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## Evaluation Report

# External review of the SWISS HUMANITARIAN AID (SHA) UNIT

19.02.2021

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# List of Abbreviations

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AG	Advisory Group
ALNAP	Global network of humanitarian aid partners to promote learning how to improve response in humanitarian crises
BK IZA	Beratende Kommission Internationale Zusammenarbeit
bln	billion
BMZ	German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development
CHA	Centre for Humanitarian Action
CHS	Core Humanitarian Standard on Quality and Accountability
CTP	Cash Transfer Programming
DA	Direct Action (by SDC humanitarian aid)
DAC	Development Assistance Committee
DDPS	Federal Department of Defence, Civil Protection and Sport
DRC	Danish Refugee Council
DRR	Disaster Risk Reduction
EAO	Ethnic Armed Organisation
ECHO	European Commission Humanitarian Aid and Civil Protection
EG	Expert Group
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organisation
FDFA	Federal Department of Foreign Affairs
FTE	Full-Time Equivalent
GCA	Government-Controlled Area
GHD	Good Humanitarian Donorship
GIS	Geographic Information System
HA	Humanitarian Aid
HH	Humanitäre Hilfe
HPG	Humanitarian Policy Group
HSD	Human Security Division
HQ	Headquarters
IARAN	Inter-Agency Regional Analysts Network
ICRC	International Committee of the Red Cross
IDP	Internally Displaced Person
IFRC	International Federation of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies
INGO	International Non-Governmental Organisation
IOM	International Organisation for Migration
INSARAG	International Search and Rescue Advisory Group
KMZ	Crisis Management Centre, FDFA
LRRD	Linking Relief, Rehabilitation and Development
m	million
MDPN	Mission Debriefing Personal Note
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MSF	Médecins Sans Frontières
NGCA	Non-Government-Controlled Area
NGO	Non-Gouvernemental Organisation
NORCAP	Norwegian Capacity, NRC's global provider of expertise in HA and peacebuilding
NRC	Norwegian Refugee Council

OpCom	Operations Committee (of SDC)
OSCE	Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe
PVFMH	Verordnung über das Personal für die Friedensförderung, die Stärkung der Menschenrechte und die Humanitäre Hilfe
PHAP	International Association of Professionals in Humanitarian Assistance and Protection
PSEAH	Prevention of Sexual Exploitation, Abuse and Harassment
REDOG	Swiss Association for Search and Rescue Dogs
RRT	Rapid Response Team
SGBV	Sexual and Gender-Based Violence
SCO	Swiss Cooperation Office (integrated at the Embassy)
SC	South Cooperation of SDC
SDC	Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
SECO	State Secretariat for Economic Affairs
SHA	Swiss Humanitarian Aid (the SHA Unit is an instrument of SDC's HA)
SKH	Schweizerisches Korps für Humanitäre Hilfe (SHA Unit)
SRC	Swiss Red Cross
TGB	The Grand Bargain
ToC	Theory of Change
ToR	Terms of Reference
UNHCR	The UN Refugee Agency
UN-OCHA	United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
UNRWA	United Nations Relief and Works for Palestine Refugees
USAR	Urban Search and Rescue
WASH	Water, Sanitation and Hygiene
WFP	World Food Programme
WOGA	Whole-of-Government Approach

# Executive Summary

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## Background

**The Swiss Humanitarian Aid (SHA) Unit:** Swiss Humanitarian Aid (HA) is universal and aims at saving lives and alleviating suffering. One of the four instruments of Swiss HA which contributes to this goal is the SHA Unit, created in 1973. It consists of a pool of approximately 600 standby experts who are grouped in 11 thematic Expert Groups (EGs), plus about 180 reserve experts. It is managed by Swiss HA and the SHA Unit of the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC), one of four SDC departments. The deployment modes applied by this corps are: (i) Carry out rapid response actions with the Swiss Rescue Chain and or Rapid Response Teams (RRTs) after sudden and onset disasters; (ii) Implement humanitarian projects of the SDC HA (Direct Actions, DAs); (iii) Support Headquarters (HQ) or Swiss representations abroad; and (iv) Provide technical expertise to partner organisations through secondments.

**Purpose of the evaluation:** The evaluation shall determine the relevance and added value of the SHA Unit and make prospective recommendations so that the corps remains relevant and fit for purpose in the future, especially against the background of changes in the HA sector and to framework conditions (reorganisations in the Federal Department of Foreign Affairs and SDC).

**Methodology:** The evaluation applied a mixed-method approach which consisted of (i) Intensive document review, (ii) Reconstruction of a Theory of Change, (iii) 40 semi-structured interviews with corps members, SDC staff and partners, (iv) 16 meetings and focus group interviews with members of the EGs and SDC HA desk officers, (v) An online survey among all active as well as reserve members and those who left the corps after 01.01.2018 (this included 892 people altogether), (vi) Participation in an H-webinar of SDC HA, (vii) Conducting an option workshop for alternative organisational structures, (viii) Analysis of five case studies, namely Haiti, Mozambique, Myanmar, Jordan and Ukraine, and (ix) Analysis of selected quantitative data (e.g. deployment statistics 2015-2019 and financial data). The foreseen visits to Myanmar and Jordan had to be cancelled due to COVID-19 restrictions and thus all case studies were based on document review and physical, telephone or online interviews (47 interviews).

## Findings

**Trends in the HA sector:** On one side there are more natural disasters, but their impact on people, in terms of number of victims, is reduced due to improved national coping capacities in many countries. On the other side, the number of displaced people, migrants and refugees has continuously increased over the past 20 years. Overall, humanitarian needs are much higher than what can be delivered with HA, and this gap may widen in the future.

Another important topic that dominates the future of HA is climate change, environmental degradation and related risks like water availability, draughts and floods, which may lead to migration flows and forced displacements.

There are more long-term protracted crises in the focus of HA, and the combination of humanitarian, development and peace instruments have become essential in addressing these crises effectively and more coherently in a nexus logic. In this context, the rollout of integrated Swiss embassies has provided new potential for synergies but has also changed the working procedures for Swiss HA and the SHA Unit. This is also connected with the underlying trend of bureaucratisation of HA.

Security threats as well as the recent COVID-19 pandemic have made access to beneficiaries for (international) aid workers more difficult. Furthermore, middle-income countries are often reluctant to call for international aid. This makes it more difficult for HA to support people in need and reinforces the importance of the 'localisation agenda'. This agenda aims to empower local actors who are familiar with the context and present on the ground before, during and after a crisis.

Many factors influence the interest in working abroad. Overall humanitarian aid jobs have lost attractiveness, as working in fragile contexts appears to be too arduous for many Swiss. Furthermore, experts returning from longer deployments cannot always find another job that satisfies them. Additionally, the HA labour market in Switzerland is increasingly internationalised, and the proportion of international HA staff has been continuously increasing.

**Relevance of the SHA Unit and added value:** The SHA Unit significantly contributes to the overall goals of Swiss HA. It provides good visibility, especially through the well-known RRTs. The image of the SHA Unit in Switzerland is strongly associated with RRTs by the Swiss public, media and members of parliament, although 99% of the Unit's 134 full-time equivalents (average 2010–2019) are allocated to the other three deployment modes. DAs and support to Swiss representations abroad make up 37%, support to HQ 14% and secondments 45%. (The remaining 3% are internal mandates.) While the secondments, especially those based in Switzerland, have increased over time, deployment in DAs have rather decreased since 2010, but with annual variations.

A major asset is that the SHA Unit is composed of qualified and motivated experts with a strong identification with the corps and with their respective EG. The deployments support the outlined objectives of the Unit because the SHA experts support rapid response and SDC HA capacities to deal with crises provide solid Swiss expertise, support the strengthening of partner organisations, and feed into the advocacy and policy dialogue. There is a high level of flexibility in applying and combining the four deployment modes.

The main added values of the corps' deployments are (i) High visibility of Swiss presence in the field and with partners, (ii) Linking the working experience of experts on the ground with policy dialogue and advocacy, (iii) Support for monitoring and programme, and (iv) Project implementation in crises contexts. Furthermore, the presence of SHA experts at integrated embassies can be a 'door opener' for both new networks and stakeholders and can support addressing critical policy issues with better evidence.

**Appropriateness of the SHA Unit's strategic orientation:** Due to the shift to longer deployments (i.e. with secondments), the gap in the original core task of rapid response has widened, resulting in a lack of a vision. The needs and required profiles for short-term rapid response and long-term secondments differ considerably, and so do their career perspectives.

The 11 thematic EGs – with a large range of group sizes from 16 to 172 members – represent important technical and managerial skills. The thematic areas covered by the EGs are relevant, but the strong EG orientation contributes to compartmentalised and disconnected 'silo thinking' and the coordination mechanism is rather weak.

The HA environment has become more complex and demanding, and thus deployments require a higher level of professionalisation and accumulated experience in the sense that SHA members must have regular deployments and refresh their competencies, while currently too many members have only minimal deployment experience. The deployments nowadays require more mixed profiles, combining technical and soft skills, such as intercultural communication, considering governance issues, multi-stakeholder negotiations, beneficiary assessments, knowledge of the UN emergency architecture, and the ability to work in complex



context settings and setups as in the integrated embassies. A good mix of experienced generalists and specialists is required.

Deployments are challenged by (i) The decreasing number of overall deployments, which reduces opportunities to apply skills and to gain experience, (ii) Difficulty in recruiting for fragile contexts, leading to high turnover of experts involved and lack of continuity (where too many look for deployments in Switzerland), (iii) Difficulties for SHA experts in applying working procedures at the integrated embassies, (iv) Lack of independent reviews and evaluations of deployments (and DAs) that could be used for cross-thematic learning, and (v) Lack of long-term career perspectives.

**Appropriateness of the SHA Unit's organisational and managerial structure:** The intended "Swissness" of the current pool goes against the observed trend of internationalisation of similar pools of experts. The HA labour market in Switzerland has become more international and diverse in the past 10 years.

The heads and deputy heads of the EGs steer and coordinate their own groups, and these efforts vary considerably across EGs. Furthermore, the formal corps director has a huge portfolio to manage and is quite removed from the corps' day-to-day operations. Clearer leadership, vision and coordination of the overall corps could provide more strategic coherence, enhance performance management of the pool, etc.

The trend of more long-term deployments, support to HQ and representations abroad, and DAs mean that staff reach 10 years of service faster when working on such deployments than when working on RRTs. Therefore, the currently implemented 10-year time limit for the accumulated deployments for SHA experts has become an obstructive factor for the corps' functioning and results in a high drop-out rate of experienced experts.

The SHA Unit provides a diverse pool of experts and could be further used in other SDC or Swiss NGO contexts. There are unexploited synergies with other SDC departments (e.g. South Cooperation, Cooperation with Eastern Europe, and Global Programmes) and whole-of-government approach (WOGA) partners (e.g. Human Security Division (HSD)). The ability to provide technical backstopping to partners, Swiss NGOs and local actors is also underdeveloped.

The evaluation has – based on experiences from other similar pools of experts – carved out four options for a future organisational setup: (1) SHA Unit 2.0, (2) Rapid Response Standing Team within SDC HA, (3) Outsourcing of all deployment modes, and (4) Creation of a Swiss HA foundation. Options (1) and (2) maintain the SHA Unit as the operational body of Swiss HA, while options (3) and (4) outsource part or all of the deployment modes. Clear advantages and disadvantages are associated with each of the options and are presented in the report. The above options and their sub-options might be mixed for the further development of the SHA Unit.

## **Recommendations**

The following recommendations are conceptualised to provide the basis for discussion of the ongoing strategic reflections for an SDC Vision 2030. While some refer to organisational options for the SHA Unit with far-reaching institutional and political consequences that must be further scrutinised, others are of more of an operational nature, specifically the option SHA 2.0, which refers to optimising the Unit within its current institutional setup within SDC.

### **Strategy and vision:**

- 1: SDC should continue deploying Swiss HA expertise and should further strengthen its expertise to support people with humanitarian needs after emergencies or during protracted crises.

