners interviewed as part of this evaluation process quite simply view DCAF as the only actor able to approach SSG/R in a holistic manner.

Please outline how you think DCAF adds most value given its mandate. Please outline how this compares with other organisations who work in a similar area. Please explain and name comparator organisations if you can.

Other organisations working on matters of SSG/R do not appear to cover as wide a spectrum of SSG/R related activities as DCAF’s.

Some are much more specialised in specific parts of the work. This includes organisations with a narrower technical and geographic focus (e.g., Coginta’s focus on police reform and community policing in four countries), as well as organisations that mostly specialise in engaging with civil society but not with other relevant groups (e.g., Saferworld, Interpeace, International Alert focus on broader matters of civil society engagement and peacebuilding, which may include SSG/R related components in some countries).

Other SSG/R organisations may include politically mandated bodies with a single country (e.g., dedicated NATO and EU missions in Iraq, MINUSMA) or regional focus (e.g., EUCAP Sahel or the OSCE). Others are bilateral and multilateral organisations that have a global presence, and may have significant SSG/R portfolios at country level (e.g., UNDP and GIZ). While these organisations/missions usually have a strong SSG/R focus, they may not necessarily be SSG/R specialised agencies themselves.

The Folke Bernadotte Academy (FBA) is another significant SSG/R player, with an exclusive focus on matters of peace and security. It is, however, a Swedish government agency, and does not enjoy the independence that DCAF has. Further, SSR is one of seven practice areas for the FBA, as opposed to an exclusive focus.

DCAF is known to all these organisations, and quite often works in partnership with them in the field or a policy level. DCAF and FBA have hence partnered to provide EU actors with technical SSG/R standing capacity in partner countries (the “EU SSG facility”), along with Expertise France. Both FBA and the United Nations Office of Rule of Law and Security Institutions (OROLSI) view DCAF as the most expert institution on SSR matters.

With this in mind, DCAF adds most value in so far as it is uniquely specialised in the full spectrum of SSG/R⁵, and can disseminate knowledge more effectively than much larger organisations that work on SSG/R matters:

⁵ 19% of the survey respondents indicate that DCAF’s technical expertise is the organisation’s main value add. See chart below.

- The organisation has a strong focus on knowledge and continuously produces and shares high-quality analysis, practitioner tools (e.g., the Gender and Security Toolkit).

Survey respondents highlighted research and knowledge production as two of the six main areas that DCAF derives most of its value from.⁶

- The organisation is small yet has unparalleled collective access to bilateral and multilateral SSG/R policymakers.

The organisation’s governance structure allows DCAF to shape donors’ and key multilateral organisations’ policies on SSG/R matters.

- Further, DCAF is deemed neutral.

Compared to the range of UK and US funded entities usually involved in mostly train and equip programmes, DCAF offers a principled rights-based approach that does not come with conditionality, is deemed less transactional and more mindful of local contexts. On this last point, survey respondents quoted “support for local ownership” and “neutrality/impartiality” as two of the six main ways in which DCAF adds value to its work.

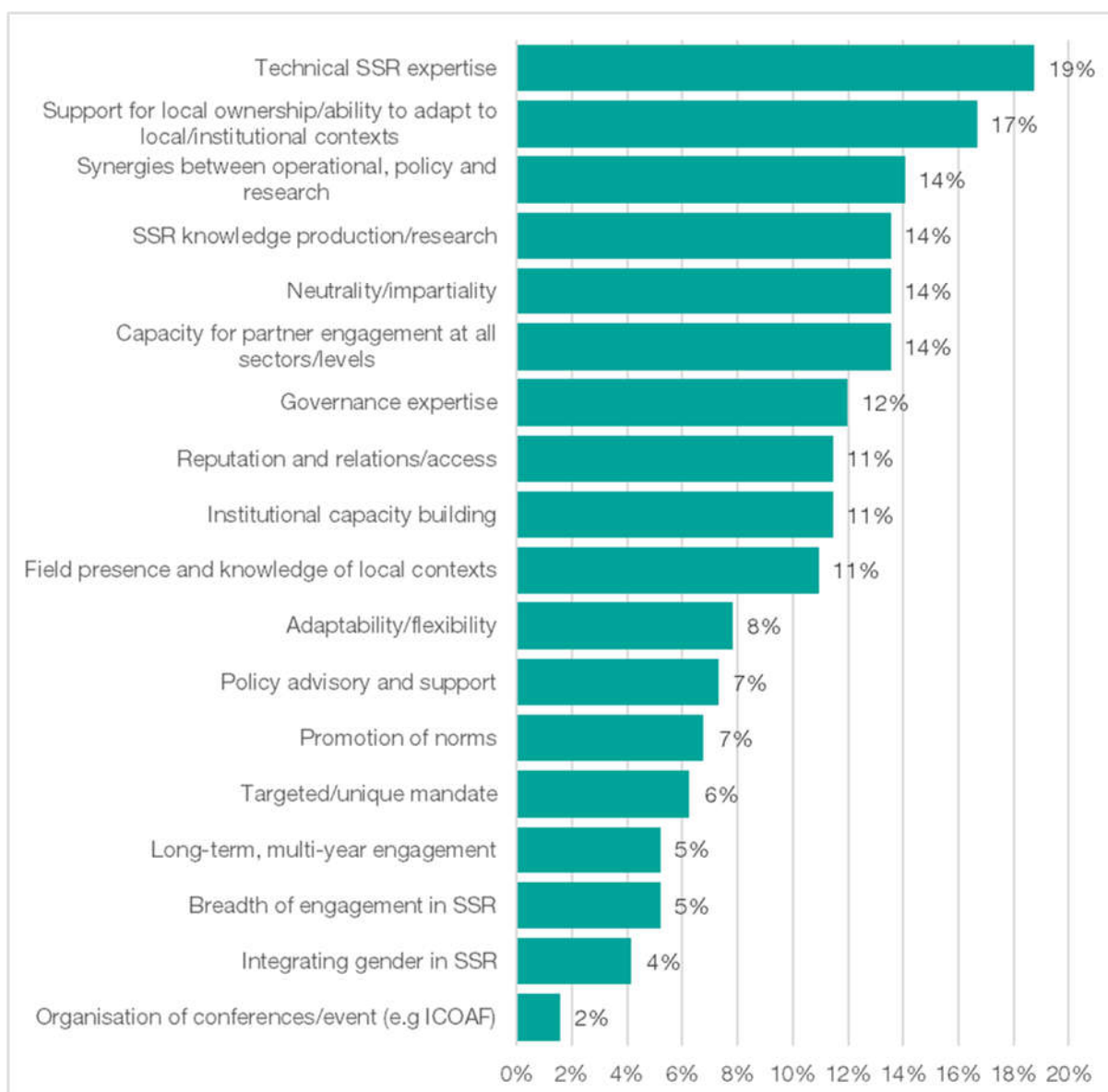
“Their (DCAF) position is never political, but normative in a politically charged environment.

That’s an important distinction, and it gives them credibility with national authorities.”

KII in the field

⁶ 14% of respondents quoted “synergies between operational, policy and research” and 14% quoted “SSR knowledge production/research”. See the chart below for more details.

Figure 26: Survey views on how DCAF adds most value given its mandate



To what degree does DCAF analyse current trends and anticipate future developments including changes in donor expectations or objectives?

One of DCAF's specificities comes from its close relationship with members of its governing board, whom are routinely referred to as donors, partners or beneficiaries. They expect the organisation to provide them with timely and bespoke analysis, anticipating emerging developments as well as helping them understand the specifics of a given country situation as and when changes take place.

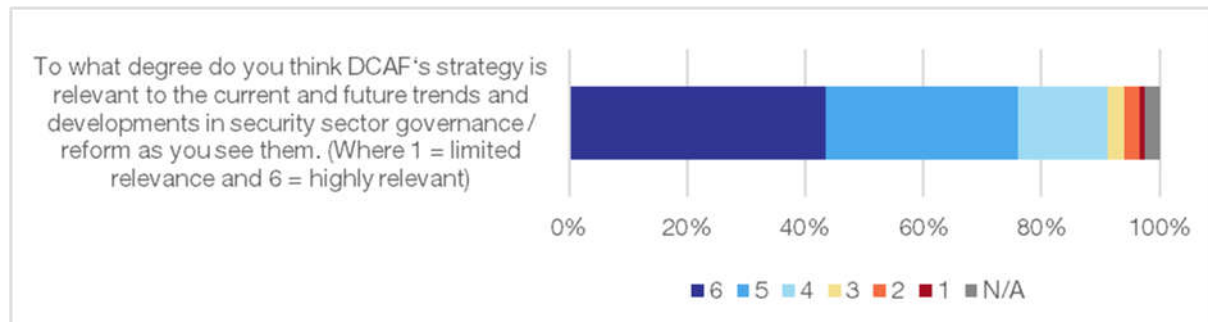
External stakeholders credit DCAF with being very responsive in producing short-term risk analysis and responding to ad hoc requests for information. The credit products for being consistently “strong, fast and well informed.”