- 2: An organisational development process should be initiated to analyse whether the SHA Unit remains as the operational HA arm within the Swiss Government or whether an alternative organisational setup for the SHA Unit offers better prospects.
- 3: A new, refreshed vision for the SHA Unit should provide a clear, common understanding about its deployment modes and their interaction with other Swiss HA and FDFA instruments in the triple nexus.

#### **Structure, resources and coordination:**

- 4: The management should be strengthened by the establishment of a head of SHA Unit who should have the authority to take operational decisions.
- 5: Selection and retention criteria of the corps members should be improved to ensure efficient management of the pool of experts.
- 6: The organisational structure and functioning of the four deployment modes of the SHA Unit should be optimised by:
  - a) Strengthening the Rapid Response Teams (RRTs) by improving mobilisation and transparency (communication) of deployments;
  - b) Carefully assessing the overall context and the added value of Swiss expertise while designing Direct Actions (DAs);
  - c) Strengthening the process for deploying secondees to ensure clear added value and achievable terms of reference (ToR);
  - d) Broadening the tasks and intensifying SHA expert support for technical backstopping, advisory services and coaching for projects of the other SDC departments, (Swiss) NGOs and local partners.
- 7: Restructure, reduce and focus the current Experts Groups (EGs) to address future needs and rebrand their purpose and way of functioning.
- 8: Find a way how to retain experienced SHA members in the corps despite the 10-year-rule for SHA Unit contracts.

#### **Communication and knowledge management:**

- 9: Improved mutual understanding within FDFA of the various HA, developmental and peace promotion instruments, including the four SHA deployment modes and their strengths and weaknesses, is required.
- 10: SDC HA should review its evaluation practice to promote independent and/or peer reviews, enhance evidence-based learning and strengthen the knowledge management system.
- 11: The utilisation and exchange of knowledge and best practices between SHA experts (and EGs) and the SDC networks should be fostered.

# 1 Background and scope of the evaluation

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## 1.1 The Swiss Humanitarian Aid Unit as evaluation subject

Swiss Humanitarian Aid (HA) is universal and aims at saving lives and alleviating suffering. Swiss HA fulfils a threefold role, as it:

- Implements its own on-site projects as a pragmatic actor (implementer);
- Is a reliable and flexible humanitarian partner and funder for humanitarian organisations (donor);
- Engages as a state actor in humanitarian affairs, dialogues and negotiations (advocacy).

The Swiss Humanitarian Aid (SHA) Unit was created in 1973 based on a concept developed in 1971 ([Swiss Confederation 1971](#)). It is based on a [by-law from 1988](#). This legal basis provides the corps a special status within the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC). This corps currently comprises about 600 standby experts, plus 180 reserve experts, and is one of four instruments for Swiss HA. The pool of experts is part of the HA Department of SDC and is organised into 11 thematic expert groups (EGs). The Unit is internally and externally considered the main asset of Swiss HA. The experts of the SHA Unit fulfil tasks under four deployment modes to:

- Carry out rapid response actions (Swiss Rescue Chain or Rapid Response Teams (RRTs)) after sudden and onset disasters;
- Implement humanitarian projects of the SDC HA (Direct Actions (DAs));
- Support headquarters (HQ) or Swiss representations abroad (including the two regional HA hubs); and
- Provide technical expertise to partner organisations (secondments).

Important factors for successful humanitarian assistance are the adherence to HA principles and respect for international humanitarian law, an efficient coordination of actors and the availability of sufficient resources. Since the creation of the SHA Unit in 1973, new challenges have emerged during the past years and the context, and framework conditions have changed (see next chapter). Important for Swiss HA are also the various partnerships with HA organisations: There is a close partnership with the ICRC, which receives one third of Swiss HA funds, and with multilateral partners (WFP, UNHCR, UN-OCHA, UNRWA, UNICEF and others), which receive another third. The remaining third of the overall HA funds are allocated to international, Swiss and local NGOs, together with own implemented projects and the SHA Unit. The SHA Unit had a budget of CHF 26.5 m for 2020 for the deployment of experts (covering personnel costs without ancillary costs such as travel costs and allowances).

## 1.2 Purpose and objectives of the evaluation

The purpose of the evaluation is a prospective (future-oriented) and formative (learning-oriented) review of the SHA Unit. Considering the changing global environment in humanitarian aid delivery and achievements as well as current organisational setup of the Unit, the evaluation's findings provide useful information and evidence for the future orientation of this instrument of Swiss HA.

The main objective is to determine the **relevance, respectively the organisational appropriateness** and **added value**, of the SHA Unit and its contribution to the core mandate of SDC's HA as well as the overall SDC mandate and Swiss foreign policy in general. The changing framework conditions also have implications for the Unit. Thus, these were addressed as part of a context analysis in this evaluation in order to make future-oriented recommendations. The indicative evaluation questions are attached in the Terms of Reference (ToR) in Annex 1. They were complemented by another two questions during the inception phase. All the questions are stated and addressed in Chapter 5, 'Conclusions'.

The Global Network of HA published an evaluation guide (ALNAP 2016, p. 113) which mentions that, in the humanitarian context, the appropriateness criterion replaces the relevance criterion used in development cooperation. In this case, we follow the ToR of this evaluation and consider both criteria as complementary because the Unit's activities address both short-term humanitarian actions (RRTs) as well as longer-term changes (e.g. through DAs and secondments).

As this evaluation has an organisational unit as the evaluation subject, the standard Development Assistance Committee (DAC) evaluation criteria were not applied, but the analysis is structured according to the evaluation questions, namely the Unit's long-term relevance in terms of futurability of the themes, appropriateness of the strategic orientation (in terms of deployment modes) as well as tasks and future competencies needed. The appropriateness of the organisational setup (in terms of agility and lean procedures) and the effectiveness and efficiency of the Unit's interventions were also analysed.

As this evaluation has a strong focus on learning and future trends, it should not be considered as a classical evaluation with highly formalised methods and structures but as integrating elements of reflective learning and organisational development.

## 2 Evaluation design and methodology

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### 2.1 Evaluation design

The evaluation includes a combination of analytical tools and qualitative as well as quantitative methods. A rigorous design was not realistic as the construction of a counterfactual would have been a rather theoretical exercise due to the lack of robust baseline data, limited possibility for benchmarking with internationally defined standards and the uniqueness of each crisis. Thus, the focus was on global needs and Swiss context trends, organisational changes at SDC HA and the SHA Unit as well as deployment trends of the corps.

### 2.2 Analytical tools

The evaluation used the following analytical tools.

**Context analysis:** This included three dimensions: (i) the Swiss institutional environment in which the SHA Unit is embedded as part of the Swiss International Cooperation Strategies 2017–2020 and 2021–2024, (ii) the Swiss labour market context, and (iii) changes in the global humanitarian aid context.

**Institutional assessment:** Inspired by existing models for institutional analysis (i.e. McKinsey's 7-S framework, 2008), the assessment of the SHA Unit aims at diagnosing how the organisation functions by addressing the critical role of steering, coordination and adaptability in organisational effectiveness. This includes the review of the Unit's organisational structure and processes, its human resources, staff and skills, its management culture and style, and its financial resources. The analysis includes the advantages and disadvantages of organisational alternatives (e.g. optimised setup vs. outsourcing deployments or cooperating with foundations, NGOs or the private sector).

**Theory of Change (ToC):** The evaluation established a ToC during the inception phase and updated it based on further document review, feedback from the interviews and findings from the case studies. This brought information about the logic of the organisational purpose or the intervention of the work of the SHA Unit and the delivery through its deployment modes.

The ALNAP evaluation guide (ALNAP 2016, p. 113) mentions that in the humanitarian context the appropriateness criterion replaces the relevance criterion used in development cooperation. In this case, we follow the ToR and consider both criteria as complementary because the SHA Unit's activities address both rapid-response humanitarian actions as well as longer-term changes (e.g. through secondments).

### 2.3 Methods of data collection and analysis

**Document review:** This included a whole range of documents of the Federal Department of Foreign Affairs (FDFA), documents specific to SDC and the SHA Unit (policies, concepts, regulations, self-evaluations, progress reports, etc.), as well as studies and evaluations conducted by other donors, academia or international think tanks and websites of HA organisations. See Annex 9 for the various websites and documents.

**Semi-structured interviews and meetings:** In total, 40 semi-structured interviews and meetings were conducted based on an interview guideline with SDC staff, head and members of the SHA Unit, Whole-of-Government Approach (WOGA) partners, Swiss and international partner organisations (SRC, Helvetas, ICRC, WFP, UNHCR) and other like-minded

organisations (GIZ, Irish Aid, NORCAP and cinfo). The interviews took place face-to-face, by phone or online. Additionally, 3 meetings were held with SDC HA staff in order to better understand the deployment procedures. A list of all interviews and meetings is available in Annex 2.

**Focus groups:** 12 focus group discussions were conducted with selected members of each EG and one focus group discussion took place with desk officers of SDC HA, offering the opportunity to deepen the reflections and discussions on some selected topics and questions.

**Online survey:** The purpose of the online survey was to get a representative opinion about the SHA Unit from the perspective of its members. Therefore, the online survey reached out to all active, reserve and traceable members (those who left since January 2018). The Field Resources Section provided all e-mail addresses. The survey was pretested with staff of the SDC HA. The questions were sent on 26 August 2020 to 604 active members, 161 reserve members and 127 former members. After sending a reminder on 7 September, the survey was closed on 10 September 2020. In total 411 members responded to the 32 questions and 76 filled it out partially. This resulted in a high response rate of 55%, indicating the close connexion of the experts with the SHA Unit. For five questions, the opportunity was provided to add comments if the rating of the question was negative. These are summarised in Annex 4.

**Quantitative data:** For long-term contextual trends, the period from 2001 to 2019 was observed; for SHA Unit trends, the situation between 2011 and 2019 was considered. Based on the contractual data for SHA experts, various deployment modes were analysed for the period of 2015 to 2019 for the case studies. The same period applies for the financial data.

**Case studies:** During the inception phase, five case studies were selected by the evaluation team and the advisory group, based on a set of criteria (see Annex 7). It aimed to analyse the SHA Unit as an instrument of Swiss HA, its deployment modes and their interaction in more detail as well as the achieved results in the field through those deployments. Two in-depth case studies (Jordan and Myanmar) were to be covered by field assessments and three light case studies to be covered by desk studies complemented by interviews (Haiti, Mozambique and Ukraine). Due to the outbreak of COVID-19, the field assessments had to be cancelled and were replaced by interviews from Switzerland via phone or online. For the in-depth case studies, interviewees were selected to get feedback on the SHA Unit and experts' deployments from the following perspectives: SDC and WOGA desk officers for the selected countries in Bern, the Swiss Embassies and Swiss Cooperation Offices (SCOs) in Myanmar and Jordan (country and regional offices), SHA Unit experts previously or currently deployed as well as Swiss and international partners and other donors in the respective countries. A total of 47 interviews were conducted for the five case studies (see Annex 2).

**Workshops:** Altogether three workshops were conducted: (i) The Advisory Group (AG), which consisted of 25 members, was formed by SDC HA and accompanied the work of the evaluation team. It provided its guidance during the kick-off workshop and approved the inception as well as the evaluation report. (ii) Part of the evaluation team participated in HA webinar hosted by SDC HA for its staff based in the field (21 August 2020). The two rounds of discussions provided the opportunity to gather additional feedback from the staff working in the field in various connections to SHA experts. (iii) As this evaluation is forward-looking, a sub-group of the AG was invited to take part in a workshop validating the options for a possible future organisational setup. This contributed to sharpen the future options for the SHA Unit.

## 2.4 Limitations

A rigorous evaluation design was not considered feasible for this evaluation as the construction of a counterfactual did not seem appropriate and because there was limited possibility for benchmarking with other organisations (due to differing historical and political contexts) and the unique context/history of each crisis. Conducting a rigorous analysis was rather seen as consistent and transparent between the information and facts analysed, the following conclusions and the subsequent recommendations.

As this evaluation mainly deals with the relevance and appropriateness criteria, it must be kept in mind that meta-evaluations show that the relevance criterion is consistently rated better than the other DAC evaluation criteria (e.g. GIZ 2014). This may be explained by the fact that it is hard to prove that something is not entirely relevant (unless it is a failure or unless projects and organisations make adequate efforts to align their programmes to the needs of the beneficiaries, apply sectoral state-of-the-art practices and make efforts to follow international commitments).

As a methodological support, current international standards on best practice in humanitarian aid were proposed as a proxy to assess relevance, appropriateness, effectiveness and efficiency of the deployment modes. The most relevant standards are those of Good Humanitarian Donorship (GHD 2003), Core Humanitarian Standards (CHS 2014) – which are also part of the broader SPHERE standards – and the commitments/workstreams made under The Grand Bargain (TGB 2016). However, the SHA Unit's adherence to these overall HA standards cannot be judged here because it raises issues about the system boundaries, since SHA deployments are often combined with other measures such as financial contributions (e.g. in DAs or secondments).

Another challenge is the establishment of a transparent basis for judgements because “hard” criteria and rating scales for answering the evaluation questions are missing. The reference to international standards for HA facilitates the task to some extent but the room for interpretation remains significant.

Furthermore, the limited number of case studies which had to be conducted remotely and the online survey among SHA experts bear potential for certain biases, such as focusing on the donor perspective.

## 3 Context trends

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### 3.1 SHA context

#### 3.1.1 Swiss International Cooperation Strategies 2017–20 and 2021–24

Based on the Federal Constitution and legislation, every four years the Federal Council and Parliament define the strategic approach of Switzerland's international cooperation. The Federal Council defined the thematic and geographical priorities for the next four years in February 2020 in the Federal Dispatch.

Swiss HA is focused on two main priorities: “humanitarian assistance” and strengthening the legal framework for providing humanitarian aid. The three thematic priorities remain unchanged in the new Dispatch: (i), Protecting the Civilian Population, (ii) Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR), and (iii) Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH). Sexual and Gender-Based Violence (SGBV) is a separate priority theme in the current strategy and will become part of the Protection theme in the coming one, while Food Security and Livelihoods will become a new priority theme for the period 2021–2024.

The current Dispatch notes that “Swiss Humanitarian Aid must remain flexible in order to be able to respond as new crises, conflicts or disasters arise”. This flexibility was also an important aspect in the original concept for the creation of the SHA Unit (1971). Among other priorities, the current Dispatch emphasises stepping up Switzerland's multilateral engagement, supporting the adoption of effective reforms and international standards as well as addressing the nexus by strengthening developing countries' resilience to crises and integrating humanitarian aid, development cooperation and peacebuilding<sup>1</sup> more closely.

**Nexus** refers to the integrated use of instruments (bilateral and multilateral) of humanitarian aid and development cooperation (and peacebuilding). **Integrated** means the simultaneous use of instruments in the same context with the aim of strengthening synergies and increasing effectiveness for the population in the short, medium and long term (input from SDC HA).

#### 3.1.2 Previous evaluations including aspects of the SHA Unit

Various previous evaluations have indirectly addressed aspects of the SHA Unit. The recommendations from the ‘Evaluation of SDC Humanitarian Aid: Emergency Relief’ (SDC 2011) are rather of operational nature because of the many case studies analysed. Overall, the mix of HA instruments (incl. RRT and secondments of SHA experts) was assessed as very good and their implementation appropriate and effective (SDC 2011, p. 1). As a further point, the secondments were evaluated as very positive. “Overall, their contribution is highly appreciated (...). Interviews point to the interest in specialising and broadening the scope of skills of the secondees” (SDC 2011, p. 3).

The evaluation of the SDC Regional Programme ‘Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon and Syria’ (Spirli et al. 2014, p. V) concluded that “secondments to multilateral partners seem to be an efficient and effective tool to enhance monitoring by these partners and may allow for exploration of Swiss contributions – if properly managed and followed up”.

The evaluation of SDC HA Direct Actions (DA) (Campbell and Schüle 2017, p. iii) recognised “DAs as a valuable instrument with the potential to address humanitarian situations, pilot new approaches and work in areas that would be more difficult for most non-governmental

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<sup>1</sup> SDC HA has bracketed peacebuilding in its nexus definition whereas the triple nexus concepts considers peacebuilding as an integral part.



mandate-holders. Stakeholders appreciate Switzerland's use of DAs for their high quality and responsibility for results, and other donors express their envy of not having this instrument at their disposal". The study mentioned that DAs are often "criticised for SHA members' unwillingness to respect SDC's internal protocol and procedures, or for being too focused on their technical mandate to engage in holistic development approaches. (...) Notwithstanding this, DAs have been found to be more holistic, adaptable and able to deliver institutional changes. (...) DAs can be formative to sectoral approaches and shape national policy. When done well, they can shore up Switzerland's reputation and be a door opener for longer-term modes of cooperation. DAs perform less well where programmes are massively upscaled; here mandates are often more appropriate." Regarding the SHA Unit, it recommended that "in the first place, an institutional decision has to be made for or against DAs. If DAs are to be maintained, this must lead to a number of initiatives, (...) fit-for-purpose DAs must have an influence on how the SHA's pool of experts is developed and where this vessel is headed in the next 10 years" (Campbell and Schüle 2017, p. iii).

The "Independent Evaluation of the Linkage of Humanitarian Aid and Development Cooperation" (SDC 2019) provides generally a positive feedback on SHA's deployments: "This facility, managed by HA, was found to be enabling for staffing flexibility in countries in protracted crisis (...). Respondents noted that the Unit is a valuable staffing instrument in nexus engagements. The SHA roster of experts is also considered by respondents as a very useful mechanism not only for emergencies, but also for strengthening the technical expertise in cooperation offices. It was also noted by respondents that sometimes SHA experts might not be focused on long-term systems change because they are on short-term contracts" (SDC 2019, p. 26). In connection with the rotation of staff there is another interesting finding: "Across all country contexts examined during the evaluation, staff underscored that leadership and staff in SCOs are the key to SDC's successful development of nexus programming. A critical point is therefore the changeover of international staff and in particular of cooperation office positions" (SDC 2019, p. 7). The fact that there are different credit frameworks for Swiss HA, peace and developmental cooperation does not administratively ease WOGA cooperation in the nexus at the level of HQ.

The independent evaluation commissioned by SDC about its performance on DRR noted that, despite many achievements and good skills, the DRR portfolio is a patchwork due to conceptual and geographical breadth as well as an unclear and fragmented vision on DRR (Mazière 2019, p. iv).

Another independent evaluation commissioned by SDC (2020) analysed its engagement in the water sector between 2010 and 2017 and included WASH activities of SDC HA. The evaluation concluded that WASH interventions reached the poor and provided sustained benefits for more than 25 million direct and 17 million indirect beneficiaries. The clear strategy of the WASH interventions, their mixed implementation mode (financial contributions to NGOs and UN organisations, direct implementation by SDC HA on site, strategic secondments to multilateral and other organisations as well as in-kind donations of material) and a strong resource base was mentioned. It also noted that more could have been done on sanitation and hygiene.

The recent external review of the Swiss Rescue Chain (Ternström and Narayanan 2020) is in certain parts related to the current evaluation because the expert mobilisation is from the SHA pool. That review team concluded that specialised modules or staff deployed in the frame of multisectoral RRTs have been successfully deployed in other interventions, and that SDC HA should "systematically build more flexibility and adaptiveness into its response capacities, rather than maintaining a 'heavy' classified Urban Search and Rescue (USAR) capacity. An orderly adaptation of SDC HA strategies, external relationships, capacities and staffing pattern should be undertaken" (p. 3).

However, SDC HA decided to continue with the Swiss Rescue Chain in its (provisional) Management Response. This response emphasised that as founding member and long-standing chair of INSARAG (International Search and Rescue Advisory Group) and due to Switzerland's long and successful engagement in establishing a multilateral USAR classification system, it is in the interest of SDC HA to assure that INSARAG remains a credible multilateral actor in USAR (SDC 2020).

### 3.1.3 SDC/FDFA context

**The nexus debate:** The concept of enhancing resilience has emerged as an important framework to face challenges concerning the interlinkages between HA, longer-term development and peace. Addressing this so-called nexus aiming at strengthened linkages between humanitarian and development efforts requires a multi-stakeholder approach. In this regard, WOGA, as outlined in the strategy for the Swiss International Cooperation 2021–2024 (Swiss Government 2020), offers synergies but also challenges in terms of complementarity between developmental, humanitarian and other public as well as private actors and their instruments applied.

**SHA deployments as activities of integrated Swiss embassies:** Many important changes of the SHA Unit have been influenced by several reorganisation rounds within SDC/FDFA from 2008 onwards, which aim to harmonise SDC with FDFA. In the context of SDC's decentralisation, many competencies were delegated to the integrated Swiss embassies. Except for RRTs, administrative procedures, programming and reporting templates were standardised and decisions on project contributions to a certain degree were also decentralised.

Proximity to Swiss development cooperation at global and regional levels and Swiss diplomacy offer many opportunities, also in connection with the nexus issue described above, but can complicate the work of humanitarian aid. In general, SDC's development cooperation units appear to play an ever more important role in the field offices vis-à-vis SHA experts, and it needs to be clarified to what extent the new administrative procedures impact the various deployment modes.

## 3.2 Swiss labour market context

**A decreasing attractiveness of working abroad:** Many trends and difficulties described above have an impact on the interest in working abroad in a (difficult) humanitarian context. The question that arises is how to attract the most suitable and experienced professionals to apply for a longer-term job in a fragile context abroad. This also includes the issue of career opportunities and development for corps members and a conducive framework that allows retaining the best people in the pool. On the other hand, international aid workers are no longer simply welcomed in affected countries. New actors have entered the humanitarian space and are replacing Western institutions and their influence in certain countries and regions. In addition, many countries have strengthened their capacities to cope with disasters as they have become technically and institutionally emancipated, better resourced and increasingly hesitant to accept outside assistance, such as in the case of the earthquakes in Mexico 2017 and in Sulawesi (Indonesia) 2018.

**Limited job opportunities and increasing internationalisation:** The labour market situation in Switzerland also plays an important role. Employers are flexible to provide staff for short-term deployments (i.e. for RRTs) but are less eager to release highly qualified staff for months or even years (i.e. for secondments). SHA experts returning from longer deployments cannot always expect to immediately find another job that satisfies them. In this regard, self-employed

people have an advantage. Furthermore, promising labour market perspectives in Switzerland, compared to the rigid employment conditions and limited career development within the SHA, reduce the incentive to look for engagements abroad. In addition, there is competition from the private sector for talent, which makes it difficult for SHA to get hold of the most promising people.

The trend in Swiss HA organisations points to an important trend: the labour market and advertisements are increasingly internationalised. The proportion of international HA staff in Swiss NGOs and the ICRC has been increasing, and Swiss often represent a minority of the overall staff with the majority from EU countries (cinfo 2020, p. 9).