External KII respondents specifically praised DCAF for being consistently “ahead of the curve”. ISSAT was regularly credited for i) being at the forefront of emerging security trends and ii) the quality of its analytical outputs, including its thematic briefings and country mappings.

“I cannot think of anything they do which is not relevant, it’s often relevant three months later (...) They have great foresight, it’s something I have realised time and time again.”

KII, external respondent

Figure 27: Survey responses to the relevance of DCAF strategy to future trends



Survey feedback captured in the diagram above indicates that over 90% of respondents deem DCAF is doing very well in anticipating current and future trends, and ensuring it remains relevant in doing so.

How does DCAF analyse current trends and anticipate future trends and developments in their respective areas of activities?

DCAF remains an organisation with a strong focus on learning. DCAF interviewees report that staff are constantly encouraged to share observations and new ideas. As the organisation engages with a broad range of subject matters (e.g., police reform, intelligence oversight, governance of private security companies, gender and security, accountability in the extractive industry) in a range of countries, and in partnership with local, national, regional and international stakeholders, DCAF is credited for continuously having its “fingers on the (SSG/R) pulse.”

In addition to the organisational culture, country-specific efforts exist to monitor the context and its risks, for instance in Mali. There was however no indication that a continuous analysis of emerging trends and developments systematically feeds into organisational systems at this stage, to the exception of ISSAT. This may change in 2022-23 as the recently appointed⁷ Senior Advisor for Monitoring, Evaluation, Accountability & Learning (MEAL) makes plans for more structures in-house learning (See the effectiveness section below).

Further, the availability of core funding⁸ enables DCAF to retain some agility, anticipate new developments and create awareness of emerging issues through dedicated baseline research and data. This flexibility is an important variable in allowing the organisation to anticipate trends and developments in the field of SSG/R.

DCAF and its donors have agreed to earmark dedicated funding for analysis and learning.

⁷ The incumbent joined DCAF less than a year ago, in March 2021.

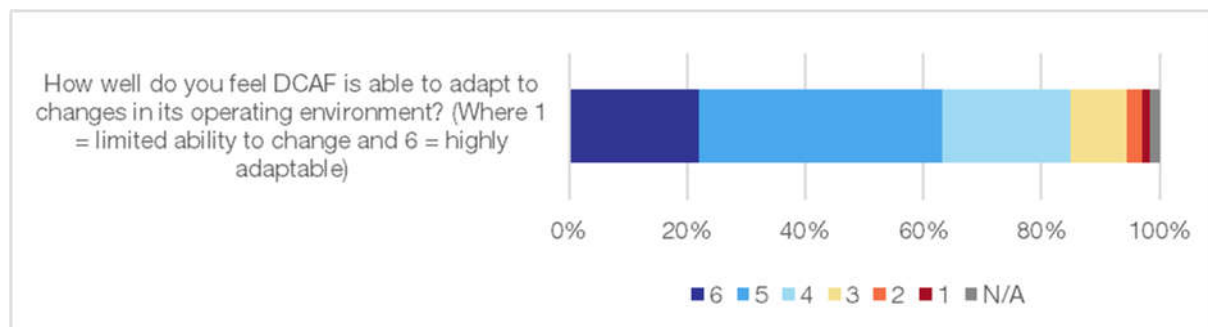
⁸ The majority of DCAF core funding comes from Switzerland and, to a lesser extent, Sweden.

To what degree has DCAF been able to adapt to unexpected changes/new developments in its environment?

DCAF is now operating in an environment where i) the COVID pandemic has translated into a closing down of democratic space in a lot of societies, ii) regional and global rivalries are becoming stronger, and iii) a series of coups in west Africa signals a push away from democratic governance in DCAF's largest area of operation (Sub-Saharan Africa). These combined trends are a challenge to DCAF's model of democratic governance as a key to sustainable SSR.

Survey findings in the table below suggest that DCAF is fast to adapt in the face of unexpected changes. The finding below is mostly based on self-perception by DCAF personnel, staff and consultants alike (150 out of 237 respondents).

Figure 28: Survey responses on the ability of DCAF to adapt to unexpected changes



Most KII respondents rightfully identify adaptation to the new environment as a collective challenge, not just for DCAF. Examples came up through selected interviews of DCAF's adaptive work in selected countries. In one west African country, work with the parliamentary defence commission came to an end in the aftermath of a coup, but work with the Office of the Inspector General of the armed forces kept going (albeit with limited publicity), and a new stream of work started with the national Human Rights Commission. DCAF has made decisions to increase its engagement with media and civil society actors in given environments, in adaptation to recent events.

Similarly, when it comes to Afghanistan, DCAF is about to launch a lessons learned exercise on behalf of ISSAT governing board members to review their engagement in Afghanistan. comparative review of lessons learning processes among its board members.

Are there any additional areas in which you feel DCAF should be working or any additional services/activities that DCAF should be involved in?

Most interviewees deem that DCAF is rightfully focusing on a core mandate of SSG/R, and should seek to consolidate its current portfolio around its present focus. This perspective is shared by internal and external interviewees alike.

This being said, the evaluation team would like to flag three aspects of DCAF's work that may warrant further attention.

- SSR, politics and hybrid Security & Justice providers

DCAF operates in countries of protracted governance crisis and “institutionalised insecurity.” These environments abound with non-state and/or hybrid security and justice providers such as Iraq’s Popular Mobilization Forces (PMF), Burkina Faso’s Volunteers or the Defence of the Homeland (VDP), Libya’s armed groups, Myanmar’s ethnic armed groups or hybrid actors in Ukraine.

Several interviews raise the question of whether DCAF should seek to understand these groups sufficiently, *before* possibly formulating policy as to how to engage hybrid security actors in Security Sector Reform processes.

“DCAF still is very much in a programme logic. But you cannot do SSR without politics. They have yet to use their knowledge and access to be a more political player and express opinions.

They’re credible, they’re like the International Crisis Group for SSR.”

External KII feedback

Should DCAF decide or be called upon to help selected donors and partners understand options to work in hybrid environments, then the organisation needs to develop its own internal capacities to engage and better understand some of these security and justice actors in the first place.

- Human-centred SSR and the need of systematic engagement with civil society constituencies across the board

All interviewees share the view that SSR requires thorough engagement with selected civil society constituents to hold state institutions and security services to account and anchor transformative processes in a rights-based approach. This analysis is shared by most DCAF senior interviewees but has yet to translate into systematic adaptation in countries of intervention, to the noticeable exception of DCAF’s Security and Human Rights Implementation Mechanism (SHRIM). In selected countries, DCAF has refocused on engaging with selected civil society constituents but changes remain recent. In others, the organisation has yet to fully grasp the potential of broadening its civil society engagement despite initial plans to do so (in Northern Macedonia for instance), or the existence of a range of vibrant and highly mobilised and vocal civil society constituents (as in Lebanon).

- DCAF’s work on intelligence reform is niche

Some of the work DCAF does is unique to the organisation. Typically, it is to the evaluation team’s knowledge the only organisation that works on matters of intelligence reforms and does so without serving another nation’s security interests.

To what degree does DCAF effectively communicate its role and added value to key stakeholders?

To a large extent, DCAF is a prisoner of its own success. The organisation has become a centre of excellence and raised really high expectations, which it now continuously ought to manage (mostly from core donors), in the face of i) competing priorities, ii) a growing programmatic portfolio, iii) a much larger group of stakeholders.

Most external KII respondents have signalled an interest in more regular and proactive communications outlining DCAF’s adaptation efforts in the context of a given country or geopolitical trend. These could take the form of concise notes or briefings,⁹ feeding into policy decisions in relevant capitals and regional organisations.

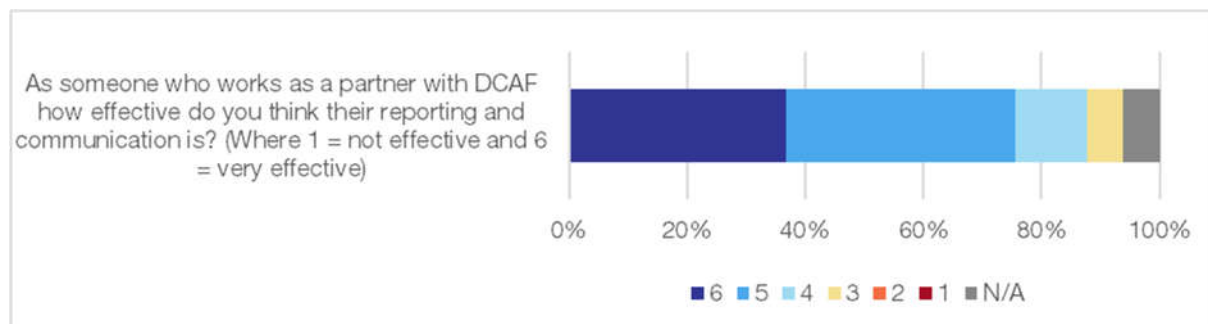
⁹ Dedicated interviewees mentioned the existence of ad hoc requests for information, as well as regular donor briefing notes for the SHRIM initiative.