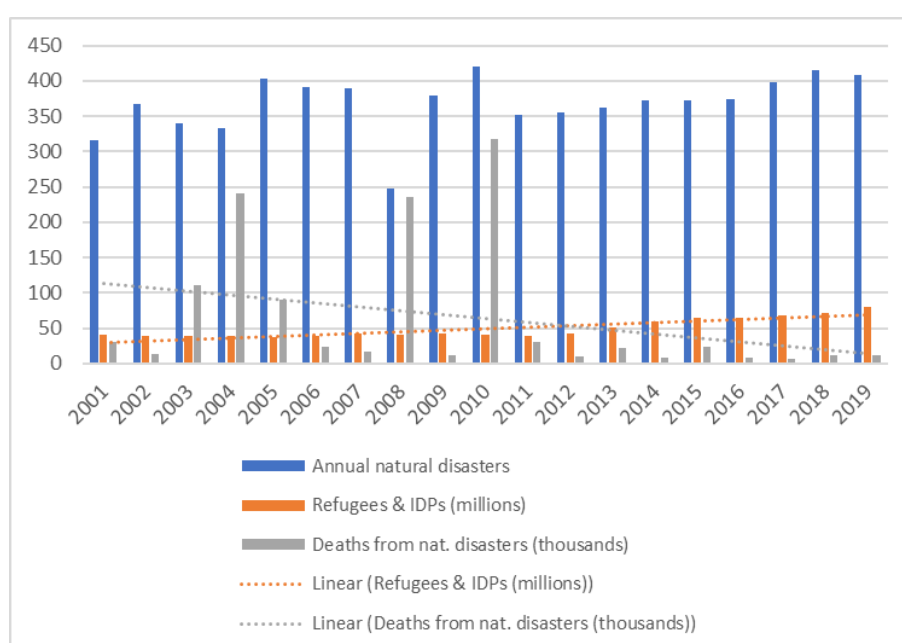
### 3.3 Global humanitarian aid context

Changes in the 'landscape' of crises: While the number of annual natural disasters fluctuates around 300 to 400 cases, the related number of deaths shows an erratic pattern depending on large-scale events and a general decreasing trend over the last 20 years. At the same time, economic losses due to natural disasters and the number of people affected by man-made disasters and war, in particular the number of displaced persons (i.e., refugees and Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs)) has increased to a historic high (see Figure 1).

Changes are also evident in the structure and duration of crises. Protracted crises are becoming the new norm, with 40% more ongoing crises considered to be protracted than in 1990. As these crises increase, countries and communities need more effective and sustainable strategies to build their resilience against shocks and stressors (FAO 2020), and HA needs to find ways to reach more with less.

Future climate change-related risks will create direct or indirect impacts at global scale and expose the poorest segments of populations to various risks (such as floods or droughts) and accelerate internal displacements as well as migration flows.

**Figure 1: Global trends in natural disasters, displacements and deaths 2001–2019**



Source: own compilation from UNHCR 2010, 2019 and <https://ourworldindata.org/about>, see also Annex 6.

Water scarcity and climate change effects are increasingly becoming core drivers for conflicts and humanitarian crises. Climate change involves complex interactions at different levels,

often with unpredictable outcomes. Secondary effects, such as the greater range of disease vectors as global temperature increases, increased conflicts over natural resources, and the slow reform pace of political systems to adapt to rapid climate change are all long-term concerns (HPG 2016).

**Erosion of international humanitarian norms:** In the past, conflicts catalysed high-profile efforts to resolve fighting, build peace and achieve accountability. However, the nature of conflicts changed from traditional conflicts between two parties to increasingly more conflicts with non-state actors that are difficult to include in the peace nexus. Humanitarian access becomes more and more difficult. As a result, there are several prolonged, internationalised proxy conflicts in Afghanistan, Libya, Syria and Yemen, to mention a few, and violations of international human rights and international humanitarian law continue. These combined with negative effects of counter-terrorism measures on humanitarian action lead to a dangerous erosion of international norms and enhance risks for humanitarian operations. For humanitarian aid workers, this contributes to a steadily expanding caseload and less access. It leads to increasingly dangerous operating environments in which violators of humanitarian principles benefit from widespread impunity. In turn, this makes humanitarian response more difficult and costlier to implement (UN-OCHA 2020).

**Safety and access to target populations:** Humanitarian outreach is constrained by violence against aid workers, which restricts humanitarian access to suffering people. Thus, the implementers' requirements concerning safety and security management and "duty of care" issues are becoming increasingly demanding. There is a trend to delegate more implementation responsibility to local organisations and to implement projects in particularly sensitive areas through remote management. Direct or indirect access is important for efficient delivery of aid and to avoid erosion of support. The recent global COVID-19 outbreak might lead to paradigm changes of how humanitarian and development aid is delivered in the future due to further limiting aid workers' physical access to target groups.

**New strategic guidelines:** Representatives from donor countries and international aid organisations agreed to 'The Grand Bargain' (TGB) in May 2016.<sup>2</sup> This outlined 51 commitments distilled in 9 thematic workstreams to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of international humanitarian aid.

The nexus is for SDC of great importance, as already mentioned above, and is the only cross-cutting commitment in TGB: to "enhance engagement between humanitarian and development actors". During the last few years, SDC HA was very active at various levels of TGB, especially regarding workstream 3 to increase the use and coordination of cash-based programming. The Cash Transfer Programming (CTP) approach is an important topic in several EGs of the SHA Unit.

Workstream 6 (participation) and especially workstream 2 (the localization agenda) are very debated internally in connection with SDC's HA DAs. Humanitarian response as a process of "recognizing, respecting and strengthening the leadership by local authorities and the capacity of local civil society in humanitarian action" can be seen as a contradiction to DAs, but the direct presence of SDC also holds great opportunities in this respect. SDC is committed to the localisation agenda as Switzerland, together with IFRC, is co-

**'Localising humanitarian response'** is a process of recognising, respecting and strengthening the leadership by local authorities and the capacity of local civil society in humanitarian action to better address the needs of affected populations and to prepare national actors for future humanitarian responses (OECD 2017). In the sense of TGB, it means that HA is delivered as locally as possible and as internationally as necessary.

<sup>2</sup> <https://interagencystandingcommittee.org/grand-bargain>

convenor of the workstream and in the annual independent report 2020 for the TGB, Switzerland's role is mentioned in connection with progress on localisation (IHG 2020).

**Bureaucratisation of humanitarian aid:** Another trend appears to be the bureaucratisation of humanitarian aid in general, also evidenced by the numerous standards applicable to HA (e.g. GHD, CHS, TGB). Accountability to taxpayers and local partners has become more demanding, not least because information and news spread fast across continents. Security issues and contracting in fragile contexts further complicate procedures that ensure that funds do not fall into the wrong hands.

## 4 Evaluation findings

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### 4.1 Relevance and value added by SHA

#### 4.1.1 Purpose of the SHA Unit

The original purpose of the SHA Unit was to establish a voluntary corps of qualified specialists for emergency operations abroad (Swiss Federal Council 1971). The corps was meant to be deployed in the form of ad-hoc teams (RRTs) or as individuals. Both deployment forms could take place in the context of a direct emergency action, support other Swiss organisations in their HA efforts or provide secondments for UN organisations.<sup>3</sup>

The defined purpose remained largely the same over time. Today's purpose of the SHA Unit within the broader goals of Swiss HA is (i) to provide rapid response to crises, (ii) to bring in Swiss/specialised expertise, (iii) to temporally enhance SDC capacities to deal with crises, and (iv) to provide technical or managerial support to strengthen partner organisations (see also ToC in Figure 3).

By the end of 2019, the SHA expert pool was comprised of 604 active and 179 reserve experts organised in 11 Expert Groups (EGs). Besides recruiting and deploying the experts, the Unit has also the mandate to train corps members, foster team building, develop conceptual tools and facilitate knowledge management (e.g. through exchange platforms).

The corps has accumulated sound experiences through its various deployment modes and is a highly visible and acknowledged instrument of Swiss HA engagement. Nevertheless, it is challenging to find and adjust the triangulation of the needs in the field, the political agenda in Switzerland and the availability of expertise. Furthermore, the gradual shift to longer-term deployments<sup>4</sup> over time opened up a dilemma between uncontested emergency orientation as the primary task and longer-term tasks. This is also indicated by the perception that a common purpose is currently missing, especially against the background of changing contexts.

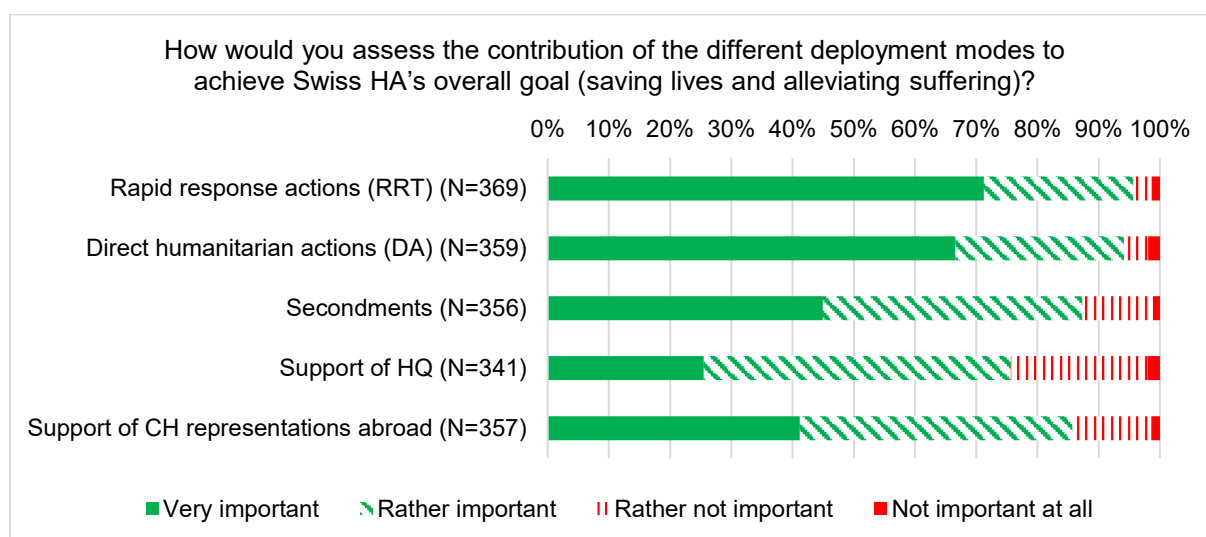
The contribution of the SHA deployment modes to the goals of Swiss HA can be well represented by the rating of the corps members. From the online survey, 71% of respondents rate RRT as “very important”, and 67% see DAs as “very important”. Considering the rating “rather important”, both modes reach 95% approval. The secondments (45%) and the support to the Swiss representations abroad (41%) receive somewhat lower values for the rating “very important”, and support to HQ is rated substantially lower (26%) than the other deployment modes, although still largely positive. This picture also holds true when considering the opinions of SDC HA staff and partner views.

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<sup>3</sup> The concept put significant emphasis on the complementarity of this corps with the ICRC and the SRC. The latter hosted a material depot on behalf of the corps.

<sup>4</sup> Individual contracts are for max. 1 year, but contract renewals allow to stay longer in DAs, field support or secondments.

**Figure 2: SHA Unit contribution to overall Swiss HA objectives**



Source: Online survey

#### 4.1.2 Characteristics of SHA Unit deployment modes

The operationalisation of the four deployment modes for SHA experts – for which more detailed concepts, ToR and guidelines are available – can be described as follows:

**RRT:** In case of an emergency, SDC HA forms a crisis cell. This team consists of various SDC HA functions<sup>5</sup> according to the crisis cell concept and sometimes includes other organisations considered as partners. This team assesses the situation and elaborates options. It defines the profile of required experts based on needs expressed by the recipient country, partners or SCO and the embassy. The Field Resources Section then mobilises the SHA experts. Contracts can last up to 21 days, which can be extended in the event of complex disasters. In case of extension of deployment, the RRT contract is changed into an SHA contract.

The Rapid Response service is responsible for the operational readiness of RRTs and is also involved for the deployment policy of the Swiss Rescue Chain. The latter was recently evaluated (Ternström and Narayanan 2020) and is not covered here.

**DA:** These projects are developed by the desks in cooperation with the Swiss representations abroad, and often based on previous assessment missions. The credit proposal needs to be discussed and approved by an Operation's Committee (OpCom) if the project budget exceeds CHF 2 m. The Field Resources Section then recruits the SHA experts through an announcement on the "closed user group" platform. (If experts are not available, they are recruited through cinfo.) Reporting follows the general SDC procedure. Contracts often last up to one year and can be renewed. Additional local staff is hired in the field.

**Support HQ/Field:** SHA experts are used to strengthen technical or administrative capacities at SDC HA in Bern or in the field (SCO and Embassies). At HQ, administrative support is often requested to fill gaps or balance understaffed divisions and therefore is not always related to a specific crisis situation. In the field, the goal is primarily to increase the capacity to cope with changes on the ground and crises. The experts are mobilised by the desk and the Field Resources Section in cooperation with the partner. Contracts vary between a couple of weeks

<sup>5</sup> A crisis cell at HQ is composed of the head of the cell, representatives from the staff function (KMZ, security, etc.), the Field Resources and Equipment and Logistics Sections, the Multilateral Division and the concerned desk. Often a representative from the SRC also participates as well as representatives from other organisations when needed (e.g. REDOG and DDPS).

and one year but can be renewed for support to the field. (At HQ, contracts are limited to one year.)

**Secondments:** These support mainly the five UN HA organisations WFP, UNHCR, UNICEF, UNRWA and UN-OCHA after a natural disaster or an outbreak of a crisis through operational secondments. Often, but not always, they are linked to an earmarked or in-kind contribution from SDC HA or to strategic secondments at higher policy levels. The recruitment is done by the desks and the Field Resources Section and depends on the approval of the proposed candidate(s) by the partner.

#### 4.1.3 The reconstructed theory of change (ToC)

The reconstructed ToC of the SHA Unit illustrates the intervention logic in the context of the Swiss HA (see Figure 3). This has been reconstructed on the basis of the review of several documents, such as the Dispatch on Switzerland's International Cooperation 2017–2020 and 2021–2024, the operational concept for Swiss HA and the SHA Unit 2009–2014 (FDFA 2008), as well as the Foreign Policy Strategy 2020–2023 (FDFA 2020) and findings of this evaluation.

While the overall goal of Swiss HA is to save lives and alleviate suffering, there are two strategic goals contributing to this: (i) preventing and overcoming the consequences of crises, disasters and fragility and (ii) contributing to strengthening the international humanitarian framework. This is achieved through three outcomes (also described as the triple role of SDC HA): (i) implementing own on-site projects as a pragmatic actor (implementer), (ii) being a reliable and flexible humanitarian partner and funder for humanitarian organisations (donor), and (iii) engaging as a state actor in humanitarian affairs, dialogues and negotiations (advocacy).

The SHA Unit is one of four instruments of Swiss HA. The others are provision of relief goods, financial contributions, and dialogue and advocacy. It is interesting to note that the SHA Unit, while extensively contributing to SDC HA response on the ground and to preparedness, also directly or indirectly contributes to other outcomes of the SDC HA. To note, the (strategic) secondments and support to field offices contribute also to SDC HA being a reliable and flexible partner and a key actor in promoting HA principles. This enables the operational arm of the SDC HA, the SHA Unit, to contribute to the triple role of the SDA HA.

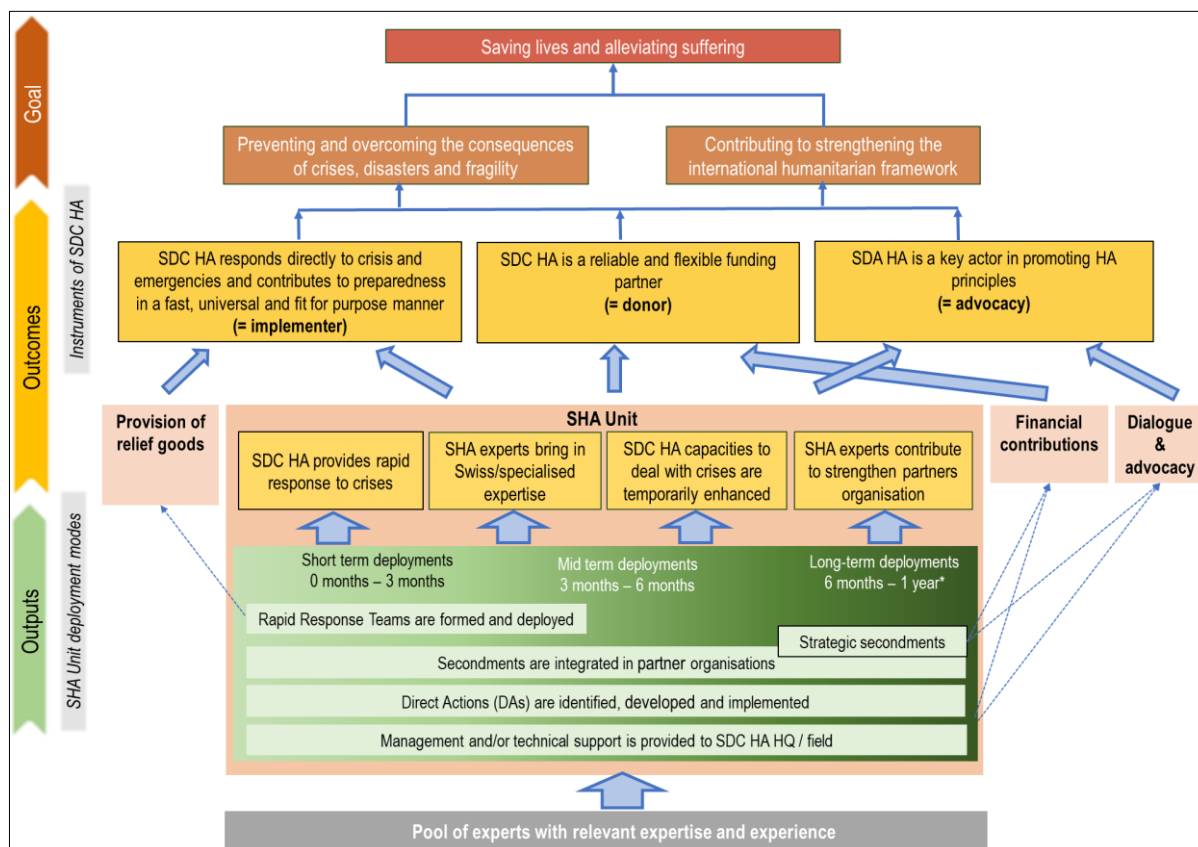
The deployments of experts contribute to reaching the outcomes at the SHA Unit level: SDC HA responds quickly to crises, SHA Unit experts bring in Swiss/specialised expertise, SDC HA has capacities to deal with crises are temporarily enhanced, and SHA Unit experts contribute to strengthen partner organisations. The contribution of the SHA Unit, complementing and/or combined with the other instruments of the SDC HA triple role, is the core of this evaluation and where most of the evaluation questions converge.

For sake of clarity, this ToC focuses on deployment modes and include neither thematic areas and the various EGs nor the priority themes for the SDC HA 2017–2020 (protecting the civilian population, DRR, WASH and SGBV) or 2021–2024 (WASH, Food Security & Livelihood, Protection (incl. SGBV/education in emergencies) and DRR).

In terms of visioning the four deployment modes within the triple nexus and the time scale, a visualisation was drafted and is attached in Figure 16 in Annex 5.



**Figure 3: Reconstructed theory of change of deployment modes of the SHA Unit**



\* Note: Long-term deployments can last up to 4 years if contracts are renewed.

Source: own compilation from various documents and sources

#### 4.1.4 Consequences of changing framework conditions within the FDFA

The integration of deployments into Swiss representations (SCOs and embassies) has made them more complex and more demanding in terms of coordination and administration as more WOGA partners are involved.

The different case studies (see Annex 7) conducted for this evaluation have shown that integration has also brought several positive effects. Projects of SDC HA are more carefully assessed and often also designed for the long term, in close cooperation with the other present SDC and WOGA actors and with more participation of local stakeholders. This, however, has contributed to increased frustrations among many members of the corps as they feel downgraded in their status and scope of responsibility (interviews). The new administrative and reporting requirements, which became SDC-wide standards after the reorganisation, caused an additional burden for the external and short-term experts, resulting in more administrative requirements and workloads also for the embassy staff.

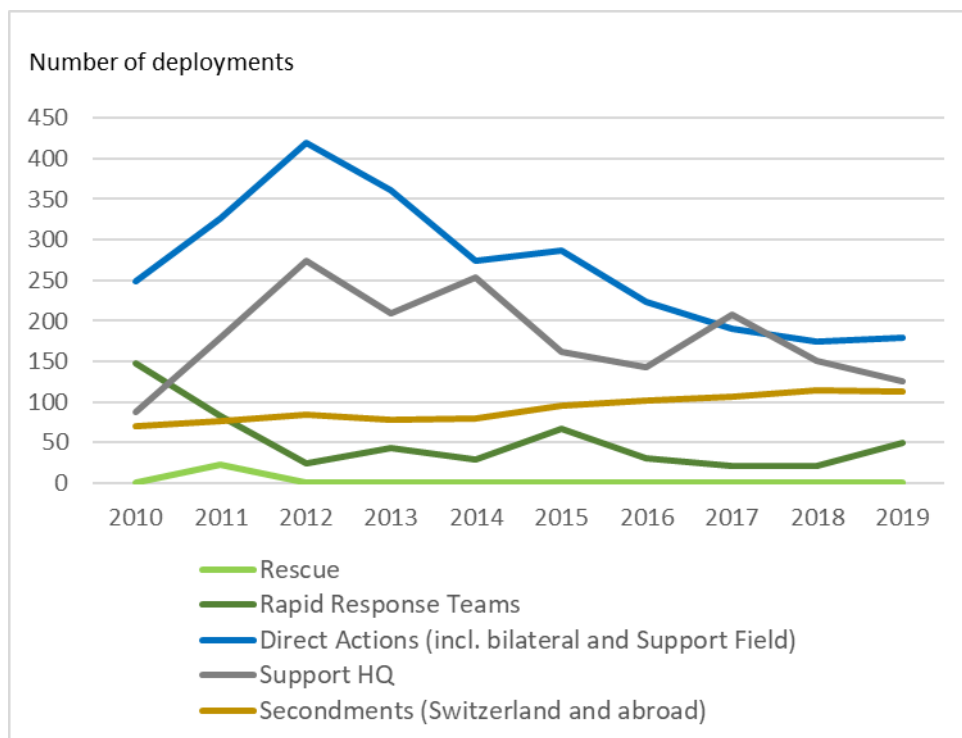
There is also the widespread opinion that risk-aversion has become mainstream in the FDFA (but also within Swiss NGOs). The SHA Unit's ability to deploy experts in fragile contexts or conflict situations was identified as a challenge. Therefore, more and more activities are outsourced either to multilateral organisations or INGOs who then bear the operational and safety risks instead of SHA experts. It is also difficult to find qualified SHA Unit staff for fragile contexts, while it is easy to find them to work in Geneva.

There appears to be a controversial perception of whether the diplomatic passport of corps members is an advantage (providing better accessibility), as this very much depends on contexts because procedures for accreditation differ and can be lengthy.

### 4.1.5 Deployment trends

The needs are communicated by partner governments, Swiss representations abroad or international organisations via geographical desks or the Multilateral Division. The following figures of the deployment trends show the number of deployments over time.

**Figure 4: Development of number of SHA expert deployments** (Switzerland and abroad)



Source: Personnel statistics 2019

After a peak in 2012, with 833 deployments in total, the number has more or less gradually decreased to 466 in 2019. Swiss Rescue Chain deployments occurred only in 2011. DAs and support to HQ and field representations saw a gradual decrease of deployments after that peak. This is a concern expressed by members of the corps as it reduces opportunities for field exposure and acquiring new know-how. Secondments, however, have doubled since 2010 to around 110 deployments per year on average. Because these deployments last substantially longer than RRTs, they are more attractive from a full-time equivalent (FTE) perspective.

**RRT:** These are the flagship deployments as they bring a lot of visibility. Their deployment depends on the occurrence of disastrous events and related requests by partners. RRTs represented on average only 1.4% of the SHA expert deployments expressed in FTEs<sup>6</sup> between 2010 and 2019 (see Table 10 in Annex 5).

<sup>6</sup> This does not include 0.1 FTE deployed for the Swiss Rescue Chain (only in 2011).