In regard to specifically communicating its added value and adaptation to its Swiss constituents, there may be room for adjustments in communicating with FDFA and DDPS across the board. These groups include interlocutors whose expectations and objectives, while broadly in alignment, may differ on specifics. In the case of DCAF, its core funding is managed by SDC.¹⁰ This set up has resulted in a situation where expectations placed upon DCAF may be more development-oriented (e.g., in regard to RBM frameworks and demonstrating impact) than they are for the other two centres. It is to the interest of all parties that staff at working and policy level communicate more regularly to better understand one another’s position, clarify assumptions and approaches, and avoid cases of assumed knowledge.

Lastly, the evaluation team was not able to assess whether DCAF is pursuing dedicated outreach efforts to disseminate knowledge products, beyond the immediate scope of a given project. This can best be assessed from 2022 onwards, as i) pandemic related restrictions are lifted and knowledge sharing efforts can go unabated, and ii) DCAF can assess the performance of its external knowledge sharing efforts through dedicated outcome indicators.¹¹

While there may be room for slight improvements on the above, the diagram below shows that external DCAF partners¹² mostly view the organisation’s communication and reporting in very positive terms.

Figure 29: Survey responses from partners on effectiveness of DCAF reporting and communication



Effectiveness

To what degree is DCAF on track to achieve its strategic goals/objectives?

As part of a wider process to improve the quality and accountability of its work, DCAF has made conscious and systematic efforts to introduce Results-Based Management (RBM) approaches across its entire portfolio. Efforts were significant and entailed the production of an organisational strategy, regional iterations, a revised RBM framework inclusive of four core objectives broken down into sub-objectives and a set of indicators, as well as annual performance reports since 2016.

DCAF has broadly achieved its objectives in relation to the organisation’s two intermediate outcomes: i) directly supporting national actors to effectively implement and support inclusive and participatory SSG/R, as well as ii) enabling international actors to provide effective and coherent support to nationally led SSG/R processes. The organisation has reported against these objectives in dedicated annual performance reports. The absence of dedicated

¹⁰ PHRD manages GCSP’s and GICHD’s core contributions.

¹¹ As of February 2022, DCAF is finalising a registry of outcome level performance indicators. More information can be found under the effectiveness section of this report.

¹² The said diagram captures feedback from 51 respondents who self-identified as “partners”.

baselines has been identified as an area of improvement for future reporting, despite the inherent difficulty of doing in light of the nature of the activity.

The organisation correctly assessed that its RBM approach required further adjustments. A dedicated senior Monitoring Evaluation Accountability and Learning (MEAL) Adviser was hired in March 2021, to enable the organisation to shift its focus to an outcome rather than output level. This involves a four-pronged process of i) Workplans at the Division level to enhance the quality of monitoring, ii) More systematically using monitoring exercises for management purposes, so that future performance reports allow for timely analysis and decision-making, iii) Amending existing templates and processes to introduce outcome statements and indicators that allow for different project realities, and lend themselves to organisational reporting at outcome level, iv) A shifting focus from attribution to contribution, to the extent possible.

As of February 2022, DCAF has completed a thorough one-year consultative process, culminating in the design of a comprehensive RBM framework for the organisation as a whole.¹³ This includes:

- Three Strategic Objectives and seven sub-objectives to capture the programmatic work that DCAF does, backed up by
- Eighteen concrete outcome statements, and
- A registry of corporate indicators at outcome level. At least two indicators have been defined for each corporate outcome. Attention has been paid to the formulation of each indicator, to ensure they can be used across most thematic areas, projects and settings.

All projects can now choose defined corporate outcomes they contribute to, and pick a set of outcome indicators from the registry, allowing DCAF to now measure influence. This is a significant accomplishment and departure from the mostly output level indicators that were listed in DCAF's initial 2020-24 strategy document.

This system will now be piloted in 2022, with a view to roll out outcome-focused monitoring and reporting for the organisation as a whole. Doing so will allow DCAF to i) test its planning assumptions and finetune its list of outcome indicators, including in relation to qualifying attribution of its policy work.¹⁴ Further, the organisation will ii) bring consistency across all Divisions and ensure that all existing tools, templates and processes follow this outcome level focus.

In terms of annual reporting, DCAF is fine tuning its approach and will, for 2021, produce a single external facing annual performance report, in lieu of previously two annual reports.¹⁵ The 2021 report will feature a stronger focus on results but may not yet feature outcome indicators as these have yet to be tested. This will change for 2022.

This organisational effort is complemented by dedicated initiatives at division and project level. This includes a dedicated ISSAT impact study to be renewed every year, so as to assess the extent to which the behaviour of dedicated Governing Board Members may change as a result of the work DCAF is doing.

¹³ The proposed RBM framework is undergoing final validation at SMT level. In addition to three programmatic SOs, a fourth one focuses on "Tailoring the organization to better deliver its mandate," and comes with its own outcome statements and indicators. Dedicated indicator sheets serve to outline a definition and clarify the purpose, means of verification and data collection tools in relation to each proposed indicator.

¹⁴ In parallel, DCAF is drafting a dedicated research and policy strategy, expected to be finalised by June 2022. The said document will guide DCAF's work on Gender and Security, Business and Security, as well as the production of practitioners' tools and policy material.

¹⁵ In 2019 and 2020, an external consultant helped DCAF produce an annual performance report, in addition to the organisation's annual activity report. This has changed with the recruitment of a dedicated Senior MEAL adviser who is streamlining processes for the whole organisation.

To what degree has DCAF shown it has the capability to manage change?

As mentioned earlier on in regard to DCAF's adaptability to a fast-evolving environment, the organisation has continuously displayed the ability to manage change. This applies to both its external as well as internal environment, in terms of change processes (see the efficiency section below).

When doubt has been expressed by individual respondents, it was more a reflection of "not knowing" how DCAF was going *about* managing change, as opposed to suggesting that DCAF was not changing the way it operates.

To what extent and in what ways does DCAF promote gender and inclusion?

All interviewees share the perspective that gender equality is a core principle of DCAF's work, one that is operationalised across the board and enjoys dedicated in-house technical expertise through DCAF's 12-strong Gender and Security team. The said team mostly focuses on i) managing a dedicated gender transformative programmatic portfolio, ii) supporting other DCAF projects (including but not limited to operational work, deliverables and policy initiatives) to mainstream gender in their work, as well as iii) producing gender-specific practitioner guidance material.

How does DCAF work to mainstream gender and inclusion in their work?

The gender workstream is informed by the organisation's own practice and informs the practice of others through the dissemination of knowledge products. External respondents consistently praised the high quality of DCAF's gender operational and policy work.

- Producing practitioner guidance on Gender and SSR

The most comprehensive series of gender and SSR guidance material issued by DCAF is the Gender and SSR Toolkit, a body of guidance material developed in partnership with OSCE ODIHR and UN Women. The said toolkit includes a series of nine modules that not only explain why a gender perspective is essential to SSG/R but also present the readers with a vast comparative perspective of options to address gender biases in the Security & Justice sector. In addition to providing specific examples from national SSR processes, the toolkit provides practical and dedicated guidance for the defence, police, justice, intelligence and border management sectors.

Similarly, DCAF has developed a methodology and data collections tools to assess the extent to which women meaningfully participate to UN Peace operations. The Measuring Opportunities for Women in Peace Operations (MOWIP) Methodology benefited from initial Canadian support for DCAF to carry out a mapping on the topic, funded through the Elsie Initiative in 2019.¹⁶ In the first two months of 2022, DCAF has used the MOWIP assessments to release a series of policy briefs related to "opportunities for women in peacekeeping."

As a result of this combined policy/operational work, DCAF's gender expertise enjoys very high levels of legitimacy and brand recognition among external stakeholders interviewed as part of the evaluation process.

- Implementing gender and SSR initiatives in the field

DCAF has a range of operational initiatives to promote gender and inclusion in the field, implemented either directly by the Gender team, or in support of dedicated operations teams

¹⁶ In 2017, Canada launched the Elsie Initiative for Women in Peace Operations, to try and move from a gender mainstreaming to a transformation gender approach in regard to women's participation in UN Peace operations.

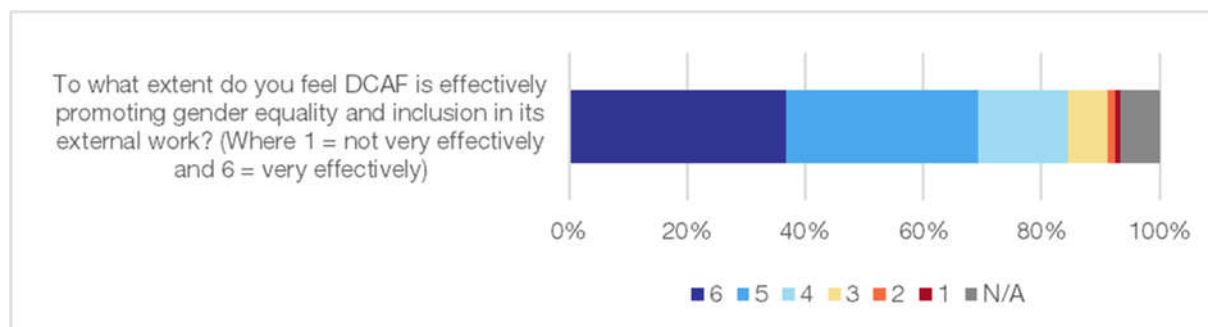
in the field. The most recent initiatives include i) a gender self-assessment of the Ukrainian police, ii) the provision of gender expertise at project design stage for Gambia programming, iii) a comparative initiative focusing on gender, climate change and SSR in Colombia¹⁷, Yemen and Mali.