**DA:** DAs must fulfil four criteria (see box). Especially the fourth criteria, “no other partner can provide the results in the same time and quality”, is contested as many interviewees questioned that SDC HA can really provide better results compared to other actors. With the ending of larger DAs (especially reconstruction projects after the Nepal and Haiti earthquakes), and based on strategic reflections, DAs have been diminishing in the last years although SDC HA maintains the target of allocating up to 10% of its budget for DAs. This required identifying new DAs. The related efforts started in 2019 but until an increase of DAs can be seen takes time as they need sound planning and approval processes. The recent travel restrictions imposed by COVID-19 have further hampered the identification of new DA opportunities in the field. DAs abroad (including the support to the field representations, as the SDC HA statistics counts them together)<sup>7</sup>, made up to 36.8% of the FTE allocation of the SHA Unit on average during the past 10 years.

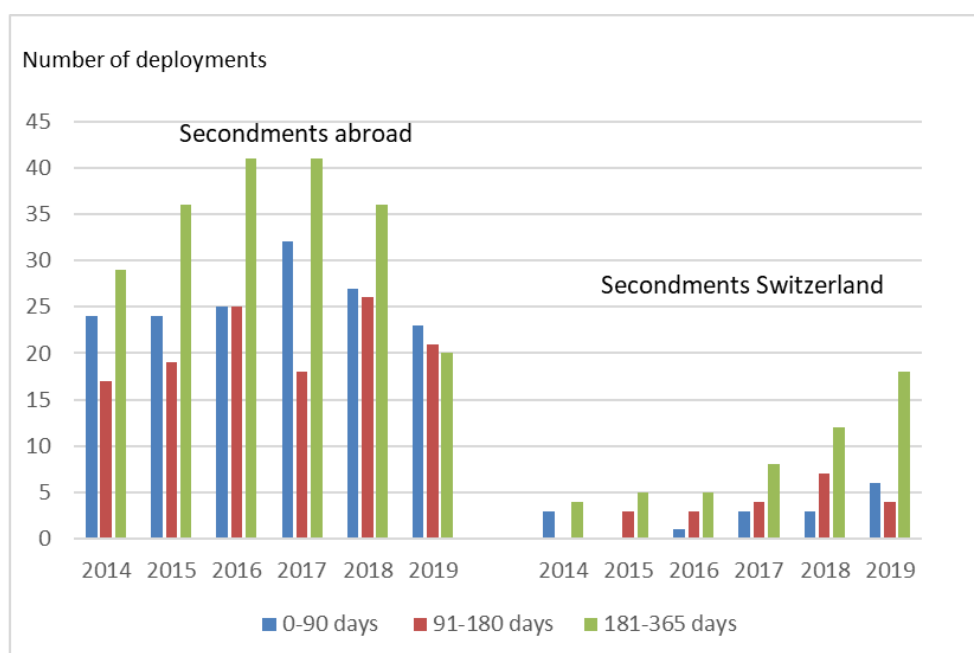
A **Direct Action** (DA) is a project or programme in which the financing organisation is also the implementer. In DAs, SHA experts directly support the affected population/partners. Criteria to be fulfilled are: (i) Switzerland as a state actor can work on the basis of humanitarian principles, (ii) Swiss expertise is available and its support is welcomed by the affected state, (iii) Switzerland as a state actor has advantages, and (iv) no other partner can provide the results in the same time and quality (Swiss Government 2017, p. 2435).

**HQ/Field Support:** This deployment mode is a flexible mode to add resources in Berne or in the field representations to support SDC HA. HQ support makes up to 14.4% of the SHA Unit's FTE. This also contributes to training SHA experts. The support to field representations is statistically subsumed under DAs abroad (see above). Another 2.5% of the SHA Unit's FTE were mandates and support in Switzerland according to the SHA Unit's needs.

**Secondments:** These have been prioritised during the last years. Over 80% of SHA experts deployed as secondees are seconded to one of the four HA organisations of the UN (WFP, UNHCR, UNICEF, UN-OCHA) with which SDC has memoranda of understanding (MoUs). Other partners like ministries or NGOs play a minor role as hosts. The secondments abroad represented 32.7% of the FTE allocation, and the secondments in Switzerland – which only started after 2011 – made up to 12.5% of the average FTEs between 2010 and 2019. Figure 5 shows that longer-term secondments have increased, especially those in Switzerland (mostly Geneva-based). The Swiss-based secondments increased from less than 1 FTE in 2010 to 15 FTEs in 2019. The increase of the secondments varies between EGs, the biggest increase noted for the EG “Protection”.

<sup>7</sup> The statistics also show direct actions in Switzerland which appear not to be DAs in the sense presented under the deployment modes but rather mandates to support the functioning of the SHA Unit. See Table 10 in Annex 5.

**Figure 5: Development of secondments per category of duration and place**



Source: Compiled from data received from the Field Resources Section.

A specific issue related to secondments is the matching of needs (ToR submitted by partners) and the availability of SHA experts. While around 114 secondments were deployed on average in 2018 and 2019, 73 requests could not be filled with SHA experts (or external experts), mainly because (i) No expert was available in time (33), (ii) The host withdrew the request (13), (iii) The SDC HA Desk stopped the search because it became clear that nobody would apply or match the needs (12), and (iv) The candidate was not accepted by the host (7) (source is information received from the Field Resources Section). This illustrates the pressure to find qualified and available people under time pressure because UN agencies often place the offer with other standby partners in parallel.

## 4.2 Appropriateness of the SHA Unit's strategic orientation (deployment modes)

### 4.2.1 Strengths and weaknesses of the four deployment modes

The four deployment modes allow the SDC HA to assign the experts of the corps in a variety of ways. While the corps was initially designed for short-term deployments, the experts are nowadays also deployed over several years. This has allowed SDC HA to cover more and more tasks with the experts of the corps in a very flexible and adaptable way. Overall, the combination of field project activities (RRTs, DAs) with diplomatic staff (SHA corps members) and linking this with Swiss representation at global level (e.g. UN fora) is considered as an asset (interviews).

While the corps' rapid response has maintained a good reputation, secondments and in particular DAs are debated within the FDFA and SDC HA, but among SHA experts their relevance and outcome are more positively assessed (see Figure 14 in Annex 5). The following table provides the current situation and assessment of the four deployments based on the various sources used for this evaluation.

**Table 1: Strengths, weaknesses and challenges of the four deployment modes**

<b>Rapid Response Teams (RRTs)</b> The aim of RRTs is to act rapidly in case of emergency to support countries and local population. This is closely interrelated with the Swiss Rescue Chain, where other Swiss actors support deployments at larger scale.		
Strengths	Weaknesses	Challenges
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• High visibility in Switzerland, great media attention and positive feedback from the public and policy-makers;</li> <li>• Fast, flexible and agile deployment (usually within 48 hours);</li> <li>• Well-established cooperation with different federal authorities and clear role allocation;</li> <li>• Field Resources and Equipment and Logistics Sections work well;</li> <li>• Selected team leader is very experienced, and most SDC HA staff (structure post), know the internal procedures and the coordination issues in the field.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Insufficient cooperation with other supported partners in the field (lack of synergies);</li> <li>• Perceived lack of transparency in the process and criteria used in selecting SHA Unit experts to be deployed;</li> <li>• SHA Unit experts sometimes lack the social and cultural skills necessary for field work;</li> <li>• Insufficient understanding of the context and the role and procedures of SDC/embassies;</li> <li>• Small deployments and institutional time pressure hardly allow including inexperienced corps members.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Difficulty in assessing the needs and identifying the thematic areas and teams to be deployed to be fit for the purpose on the ground in a short time;</li> <li>• Pressure to act when time is short and media pressure is high;</li> <li>• Sufficient level of communication and coordination with the embassy;</li> <li>• Finding a niche in order to move into the recovery phase as part of the nexus;</li> <li>• Late responses to Swiss HA offers to deploy an RRT, which adds to time pressure.</li> </ul>
<b>Direct Action (DA)</b> DAs are bilateral self-implemented projects by SDC HA. DAs vary widely in terms of scope, duration and also the extent to which they promote localisation and strengthen capacity development of local partners.		
Strengths	Weaknesses	Challenges
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Flexibility and control over the whole process, including the allocation of resources (local staff, procurement, etc.);</li> <li>• Visibility of SDC, Swiss HA and Switzerland in the country of operation;</li> <li>• Access to local population in difficult or remote areas;</li> <li>• A direct sense of what is happening in the field gives insight in policy dialogue;</li> <li>• Doors open to local partners and networks: when an integrated embassy is there it can support in addressing other difficult issues;</li> <li>• Creates bridge after RRT: DAs can respond fast to early recovery needs;</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Difficulty in finding the right experts for the right place, especially for a long period of time in fragile and complex contexts, leading to high turnover of experts involved and lack of continuity;</li> <li>• Complicated financial management procedures, inadequate financial system and increased administrative burden the embassy;</li> <li>• May be donor- and supply-driven with many Swiss experts (instead of more local professionals), which also increases costs;</li> <li>• Little focus on promoting participation and empowerment of local partners;</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• More staff needed due to heavier admin. procedures and coordination needs (in comparison with mandates);</li> <li>• The dual role of donor and implementer reduces the interest in critical, external views and independent evaluations, consequently limiting learning;</li> <li>• Highly dependent on timing and context to be successful and meaningful (good integration into an SDC country approach is required);</li> <li>• Concept not well defined and understood because of diverse terminology of “direct actions” within SDC;</li> <li>• The term “direct action” (DA) can be misleading and be</li> </ul>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Swiss expertise, high professional standards and technical know-ledge.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Not supported by everybody at SDC HQ and in embassies, which leads to frictions.</li> </ul>	<p>perceived as more limited than it is (i.e., DAs do not only include hardware; they also place importance on soft components).</p>
<b>HQ support and representations abroad</b> Temporary deployment of SHA experts to HQ, embassies and field offices strengthens management and thematic capacities during crises and catastrophes.		
<b>Strengths</b>	<b>Weaknesses</b>	<b>Challenges</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>More flexible employment conditions make it possible to react faster and less bureaucratically to new requirements and therefore to deploy expertise efficiently where needed;</li> <li>Many tasks in the country of operation can only be carried out through the (additional) involvement of the corps members;</li> <li>These enable SHA experts to better understand SDC's working approaches at HQ and in the field and increase chances to apply for structure posts at SDC.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Difficult to justify that SHA experts manage country portfolio or have leading functions abroad which typically would fall under the job of an SDC structure post (especially in SCOs integrated in embassies);</li> <li>SHA Unit experts have different contracts, working conditions and career perspectives, even on long-term assignments and in integrated embassies, which can lead to internal frictions.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>SCO in crisis contexts are often heavily dependent on SHA experts to fulfil their tasks, even in the mid- to long-term;</li> <li>Other departments within the FDFA are envious of not having flexible access to additional human resources;</li> <li>The temptation exists to temporarily fill staffing gaps that should be provided by structure posts.</li> </ul>
<b>Secondments (Switzerland and abroad)</b> Secondments to multilateral and other organisations aim at strengthening the response, thematic and strategic capacity of partner organisations.		
<b>Strengths</b>	<b>Weaknesses</b>	<b>Challenges</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Complementary "in-kind support" to funding commitments, which provides operational insights (monitoring and thus accountability);</li> <li>Insights into the working modality of other HA organisations (opportunity for SHA experts to gain working experience);</li> <li>Field presence and feedback from the field in areas where SDC is not present;</li> <li>Contributions to policy dialogue with and institutional development of multilateral partners;</li> <li>Possibility for SDC HA to promote its own ideas and</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Difficulties in placing people because there are not sufficiently qualified applicants (i.e., they lack cluster coordination or UN experience) to be able to make rapid and matching offers;</li> <li>Difficulties in placing people – especially in higher positions – because UN organisations want to fill them with own staff who know the organisation and because of the limited deployment length offered;</li> <li>Host organisations would prefer cash contributions to finance their activities and staff;</li> <li>SDC HA (Field Resources Section and Multilateral</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Uncertainty regarding the precise purpose: gaining insights, practice strategic influence or promote young SHA experts who could gain experience abroad?</li> <li>Swiss secondments from SHA staff generally have only advisory function and can only be used to a limited extent, be it in staff supervision or in the authority to issue instructions in administrative processes;</li> <li>Host organisation might not see Swiss secondees as internal staff but as "donor" spies who report back, so secondees are not fully trusted;</li> <li>SDC's priorities might not correspond with the host</li> </ul>