DCAF’s gender interventions usually seek to enable national partners to understand and implement practical approaches to addressing gender disparity and gender biases in relevant Security & Justice institutions. Doing so may require a combination of interventions to raise awareness and frame the issue in the first place. In the case of DCAF’s recent support to the gendarmerie in Mali, it features i) basic gender awareness training, inclusive of roleplays, ii) re-assessing policies inclusive of quotas which are not being implemented, iii) conducting gender assessments jointly with the institution.

DCAF’s approach to joint data collection together with the institution often serves as a foundational piece for national partners to understand the importance of data and processes, as well as own the issue which they are gathering data on.

DCAF implements a range of gender related initiatives at any given time. In February 2022, as the evaluation takes place, DCAF is dispatching a gender expert to Ethiopia to help the country’s federal police academy conduct a gender assessment. Two years ago, DCAF completed a yearlong gender assessment of the Gambia’s security services (police, armed forces, navy, drug enforcement agency, prison service, fire service and ministry of justice), as a prelude to ensuring the country’s defence act becomes gender mainstreamed.

Figure 30: Survey responses on how effectively does DCAF promote gender quality and inclusion in their work?



To what extent do the RBM frameworks integrate a focus on gender and inclusion, and how is monitoring data used for effective course correction?

As stated above, a new RBM framework was developed in 2021 and is being rolled out across DCAF in 2022. This includes a systematic focus on gender across the board, in the form of i) gender specific outcomes and their set of indicators, as well as ii) dedicated gender specific indicators for each outcome that is not gender specific. The system has been socialised to all relevant DCAF personnel to reflect broad buy-in ahead of its implementation in 2022.

- Providing in-house expertise and support

In addition to policy and operational work, DCAF’s Gender and security team also is in the process of developing in-house guidance and toolkits for project design. This effort seeks to enable colleagues to develop a minimal level of practical understand and expertise on how to mainstream gender in their work, at design, implementation and reporting phase. Training DCAF colleagues on existing tools and how to use and apply them is expected to contribute to enhancing the quality of DCAF’s work across the board.

¹⁷ Building on a gender self-assessment of the national police of Colombia, which DCAF facilitated in 2021.

To what degree is DCAF able to provide effective services in difficult environments (e.g., fragile states)?

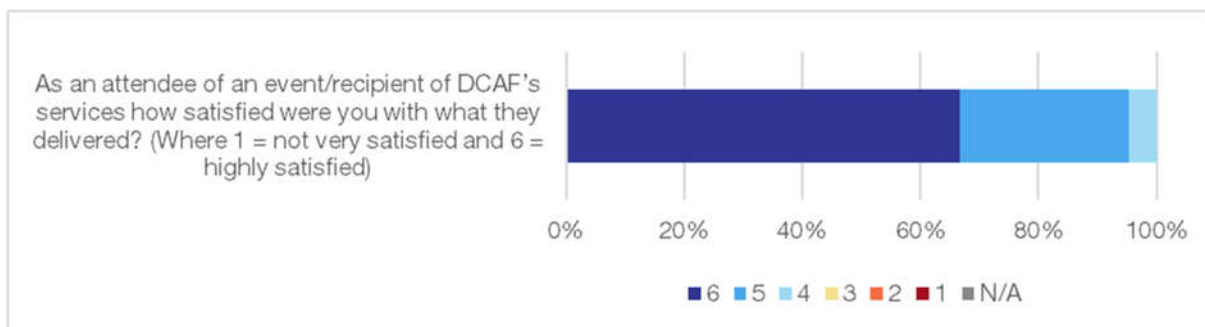
DCAF is able to do so to a large degree. As a matter of fact, a significant part of DCAF work takes places in environments characterized as “fragile”, such as Mali, Burkina Faso, Niger, Somalia, Libya, Lebanon, Palestine. Missions undertaken by ISSAT on behalf of Governing Board members similarly tend to take place in fragile environments.

There is no evidence to suggest that DCAF’s work in fragile states may be less effective than in other environments. The nature of the intervention may be context-specific and offer different forms of engagement, but external KII respondents praise DCAF as a pragmatic, flexible and adaptable organisation.

To what degree are users/participants/customers satisfied with the services they receive?

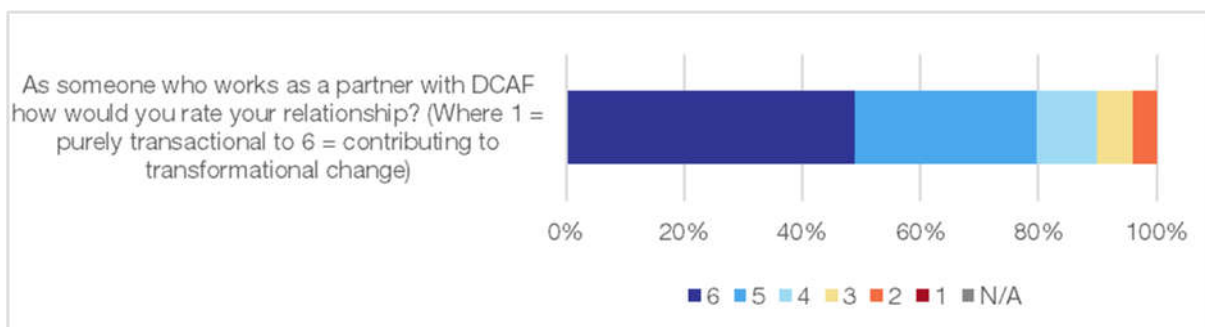
External satisfaction rates with DCAF’s work are very high across the board. Event attendees and recipients of DCAF services who took part in the DCAF survey had a unanimous 100% satisfaction rate (see below).

Figure 31: Survey responses on the satisfaction level of attendees at DCAF events/services



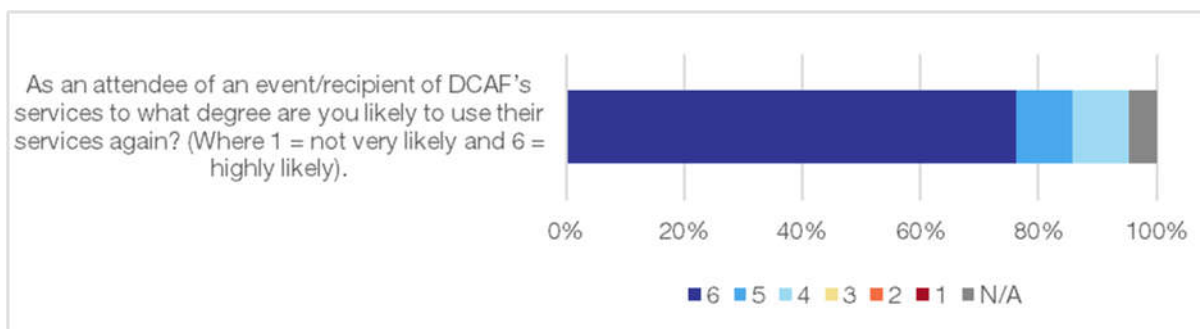
Further, about 50% deemed that their work with DCAF in the field “contribute(d) to transformational change.”

Figure 32: Survey responses on the effectiveness of DCAF as a Partner



External users and partners interviewed as part of the evaluation process do view DCAF as a centre of excellence, and either have plans, or very much would like, to work with the centre again. This is backed by relevant survey findings below.

Figure 33: Survey responses on the likelihood of attendees of DCAF events or recipients of services of using DCAF services again



In the case of ISSAT, where users and customers are governing board members, interviewees similarly reported very high satisfaction rates, praising them for being consistently “responsive and hard working.”

Echoing survey findings, users and customers interviewed as part of this evaluation process report high satisfaction rates with DCAF’s services for the following reasons:

- DCAF is perceived as a centre of excellence

Their subject matter knowledge is extremely high and DCAF personnel come across as highly skilled professionals.

- DCAF is neutral and independent.

In politically charged contexts, users report they are more comfortable engaging with a “Swiss partner” on matters of SSR, rather than partners they deem have ulterior motives, may it be UK/US or UN partners. In the case of Iraq, one respondent specifically mentioned that DCAF may be the only organisation able to engage with the Popular Mobilization Forces (PMF), something simply out of reach for other types of SSG/R actors.

- In several instances, ISSAT support is what has triggered further collaboration.¹⁸

The availability of different operational modalities “under one roof” appears as a clear organisational strength for DCAF.

To what degree does DCAF’s governance and management structure support the effective delivery of its mandate?

Are the governance structures operating in a sufficiently independent manner?

DCAF governance structure may be one of the two areas where slight adjustments can be made, and only slightly more than 60% of all (internal and external) respondents deem it effective.

¹⁸ Two external interviewees recounted how i) SSR advisors operating under an EU, NATO or UN or bilateral mandate, recommended DCAF engagement based on prior dealings they have had with ISSAT, as well as ii) how seminal mapping and assessment work conducted by ISSAT led to further engagement through dedicated programming with DCAF operations teams.

Figure 34: Internal respondents views on the effectiveness of DCAF's governance and management structure

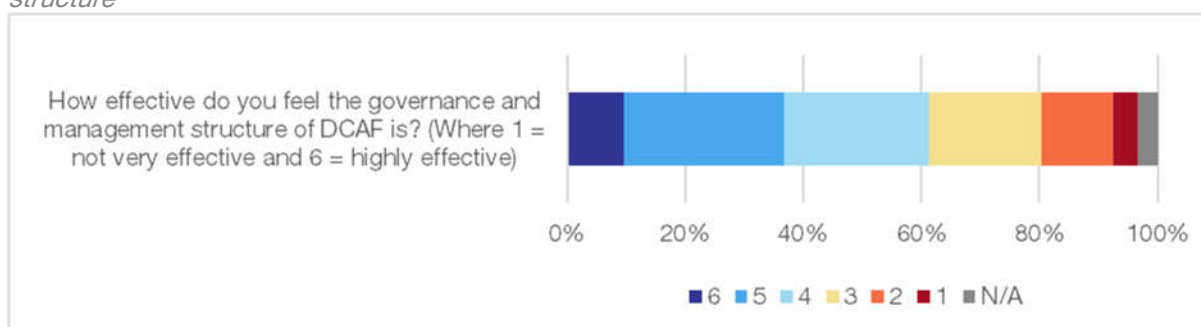
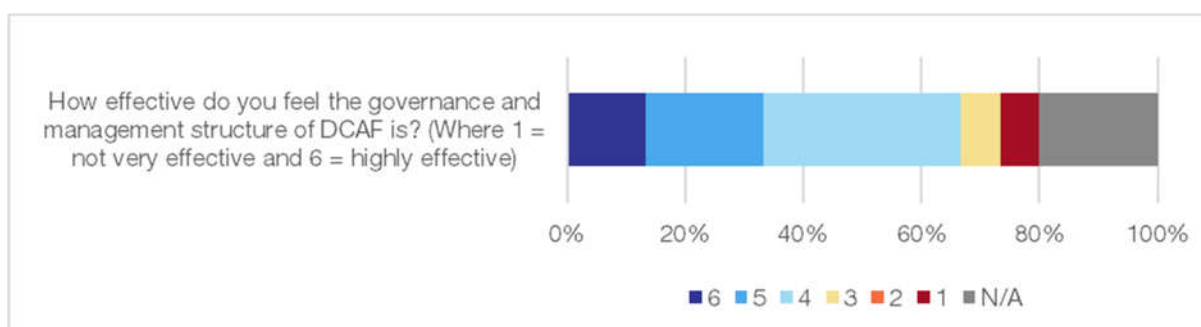


Figure 35: External respondents views on the effectiveness of DCAF's governance and management structure



All respondents' feedback suggests DCAF remains perceived as one organisation with two governance structures. DCAF has a formal Foundation Council which meets twice a year, often at Ambassadors' level. A smaller Bureau gathers seven members who meet four times a year, in addition to the two large-scale Foundation Council meetings.

The group of bilateral and multilateral partners that ISSAT supports is known as its "Governing Board". This body convenes like-minded international partners to jointly discuss opportunities, trends, challenges and lessons in how they provide support, as well as encourage joint engagement. Within this group, there is a separate "core group" of members who contribute to the ISSAT pooled fund and perform a steering function.

While ISSAT Governing Board and Governing Board Members (GBMs) may not be a governance structure properly speaking, that distinction is lost on many external respondents and confusion remains. The justification of a perceived dual structure for what is a single organisation remains unclear to most external interviewees.

Some deem that ISSAT board meetings happen too frequently and may be a bit of a burden for busy GBMs. Others argue that the focus of selected ISSAT board meetings (e.g., on UN SSR policies) does not meet the requirements of what is expected of a governance structure. Rather, some of the board meetings are more along the lines of sessions at the working level. This being said, country representatives at the ISSAT governing body are mostly technical people at working level, who are not present at DCAF Foundation Council level and wish to remain involved in, and consulted on, the work.

There is room to clarify DCAF's existing governance structure, and mainstream it to the effect that the following principles are met:

1. A single governance structure applies to the organisation as a whole.
2. The existing Foundation Council can grow to ensure DCAF retains a culture of inclusivity and diversity, as well as political access to a growing number of partner countries and institutions as may be desirable.

3. A dynamic Bureau serves to mainstream communications with an otherwise large Foundation council. Selected external interviewees deemed that GICHD's Bureau is very fit for purpose and might provide for relevant lessons to DCAF.
4. Representation at Foundation Council level would gain from being systematized to both political *and* working level, to the extent possible.
5. The existing ISSAT "Governing Board" currently serves an important function for ISSAT and its key donors and partners. It may be desirable for form to follow function, and change the name to "Steering committee". The latter label avoids confusion. It also brings internal coherence, in line with existing practice on another two DCAF multi-donor initiatives, namely the Trust Fund for North Africa (TFNA) and Security and Human Rights Implementation Mechanism (SHRIM).¹⁹
6. The Swiss voice does not get lost in the crowd: DCAF has been remarkably successful in building upon a privileged rapport with a range of stakeholders within the Swiss government. Cultivating this special relationship and specificity will serve the Centre's strategic interests (in terms of political access and funding stability and flexibility) as well as Switzerland's, in terms of capitalising on DCAF's reputation of excellence and nurturing an even stronger "international Geneva" in the foreseeable future.

Are management and leadership functions effective and responsive?

Management and leadership functions are extremely responsive at DCAF, in the following ways:

- DCAF has an extremely consultative internal culture.

Consultations are encouraged and all levels of the organisations, at both horizontal level (within a peer group), as well as between junior and level staff.

- Management is responsive to staff feedback and concerns.

Ongoing processes started in 2021 to invite junior colleagues to share their needs and aspirations. Concerns over salary scale were clarified through a transparent process of benchmarking across the organisation, and salary distortions will be corrected by 2024, across the organisation.²⁰

- 2021 was declared the year of knowledge management at DCAF, to incentivize staff collaboration and exchange across division and project boundaries.

The initiative includes awards for "active sharers", as well as including knowledge management objectives in all staff performance evaluation processes.

- Considerable work has taken place to un-silo the organisation and work effectively as "one DCAF".

DCAF has spared no effort to harmonize processes and eliminate internal disparities over the past five years, and the organisation is by all accounts much more cohesive and integrated than it was a few years ago.

"There is no sense of rigidity in decision-making processes.

To the contrary, there is constant re-calibration, everything can always be re-discussed if significant changes happen in the operating environment.

It can be exhausting, but it's also a strength."

Kll Internal respondent

¹⁹ Each of these mechanisms has a dedicated steering committee that serves a purpose similar to that of ISSAT's current board, albeit at a small scale.

²⁰ By the end of 2024, DCAF will have allocated a cumulated CHF 2 million to the issue, mostly to increase lower salary bands. See details about the "stepping forward project" infra on page 23.

For the next stage of DCAF growth, respondents' feedback outlines one area of possible adjustment to pursue ongoing efforts and reach enhanced effectiveness. Pushing down a critical mass of management decisions and oversight for management processes to the level of the Head of Resources Department²¹ would free up DCAF's Director's time. This in return will allow DCAF to make full use of the Director's unique skillset in negotiating political access, multistakeholder buy-in and financial support for the organisation.

To what degree has DCAF got the relationships it needs in place (such as for funding, technical cooperation, or political support) to work effectively – are there any key gaps that need to be filled?

Respondents' feedback suggests that DCAF has everything it needs to work effectively. All the fundamentals appear to be in place, so it rather is a matter for DCAF to decide what to focus on, to then see how best to maximize the right relationships, within the resources at its disposal.

DCAF has become a uniquely positioned actor, which can tap into complementary levels of relationships to master support for SSG/R in a range of countries. The organisation has a strong brand recognition and a strong convening power that build on:

- Unique access to policymakers able to commit political leverage and influence fundraising decisions in Switzerland and other countries through its Foundation council, the ISSAT facility, a dedicated strategic partnership with the SSR Unit at the United Nations' Office of Rule of Law and Security Institutions (OROLSI)²² and a privileged relationship with the EU (through the EU SSG Facility).²³
- A perception of excellence, neutrality and unvested interest in the pursuit of a mission that is often politically charged, and where most other actors are perceived as biased.
- Very strong networks with relevant stakeholders in countries of intervention through its Foundation council, as well as in-country presence.
- The right mix of complementary diplomatic, managerial, technical and process skills and capabilities within its cadres.
- The financial support and conceptual buy-in of a country famous for its impartiality, discretion and strong tradition of pursuing peace as part of its diplomatic practice, Switzerland.

To what degree has DCAF got the internal capability to develop and sustain new relationships?