<p>expertise in the host organisation;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Appreciation from UN hosts that secondments are not only at entry level (P3), but also at mid-career level (P4 and P5).<sup>8</sup></li> </ul>	<p>Division) do not have the resources for supporting secondment processes (incl. debriefings).</p>	<p>organisation's most urgent needs;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Deploying SHA experts to non-UN organisations, e.g. NGOs/ministries due to differences in organisational culture and salary schemes.</li> </ul>
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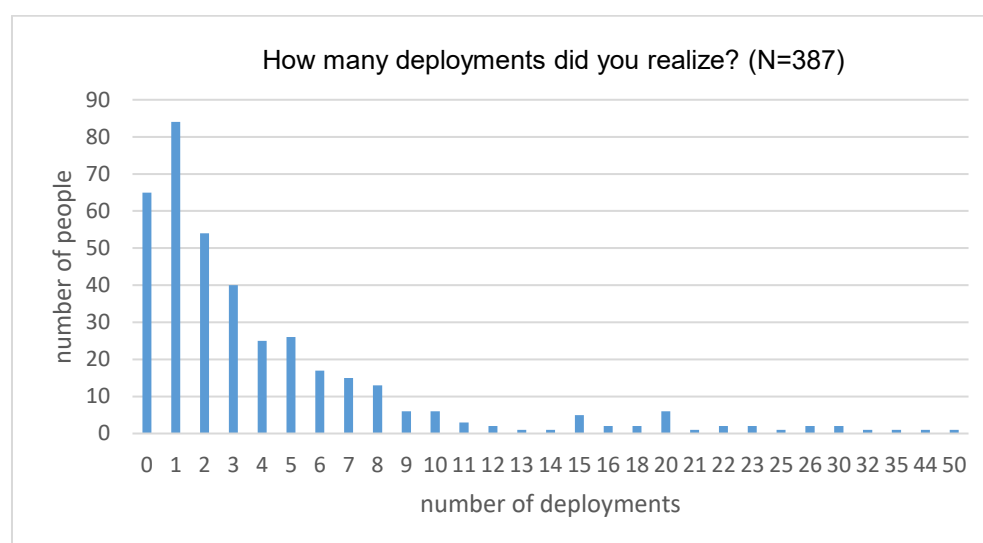
Source: own compilation from interviews, focus groups and case studies

Overall, the combination of on-site activities by SHA experts (in RRTs and DAs) and insights from secondments allow Swiss representation abroad and enable Swiss diplomacy in general to use locally gained expertise for policy dialogues at various levels (incl. at the global level with UN fora). This multi-level engagement is considered as an asset (interviews).

## 4.2.2 Deployment pattern

The following graph, compiled from the online survey data, clearly illustrates that the deployments are unevenly distributed among the corps members. While 66 experts have none (corresponding to 18% of the respondents), 139 (34%) have only 1 or 2 deployments and 14 (3.6%) have more than 20 deployments, making up for 46% of all deployments. Having good and deep experience is an asset for experts as the deployment contexts get increasingly complex. Therefore, the concern is not the concentration of deployments but rather the many experts with few deployments.

**Figure 6: Frequency of deployments by SHA experts**



Source: Online survey

Rather surprisingly, the online survey also revealed that some SHA experts are not aware of their actual status, e.g. 16% of active members as per SDC saw themselves as reserve members. Also, the interviews confirmed that the status is not always clear. There appears to be a lack of monitoring of experts' status, fitness for the purpose and motivation.

<sup>8</sup> P-staff are UN staff members. They are internationally recruited. P4 and P5 are mid-level professionals with a minimum of 7 years and 10 years, respectively, of relevant working experience. Above P5 are Director position D1 and D2, considered senior level. <https://careers.un.org/lbw/home.aspx?viewtype=SC>

**Table 2: Perception about the current status of the SHA experts (N=411)**

Perceived category by respondents	SHA expert category		
	Active	Reserve	Former
Active member (N=283)	84%	22%	16%
Reserve member (N=100)	16%	66%	32%
Former member (N=28)	1%	12%	51%

Source: Online survey

The members of the corps are also classified according to the deployment mode they best fit in and their readiness due to different mobilisation requirements: Out of the 600 experts, 15% are qualified or available for the Swiss Rescue Chain only, 19% for the Swiss Rescue Chain and RRTs, 22% for RRTs only, and 44% of the corps members do not belong to these rapid deployment modes and are used for the other deployment types (DAs, HQ/field support and secondments).

## 4.3 Appropriateness of SHA's organisational and managerial structure

### 4.3.1 Strategy, concepts and shared values

The interrelations between the SHA Unit and the SDC HA (e.g. the other Sections and Divisions) are difficult to draw precisely, as most activities are implemented in an integrated manner within the HA Department.

The SHA Unit is always described as integral part of the SDC HA (e.g. in the Federal Dispatch 2017–2020 and the implementation concept of the SDC HA 2009–2014). A more recent positioning document about the SHA purpose appears to be lacking.

Currently, the SHA Unit lacks a framework strategy or operational concept but is well documented and equipped with guidelines and tools. Together with structural changes in the deployments towards longer secondments, this deficit contributes to a widespread perception that a clear vision for the corps is missing. The original purpose of helping quickly in emergencies through the Swiss Rescue Chain and RRTs has been shifting to supporting SDC HA at HQ and in field representations and by deploying SHA experts to partner organisations through secondments.

The core essence and professional competence of the SHA Unit are the experts organised around the 11 thematic EGs. The membership is complicated as some corps members are part of several EGs, some members of the EGs have not been recruited as SHA experts through the standard procedures, and sometimes deployed experts are recruited externally if they are not available in the pool. This diversity can be an asset but it also challenges the creation of an own SHA Unit or EG identity.

### 4.3.2 Organisational setup and management of the SHA Unit

**Overall setup:** The following graph depicts the current situation of the Unit within the organisational structure of the SDC HA Department.<sup>9</sup> The corps is in a cross-cutting position vis-à-vis the HA Divisions and is coordinated by a desk officer of a division and supported by the Field Resources Section. This section was subject to an external audit (2018) to examine its possible integration into the HR department of the FDFA. The audit confirmed that the

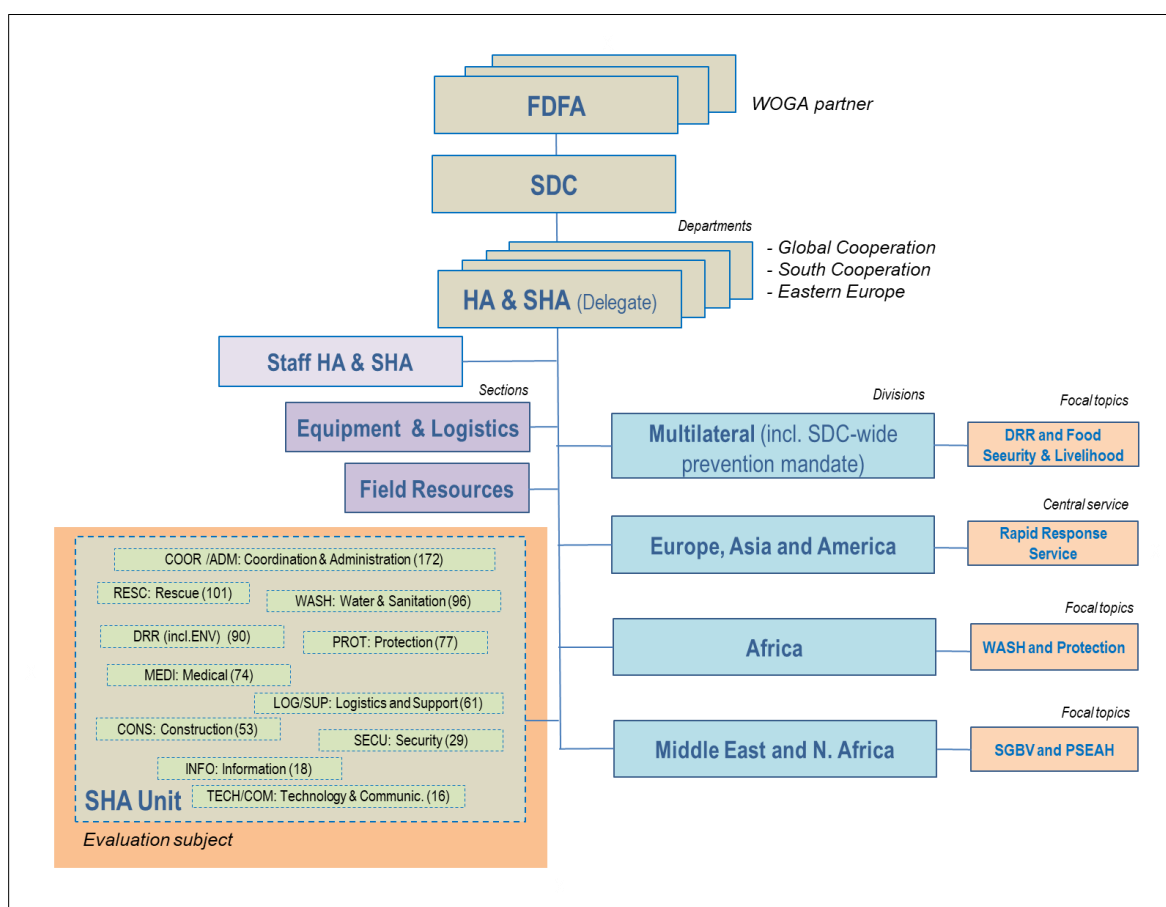
<sup>9</sup>



present structure (incl. the Equipment and Logistics Section) should not be changed. The Director of SDC HA and of the SHA Unit has a special role as Delegate of the Federal Council because she/he is responsible for the adequate preparedness of the SHA Unit and ensures the necessary financial and human resources.

The appropriate organisation and steering of the EGs as well as of thematic focal points within SHA Unit, SDC HA and entire SDC (including its thematic networks) is a challenge due to the many dispersed stakeholders within SDC and shifting priorities of the Swiss International Cooperation strategies. The complicated thematic matrix, including 11 EGs, four modes of deployments and the four geographical and one multilateral division of SDC HA provide a challenging environment for coordination and operations.

**Figure 7: Current organigramme of SDC HA and SHA Unit**



Note: This organigramme does not show the two SDC HA regional hubs in Bangkok and Lima, which have a regional mandate and are attached to the embassies. Additionally, there is a UN warehouse in Dubai used for storage of SDC HA emergency items, managed by the Equipment and Logistics Section.

Source: Own compilation based on information obtained from SDC HA

While the corps members have assessed the capacity of the SHA Unit's organisational setup to continue in the future, and they ranked the thematic orientation quite favourably in the online survey (see Annex 4), answers to the open questions from the survey and the interviews have brought forward more critical views. Some critics mentioned a lack of leadership and strategic guidance for the SHA Unit, unclear profiles of the EGs and their members, deficits in soft skills and ability to work in complex contexts and internal structures (i.e. an integrated embassy), and the rather user-unfriendly Shareweb and old-fashioned mobilisation and human resources management (see synthesis of the online survey results in Annex 4).

In 2015, an attempt was made to further develop the EGs and to reduce their number from 10 to 6 or 7. However, this effort encountered problems because identification issues and organisational questions were raised that led to the decision to dismiss the merger of EGs. As an outcome, the number of EGs increased to 11 because the EG “Protection and Sexual and Gender-Based Violence (SGBV)” was carved out of the EG “Coordination and Administration”. This was due to the fact that protection tasks became a key priority in the Swiss International Cooperation Strategy 2017–2020.

The Rapid Response service is responsible for the operational readiness of SHA experts for RRTs and the Swiss Rescue Chain. The service is also responsible for training and knowledge management as well as for certification: The RRT mode is ISO 9001-certified (2015) and the Swiss USAR capacities undergo the re-classification of the International Search And Rescue Advisory Group (next planned for 2021).