Based on respondents' feedback, it is the evaluation team's perspective that DCAF's ability to develop and sustain new relationships is not a function of its internal capabilities but one of making choices and setting priorities.

²¹ DCAF has a unique status as a Swiss foundation. Most documents require either the Director's signature, or signature by two SMT members. This requirement will need to be factored in to ensure the Resource Director has a co-signing peer available at most times.

²² The latter has recently been renewed for a further four years. It entails two main areas of work to i) develop policy and practical guidance on SSR as well as ii) provide field support to UN staff in the field and in peace missions.

²³ The EU SSG Facility has recently been renewed for a further three years. It bolsters the EU's support to partner countries' security sector governance and reform processes, providing flexible and effective expertise to address emerging needs, analyse gaps, support strategic policy planning, and coordination of dialogue on SSG/R.

By no means does it imply a lack of decisiveness on the part of DCAF. Rather, the organisation has opportunities all around and may need to decide what is strategic enough to warrant its attention and focus for the forthcoming period.

A simple example may provide a powerful illustration. A country like Iraq has SSG/R needs that exceed the capabilities of any single organisation. Should DCAF assess that, in collaboration with existing SSG/R external actors such as UNDP and the relevant UN, NATO and EU missions, it has a unique niche to engage with the PMF on matters of SSG/R, then the organisation already has the right entry points to develop relevant relationships.

Efficiency

To what degree does DCAF have effective financial and information management systems and reporting processes?

Interviews realised as part of this evaluation process paint the picture of a fast-growing organisation. For the first sixteen years of its existence, DCAF was instrumental in creating a new reality, a prevailing discourse on SSR, and making the need for SSG/R widely accepted evidence among policy circles. Then came a period of institution-wide management changes from 2017 onwards, to bring coherence to the organisation, efficiency to how it operates, and increased effectiveness in its work.

This second phase has seen DCAF embrace recommendations made in the 2018 evaluation, and undertake a vast amount of internal change to act on all recommendations. A sense of “process and consultation fatigue” was palpable through most interviews.

Financial and information systems have been amply developed in the 2017-2021 period

Human resources and Finance functions have been significantly invested in, with the arrival of a cadre of seasoned management professionals possessing both private sector and non-for-profit experience. HR related internal reforms have sought to identify and address compliance gaps such as i) the adoption of a Code of Ethics, ii) collaborative work on defining the organisation’s values and behaviours across the board, iii) reviewing and renewing as needed pension, insurance and other contracts with a view to increase efficiencies, iv) putting DCAF in compliance with legal requirements in terms of time tracking, v) introducing a policy on conflicts of interest.

In support of these undertakings, the DCAF resource team holds:

- finance reviews every quarter (three quarterly monitoring rounds and one annual review) and is rolling out a new digitalized payment system to gain efficiencies.
- Monthly two-hour reviews with senior managers from other Divisions, to ensure the resource function remains in line with expressed needs and priorities across the board.

Security management has similarly benefitted from strong organisational focus in the form of training, communications equipment, and the development of adequate processes.

How effective is DCAF’s Results Based Management system and how credible/useful are the results produced?

The revised RBM framework has just been submitted for validation to DCAF SMT, and it is too early to assess how useful results may be. This being said, the said framework has been developed to bring coherence to project design and reporting across all thematic areas and Divisions. It is, in itself, a marked improvement compared to the RBM approach displayed in the 2019-24 strategy document.

Management culture is very supportive, but the organisation is biased towards viewing policies as a systematic answer to most questions

All interviews and Focus Group Discussions with DCAF personnel point towards a benevolent management culture that genuinely seeks to support individuals and promotes a collaborative “win-win” approach to problem-solving.

However, because the nature of DCAF’s work is to help clients create policies and set up processes to bring about change, change management at DCAF has resulted in a critical mass of consultation, coordination and feedback processes which most interviewees do not perceive as efficient.

As a result, a number of internal and some external respondents perceive the organisation at risk of “bureaucratization” and becoming slow in turning decisions into action.

To what degree does DCAF have an appropriate mix of core and tied funding to enable it to be adaptive and responsive as well as deliver planned commitments?

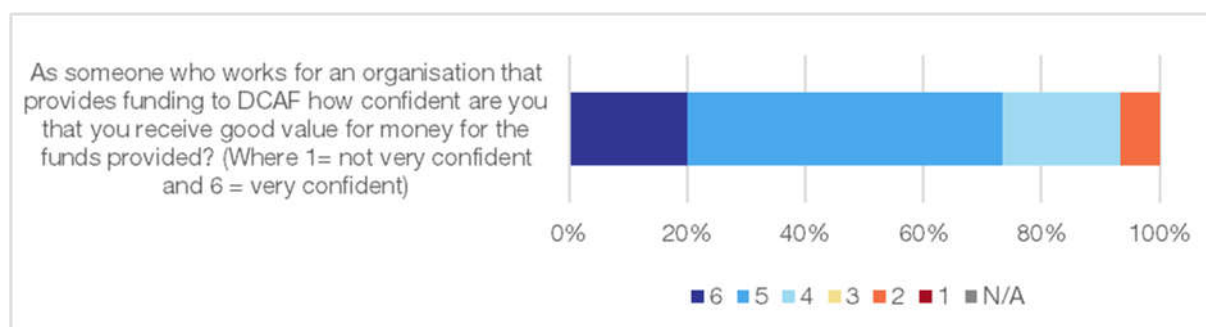
DCAF has been remarkably successful in diversifying its funding sources, and engaging with a range of other donor countries through its governance structure. As a result, the organisation already exceeds target values as per the current dispatch.

Switzerland allocates 45% of DCAF’s budget requirements in the form of core funding. This is a key specificity of Switzerland’s support to the organisation and must be maintained as it rightfully enables DCAF to avail itself of a unique amount of internal flexibility as well as seed funding for innovation and emerging trends.

Seven other donors have contributions in excess of half a million CHF per year to the organisation as of 2021. This includes donors who have signed multiyear strategic partnerships and funding agreements with the organisation (Netherlands and Norway), a donor that only contributes core funding (Sweden), as well as others who provide significant project funding (Canada, the EU, Germany and the UK).

This situation places DCAF in a strong position, and the organisation is in the process of negotiating further core funding from new donors, at the time of writing.

Figure 36: Survey responses on donor’s view on value for money of DCAF services



To what degree are staff in DCAF performing effectively and are satisfied in their work and working environment?

DCAF has approached human resources management in the same way it approaches most problem sets, seeking to generate data to substantiate its problem analysis, as a prelude to crafting tailored-made solutions. The incumbent team hence crafted an HR dashboard and Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) to capture ongoing change processes and qualify/quantify results. The said dashboard includes data assessing staff satisfaction as one of the said KPIs.

These tools are used for monitoring purposes, and translate into follow up and dialogue initiatives as and when the need arises.

DCAF has rolled out a comprehensive set of change processes to ensure staff effectiveness

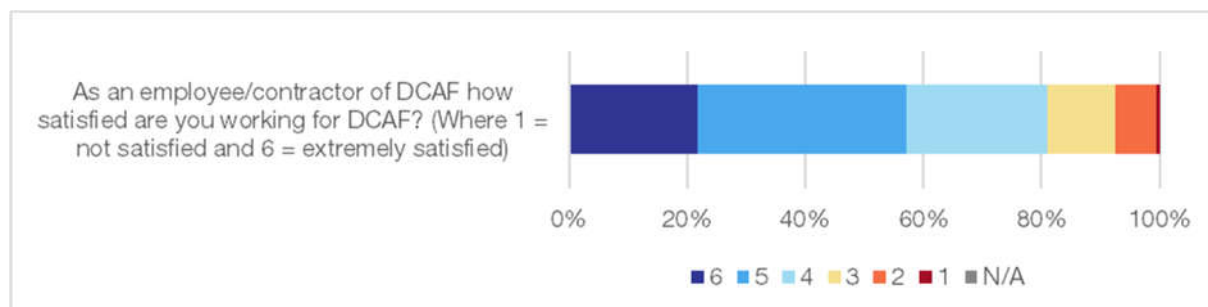
This included (but was not limited to):

- Systematising and enhancing the quality of the recruitment process to reduce recruiter's bias;²⁴
- Changes in the performance management process, including an assessment of the incumbent's knowledge sharing performance.
- Equipping managers for success: DCAF has within its own ranks a number of technical specialists who may or may not have the requisite management and soft skills to manage others effectively and grow into senior management roles. DCAF HR team set up a manager's forum to promote ongoing learning and exchange among peers, across divisions and functional lines.
- DCAF will next roll out a process of subsidiarity, to empower some of its more junior managers to make decisions at their level to the extent possible, and hence reduce bottlenecks at SMT level.

DCAF has rolled out change processes to enhance staff satisfaction across the board

150 DCAF respondents reported high levels of job satisfaction at the survey stage, as captured below. They deem the work "fulfilling" and respondents value working with "committed and capable colleagues." Staff generally felt their opinion was valued, and many deemed that their managers worked constructively to encourage and empower staff in their roles.

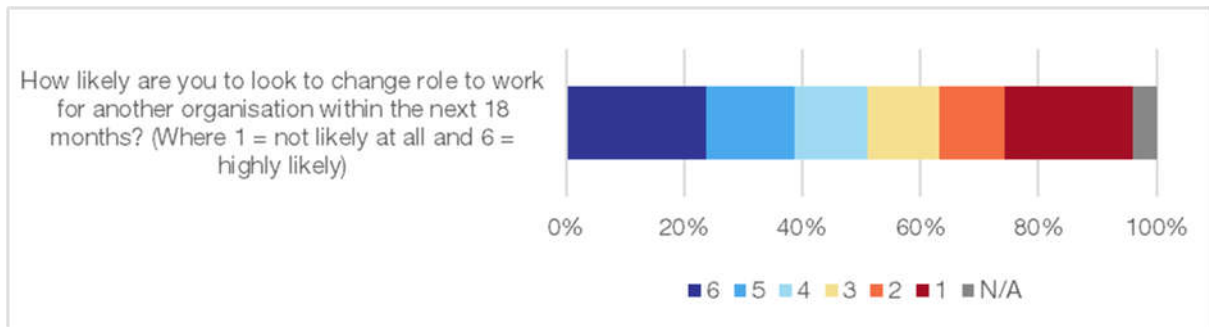
Figure 37: Survey responses on employee satisfaction working in DCAF



However, strong discontent over matters of vertical mobility and low pay at junior level are the two main reasons why about half the DCAF personnel surveyed as part of this evaluation may be considering leaving the organisation within a short timeframe.

Figure 38: Survey responses on how likely staff are to look to work for another organisation

²⁴ DCAF has developed a thorough recruitment process that includes no less than two written tests, one to assess the applicant's technical and substantive capabilities, and one AI based personality test. For senior positions, a third test has been introduced to ascertain the candidate's emotional intelligence. DCAF HR personnel systematically debrief unsuccessful candidates on this emotional intelligence test, as part of a concerted effort to improve the candidate's experience.



DCAF respondents interviewed during this evaluation acknowledged the challenges the organisation faces, in relation to staff career aspirations. Vertical mobility remains a challenge in an environment where i) junior personnel and younger generations may aspire to rapid progression and opportunities, ii) senior roles are limited in numbers and occupied by individuals with significant field experience or substantive knowledge, and iii) the organisation does not currently have the field footprint for the resources to ensure field rotation for those willing to gain precious field exposure.

DCAF is attuned to the challenge and recently launched an internal initiative, the “*stepping forward project*” to attract and retain the best internal and external talent by addressing anomalies within the compensation and benefits offered to its employees. This has included efforts to i) provide internal candidates with more opportunities for professional development, ii) benchmark salary brackets for all functions across the organisation,²⁵ iii) ensure transparency on conditions for moving from one functional band to the next, and iv) systematic exit interviews for all personnel leaving the organisation. The initiative is too recent for its results to be assessed.

DCAF has made gender equality a reality, including at senior management level

A key consideration for the HR dashboard was to precisely look at gender. As of 2022, more than 50% of DCAF senior managers across the organisation are women. Further, DCAF meets or exceeds all criteria laid out in the gender pay audit that is a mandatory requirement in Switzerland.

Sustainability

The organisation is still young but, at this stage of its growth, benefits from a set of characteristics that point towards sustainability. This includes but is not limited to:

- An ongoing demand and appreciation for DCAF’s services, in terms of technical and policy assistance from donors, multilateral organisations and SSG/R related policy networks.
- Strong in-house technical expertise, complemented by the strengthening in recent years of core business functions of Human Resources, Finance, Planning and M&E.
- Brand recognition among relevant SSG/R circles, backed up by a diversified funding pipeline.
- A large network of in-country and regional partners that can be mobilised to maximize effect, ensure broader outreach to new constituents, and support knowledge sharing and dissemination efforts.
- An appropriate use of IT solutions and training platforms to ensure that online engagement remains interactive in COVID times.
- Ongoing plans to further anchor RBM in the organisation’s practice in addition to the soon to be validated RBM framework. This includes inter alia i) rolling out a DCAF

²⁵ This came together with a salary benchmarking exercise on the basis of data collected from over a dozen Geneva based NGOs.

evaluation policy and central repository. DCAF is currently completing a thematic evaluation of its work on external oversight over the past ten years, and plans for a similar undertaking on police reform next; ii) providing technical mentoring to dedicated MEAL focal points in the field as well as increasingly engaging non-MEAL staff in internal review processes, iii) plans for internal reviews every year.

To what degree does DCAF make use and promote “international Geneva” in enhancing and strengthening their cooperation and coordination with other organisations and stakeholders, in particular within Maison de la Paix?

Enhancing and strengthening cooperation with other organisations within Maison de la Paix has been challenging for DCAF and others in light of the pandemic restrictions over the past couple of years. Now that restrictions are being lifted, DCAF has an opportunity to approach partnership in a strategic manner.

DCAF operates in an “international Geneva” ecosystem where dozens of other like-minded organisations have a wide range of strengths and weaknesses in promoting a peace agenda that is rights and principles based.

DCAF would earn from thinking of partnerships as a decisive tool in a multistakeholder engagement process.

They may have privileged access to selected levels of mostly SSG/R stakeholders, but others have better access to, and knowledge of, other relevant stakeholders, selected hybrid security and justice providers, selected RECs, selected countries or technical areas of expertise (e.g., SALW and ammunition stockpile management).

Also, other like-minded organisations face similar organisational and management challenges, including but not limited to measuring change at outcome level, vertical and horizontal job mobility. A natural community of practice exists in “international Geneva”, which DCAF practitioners could easily tap into on technical, functional (e.g., MEL) as well as management matters.

Making a better use of “international Geneva” is a natural extension of DCAF’s work. In an environment of limited resources, it offers DCAF an opportunity to combine multiple levels of engagement in a cost-controlled manner.

Doing so will require DCAF to assess the countries, policy audiences and technical areas of work where its niche and expertise, convening power and outreach capacity may gain from collaborating with others in “international Geneva.” Opportunities for collaboration may well be country or region specific, as well as subject matter or function specific. And options for coordination and collaboration may not necessarily apply to DCAF as a whole.

At the time of this evaluation, DCAF offers examples of cooperation and coordination with organisations around it²⁶, but there is no indication that senior managers approach it in a systematic manner, with a view to maximize synergies. It is understandable as they have admittedly kept busy with competing priorities in a context of COVID and change process fatigue. Also, DCAF is far from being an isolated case and most organisations in the international Geneva peace & conflict ecosystem have yet to display a deliberate intent to prioritise collaboration efforts.

²⁶ DCAF was praised for its active involvement in the Geneva Peace Week, pre-Covid.

Conclusion

DCAF has a clear strategy and vision, which it implements through multilevel engagement with a broad and complementary range of stakeholders (at country, regional, multilateral and policy level), thematic engagement across the whole range of SSG/R related matters (police, intelligence, ombudsman, parliamentary oversight, armed forces, joint gender assessments), and a complementary set of programmatic tools and funding instruments (projects and portfolios at country and regional level, as well as thematic initiatives).

DCAF is not only perceived as *a* but *the* centre of excellence on matters of SSG/R. External actors view DCAF as a trustworthy organisation that engages in partnerships, has a unique focus on learning, is international in its outreach and Swiss in its praised values of neutrality and independence. This perception is shared by prominent multilateral SSG/R players such as the EU and the UN, other SSG/R thematic actors such as the Folke Bernadotte Academy, as well as selected donors and national partners in countries of implementation. The depth of DCAF's technical expertise and the consistent quality of its work confer the organisation high levels of perceived legitimacy among its core partners and donors.

External interviewees consistently praise DCAF for its sustained focus on partnerships, adaptability, and learning. The organisation is held in high regards for its commitment to i) understanding and adapting to others' needs in varied environments, ii) mobilising world standard technical expertise and process skills in providing technical assistance, iii) continuously seeking to capture knowledge, share it and re-inject it in its own project design.

This unique position is backed up by well-developed internal systems. Significant change processes have taken place over the past four years, to improve the quality, accountability and coherence of DCAF's internal processes and systems. This has entailed developing more systematic RBM frameworks with a focus on outcome reporting, as well as equipping DCAF with more robust HR and finance back-office functions and processes.

DCAF has developed a benevolent and responsive management culture that is attuned to staff feedback. However, the magnitude of the change processes in recent years has generated a sense of process and consultation fatigue among DCAF personnel. For the years ahead, DCAF should seek to retain agility and avoid becoming what could be perceived as overly bureaucratic, in the eyes of some of its partners in the field.

The recommendations below represent no departure from DCAF's current trajectory. Rather, they build on recent changes and outline options to maximize them.

Recommendations

| # | CRITERION | CONCLUSION | RECOMMENDATION |
|---|--|--|---|
| 1 | <p style="text-align: center; color: #800080;">Relevance and communicating value</p> | <p>DCAF is praised as the centre of excellence on SSG/R related matters, for its unique breadth and width of engagement. No other SSG/R organisation can be credited with DCAF's complementary levels of intervention in the field and at policy level, its gender expertise, focus on knowledge, convening power and neutrality.</p> <p>DCAF appears to have the right focus, but can do better at communicating its value to key Swiss constituents.</p> | <p>1.1 Decide the extent to which DCAF needs to better understand, if not engage with, selected armed groups or hybrid security and justice providers. From a conflict standpoint, DCAF's singular focus on Security Sector Reform is very much in line with what numerous armed groups are fighting for: reforming a society and a state which they deem is exclusive, unfair, and generates inordinate levels of coercion if not violence upon its citizens. Some of these powerful hybrid security and justice providers have a stated interest in SSR and fear getting sidelined. In selected contexts (e.g., Iraq, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Libya), DCAF would gain from better understanding their motives, interest, and potential modalities of engagement in SSR processes.</p> <p>1.2 Enable citizens to systematically have a say in how security is provided to them in countries of intervention. It is unclear to what effect DCAF works with civil society in support of SSG/R. DCAF has an opportunity to build on its current research on how to apply people-centred approaches to SSR, so as to reflect on its current practice, frame its engagement and share analysis with key partners and donors. In a context of increasing rejection of democratic norms and unconstitutional changes of power in countries of intervention, DCAF has a role to play to engage more robustly with civil society, and help key partners and donors articulate their own position on the matter.</p> <p>1.3 Engage more often and at more (complementary) levels with Swiss government stakeholders. DCAF has extraordinarily strong links with SDC, DDPS and FDFA, and the organisation's growth presents Switzerland with a range of opportunities. DCAF may find useful to proactively sustain engagement with core constituents, at multiple and mutually reinforcing technical and policy levels, to minimise the risk of assumed knowledge and ensure that expectations are verbalised and met.</p> |

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| 2 | Effectiveness | <p>Governance structures:</p> <p>The Foundation Council brings DCAF exposure to an inclusive group of key donors and partner countries at ambassador’s level. supported by a (seven strong) Bureau. In addition, ISSAT has a dedicated Governing Board.</p> <p>The apparent juxtaposition of two governance structures for what is a single organisation is not effective.</p> | <p>2.1. Redefine the focus and name of ISSAT’s current “governing board” to avoid confusion and clarify its function. The ISSAT “board” serves a useful function more in line with that of a Steering Committee. It gathers key partner representatives at the technical/working level, and participants wish to remain engaged with ISSAT.</p> <p>Clarifying the focus and scope of this group will allow ISSAT to retain a dedicated steering function, in line with what DCAF does on other initiatives such as the TFNA and SHRIM.</p> |
| 3 | Effectiveness | <p>Leadership and management:</p> <p>The Director currently spends a critical amount of time dealing with management matters, whereas the Director is a Swiss Ambassador who has a unique skillset in negotiating political access, multistakeholder buy-in and financial support for the organisation.</p> | <p>3.1. Map out and delegate management related tasks that the Head of Resources Department has time and capabilities to oversee. This delegation will free up the Director’s time, allow him to make full use of his unique skillset, and hence maximize leadership effectiveness for the organisation as a whole.</p> |
| 4 | Efficiency | <p>Internal systems</p> <p>The organisation has grown fast over the past few years, and rolled out a comprehensive set of change processes with a view to bring coherence and efficiency to its systems and processes.</p> <p>Systems are now much developed and support functions professionalised. However, the DCAF team suffers from “process fatigue.”</p> | <p>4.1. Seek ways to reduce the “bureaucracy” to its bare minimum. Following years of intense change management processes, the organisation may face a risk of change saturation (internally) and detrimental perception (externally). The organisation needs to retain agility to remain a valued partner in the field.</p> <p>4.2. Bring coherence to DCAF’s branding. In DCAF’s publications, the acknowledgement section often reads like an exercise in attribution (e.g., “DCAF Division W, with inputs from DCAF Division X, DCAF division Y, and Operations Department/”). A simple and consistent mention that “This paper has been produced by the Geneva Centre for SSG/R” may add coherence to DCAF’s external branding.</p> |
| 5 | Sustainability | <p>The organisation benefits from a set of characteristics that point towards sustainability, including but not limited to an ongoing demand for its services, strong in-house technical expertise, strong brand recognition and networks, backed up by strengthened core business functions of Human Resources, Finance, Planning and M&E.</p> | <p>5.1. Conduct a human centred evaluation of DCAF’s work at country level. As DCAF rolls out its new RBM framework, it would be useful to capture and analyse the perspectives of civilians in countries of intervention. Seeking to assess the extent to which their SSR needs and expectations are being met, is the next step to quality the impact and sustainability of DCAF’s work.</p> |

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| | | Human-centred evaluations of DCAF's SSR work, as well as a strategic approach to partnerships with other organisations part of "international Geneva" will further strengthen sustainability. | 5.2. Display a deliberate intent to assess collaboration potential with others in the international Geneva ecosystem. Bearing in mind individual workloads and the process fatigue mentioned in this evaluation report, DCAF staff members can be gradually incentivised to assess potential more systematically for coordination or collaboration with other organisations. This can be done for new projects and initiatives, for staff to demonstrate outreach to other possibly relevant stakeholders in MdP as part of existing needs assessment processes. |
| 6 | Efficiency | IT provision across all three centres: At present GCSP provides IT support to all three centres. There are different views across the centres as to how successful this arrangement is for them. | 6.1. To collectively review the provision of IT services and support provided by GCSP and how effectively the arrangement is working across all three centres and how it might be optimised. |

Geneva, 30 May 2022

Management Response to the External Evaluation

Dear Ambassador Geissbühler,

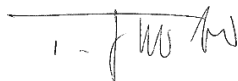
I would like to acknowledge receipt of the Final Report of the External Evaluation of the Geneva Centres, commissioned by the Swiss FDFA and conducted by IOD PARC between November 2021 and May 2022.

On behalf of DCAF's management, I should like to express our agreement with the overall findings of the evaluation. We are extremely pleased and honoured that the evaluation confirmed DCAF's leading position in the field of security sector governance and reform, and that it adequately captured DCAF's values, range of engagement, depth of technical expertise, quality of work, strive for innovation, adaptability, and continuous learning.

As stated by the evaluators, the recommendations that the evaluation has produced "represent no departure from DCAF's current trajectory. Rather they build on recent changes and outline options to maximise them". We agree with this approach and would like to thank the evaluators for the insightful report. All 10 recommendations will be incorporated into DCAF's organizational agenda for 2023 and beyond and will inform our reflexion on DCAF's next strategy.

Detailed comments to each of the recommendations are provided in the annex below.

Sincerely,



Thomas Guerber

DCAF Director, Ambassador

Ambassador Simon Geissbühler
Head of Peace and Human Rights Division
Swiss Federal Department of Foreign Affairs (FDFA)

Annex: DCAF Management Response to the External Evaluation

| Recommendation | DCAF comments |
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| 1.1 Decide the extent to which DCAF needs to better understand, if not engage with, selected armed groups or hybrid security and justice providers. | Hybrid security and justice has been part of DCAF's research agenda and operational programming for several years. While DCAF thus agrees with the recommendation in principle, it will continue to make context-specific analyses of whether engagements with selected armed groups or hybrid security and justice providers are opportune, bearing in mind all relevant benefits and risks. |
| 1.2 Enable citizens to systematically have a say in how security is provided to them in countries of intervention and build on DCAF's current research on how to apply people-centred approaches to SSR. | The inclusion of people's perspectives has always been at the core of how DCAF designs, implements, and evaluates its programmatic, policy, and advisory work. While we therefore agree with the thrust of this recommendation in principle, experience has shown that it is not always possible or feasible to <i>systematically</i> include all people in a particular context. A partner state may also impose certain limitations as regards the inclusion of its people. |
| 1.3 Engage more often and at more (complementary) levels with Swiss government stakeholders | Fully agree. |
| 2.1 Redefine the focus and name of ISSAT's current "governing board" to avoid confusion and clarify its function | DCAF fully recognizes the need to align ISSAT's governance and steering structure to DCAF's overall governance framework. This matter is under active consideration. |
| 3.1 Map out and delegate management related tasks that the Head of Resources Department has time and capabilities to oversee. | Fully agree. |
| 4.1 Seek ways to reduce the " bureaucracy " to its bare minimum | We disagree with the use of the term "bureaucracy". In recent years, DCAF has introduced and strengthened internal policies and procedures to address apparent deficits in this area, not least in response to the findings of the last external evaluation (2018). We confirm that all essential policies and procedures are now in place and no further policies are needed at this point. We agree that new policies or procedures should only be considered if they are critical to improving DCAF's performance. |
| 4.2 Bring coherence to DCAF's branding | Fully agree. |
| 5.1 Conduct a human centred evaluation of DCAF's work at country level. As DCAF rolls out its new RBM framework, it would be useful to capture and analyse the perspectives of civilians in countries of intervention | DCAF embraces and intends to further develop people-centred approaches to the design and evaluation of its programmes, where appropriate. |

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| 5.2 Display a deliberate intent to assess collaboration potential with others in the international Geneva ecosystem. | Fully agree. |
| 6.1 To collectively review the provision of IT services and support provided by GCSP and how effectively the arrangement is working across all three centres and how it might be optimised | Fully agree. |