**Management at the SHA Unit level:** The coordination of the SHA Unit is ensured by a desk officer of the SDC HA who has other primary duties (e.g. a geographical desk). The coordination of the SHA Unit is done on a part-time basis, and the coordinator has no authority to give directives to the EG heads and its members. Several interviewees see a lack of clear guidance and steering at the SHA Unit management level and quite a lot of responsibility delegated to the heads of the EGs.

The compartmentalised ‘silo effect’ was used to describe the overall linkages and exchanges between EGs by various interview partners and this particularly in a crisis cell. In such a context, competition was seen as a prevailing mode of collaboration between the EGs rather than exploiting synergies. Given the gradual reduction in deployments – which is more prominent for certain groups (e.g. “Medical”, “Technology & Communication” and “Construction”) – competition gained more place between the groups and the reduction of deployment opportunities negatively affects the motivation of SHA experts. However, on developing action lines for RRTs and training an increase in collaboration between EGs was described.

**Management at the EG level:** Ideally, each thematic group of experts has a head or a deputy head from an SDC HA structure post (part-time) and the other is an external corps member (part-time).<sup>10</sup> There are currently two groups where the leadership is entirely composed of external members. This results in an asymmetry as those groups are less anchored within SDC and have a higher barrier to receive relevant information timely enough. Having a head or deputy under a structure post of the FDFA has demonstrated to be an important success factor in integrating the thematic areas at SDC HA level to be up to date with the latest deployment trends and opportunities and for communication with its members. At the same time, synergies can be established and maintained when head and/or deputy head of EG have functions in other related units at SDC HA (e.g., Head of EG Logistics is Deputy Head of the Equipment and Logistics Section and the Head of EG Security is Deputy Head of the Section Security of the Krisenmanagement-Zentrum, KMZ).

Each EG operates along an operational concept (2017–2020) outlining its functions and priorities which is prepared for each period of a Swiss International Cooperation strategy. Related to this were also internal reflections on how to position the EG regarding the various deployment modes.

Nowadays the heads of EGs meet two to three times a year with the SDC HA management and each EG conducts an annual workshop for its members. Additionally, the head and deputy meet for a planning workshop organised by the Field Resources Section to plan the training

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<sup>10</sup> The workload corresponds to 20–25% FTE for internal heads and deputy heads. External heads and deputy heads have a tighter time budget (see Table 11 in Annex 5).

courses of their group. Further communication and exchange between heads of EG and SDC HA management occur on an ad-hoc but not on a regular basis.

The lack of action taken based on poor performance of experts is highlighted as a major challenge in efficiently managing the EG as a group and the expert as an individual. One reason mentioned for not excluding experts from EGs after poor performance or other issues was the importance of keeping a good EG size and possibly to avoid frustrating motivated people. The size of the EG emerged in several discussions as an important aspect towards the other EG, indicating importance, influence and power (i.e. an EG with more members is perceived as having more *raison d'être* and therefore as more relevant to the work of the SHA Unit than a small EG).

#### 4.3.3 Tasks and challenges of the various EGs

Based on the interviews with heads and members of the EGs, the following aspects appear important for this evaluation:

**Coordination and Administration (COOR/ADM):** The main task is heading/supporting embassies and field offices in management and/or financial administration. The EG hosts two thematic sub-groups: Finance & Administration and CTP. It is involved in RRT, HQ Support and field representations and secondments (CTP). It faces the following two issues: (i) CTP as an HA modality has become mainstream among many donors but is still in high demand. For several years, mixed profiles have been requested (e.g. CTP and “WASH” or “Protection”) and digital banking has become a topic; (ii) the EG is quite big and diverse, as are the motivations (short-term deployments vs. career postings). Thus, knowledge management as well as information sharing beside CPT could be fostered. It was mentioned that the group website needs to be updated and that longer-term deployments will be important in the future.

**Rescue (RESC):** The EG “Rescue” consists of SHA corps members who have basically completed their basic training with the army’s rescue forces. It assumes tasks on behalf of the HA of the Swiss Confederation and the Department of Defence, which are defined in an annual performance agreement especially during operations of the Swiss Rescue Chain. Additionally, it supports the development of national and international response capacities and training of USAR teams, and it executes risk assessment (damage site advice) and expert missions within RRTs.

In recent years, there have been no more USAR missions, which has led to great frustration among EG members. Independent of the results of the external USAR evaluation, they are aware that USAR’s operational options will continue to be limited in the future. However, “Rescue” members mention other skills that could be integrated in other EGs or used in RRTs, such as playing the role of right hand to an RRT team leader, because the army promotes organisational and management skills under stress and in crisis situations.

**Water and Sanitation (WASH):** This EG is part of the core mandate of the current Federal Dispatch. With an Integrated Water Resources Management perspective, WASH projects are implemented in the entire spectrum of HA, in emergency aid, early recovery and in relation with long-term development cooperation (nexus). The EG is big and diverse and WASH specialists are deployed for all four modes, which can be problematic because often the best experts are assigned as secondments and therefore not available for other deployments. Other issues described are administrative hurdles, undue competition between EGs and lack of leadership from senior management, reflected SDC’s lack of vision for the WASH EG. Concerning the issue in attracting new, younger but experienced and female workers, the EG has developed its own methods for human resources development, including a mentoring

system between long-serving and newer members. The EG is well interconnected in Switzerland with other competence centres in the same sector.

**Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) and Environment (DRR/ENV):** The EG was created in 2010 by the merger of EGs “Environment/Nuclear, Biological and Chemical Hazard” and the EG “Prevention and Preparedness”. Both groups had a long history. The EG “DRR” is involved in all phases of a crisis (before, during and after), including longer-term involvement to build resilience. Therefore, its work is closer to development cooperation work in general in providing bridges in the nexus approach. On the other side, in-house resistance to integrate EG activities into new SDC procedures was reported. The experts’ profile in the EG are diverse enough to meet the various types of deployments. However, the EG faces challenges in identifying experts for longer-term missions. Regarding short-term missions or backstopping activities in the field, programme managers with a DRR profile already in place do not generally request more specialised expertise (though there is a discrepancy between the definition of DRR generalist vs. DRR specialist). Covering a broad scope of topics, another issue mentioned was the ad-hoc approach and lack of focus areas (‘niche’). The increased number of players and data available for DRR interventions nowadays create both opportunities and challenges.

**Protection (PROT):** The EG was carved out from the EG “Coordination and Administration” in 2016, due to an increase of deployments and a focus on Protection and SGBV as strategic orientations of the former Dispatch. Most deployments are secondments to multilateral partners. There is currently a trend of longer deployments of one year or more, and requests for mixed profiles are increasing. Protection experts are very dedicated members of the SHA Unit, as the long-term secondments they realise are usually their main job. Therefore, the protection experts do not easily correspond with the roster system, which is why they would appreciate a clear career path within the SHA Unit. Training needs were highlighted, but the secondees do not feel well integrated into the SHA Unit, as there are only few points of interaction. The EG operation concept (2017–2020) proposed twinning positions, but there was no apparent follow-up. Overall, it was mentioned that the SHA Unit lacks a vision and monitoring regarding strategical secondments.

**Medical (MEDI):** The EG “Medical” is divided into two sub-groups: Rapid Response and DRR. In addition, the EG is also responsible for the health safety of the departing SHA experts. Inside the sub-group Rapid Response, the module “Mother & Child” is specialised in providing aid during disaster to women and children affected, which represents an interesting niche. While in recent years the EG members have been deployed practically only for RRTs, many of the EG members have never been in action, which has led to great frustration among the group. Additionally, the intended involvement of juniors to prevent the ageing of the group is hardly to be achieved with the rare deployment opportunities. Often the group feels bypassed and therefore somehow marginalised as an appendage. This also relates to the situation that, compared with other EGs, the EG “Medical” does not have permanent representation in Berne.

**Logistics and Support (LOG/SUP):** The EG is primarily responsible for ensuring the resources and expertise on logistics for rapid response (RRTs and Swiss Rescue Chain) but also for supporting the operational implementation of activities in the field through DAs and sometimes secondments. The EG has two working groups (Logistics and Support). The EG faces a lack of understanding by staff outside the EG of what a logistics specialist is and how he/she can be deployed beyond the support function during RRT. This contributes to a fuzzy strategy for long-term deployments of logistics experts. The EG wishes to have a clearer position on whether logistic experts are also sought for longer-term deployments such as secondments. The other issues mentioned are a poor gender balance in the EG, lack of transparency in the selection of RRT experts and the large amount of resources required to be ready for deployment for the Swiss Rescue Chain and RRTs.

**Construction (CONS):** The EG has three tasks: (i) Reconstruction and rehabilitation of public infrastructure (schools, hospitals, etc.), (ii) Emergency response (shelter, site planning, temporary buildings, cluster coordination) and (iii) Training (disaster resilience). It is mostly involved in RRTs and DAs. The main issues are that the group has lost over 20 experienced members during the past years and deployments have decreased (largely because large-scale rehabilitation projects after earthquakes in Haiti and Nepal have been phased out). Furthermore, the head and deputy head of the EG are from outside of SDC and thus big efforts are needed to stay informed about trends and opportunities at HQ. The group sees a vicious cycle at work: fewer deployments result in frustrated experts, making the recruitment of new experts more difficult. There is also a requirement to broaden the group's expertise as there are increasing links to WASH, Protection and DRR activities. Another issue mentioned was that sometimes the allocated time budgets (number of days) are used up and thus the members have to reduce their engagement towards end of the year.

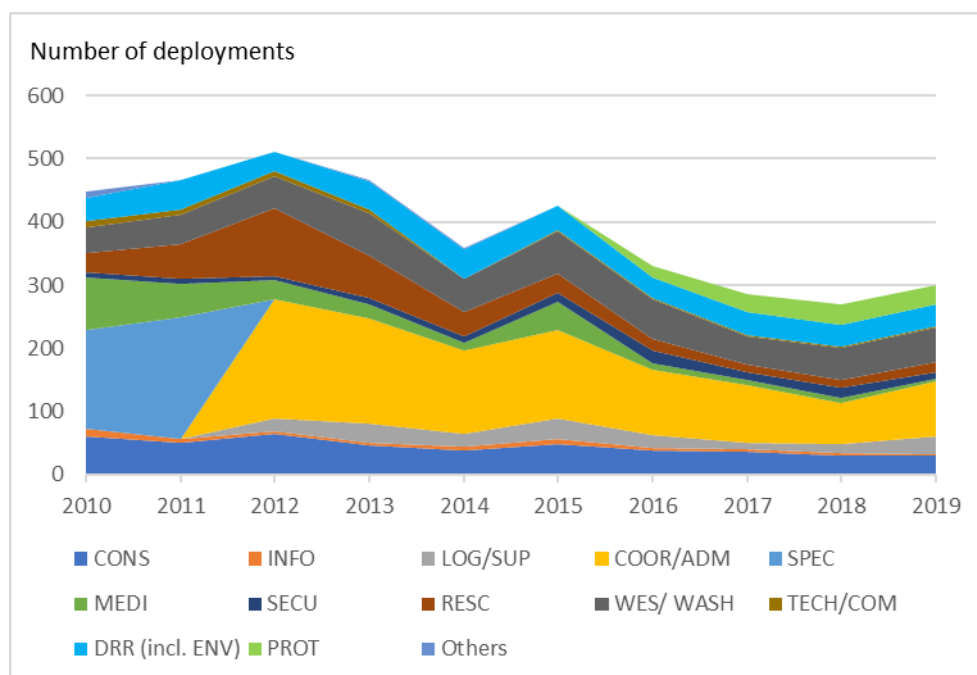
**Security (SECU):** The EG contributes to the FDFA security management and provides services upon requests for embassies (through the KMZ) but also RRTs, the Swiss Rescue Chain or support to embassy/field offices. Secondments occur only in rare cases. Currently six regional security advisors are deployed around the world, namely in Bogota, Nairobi, Yaoundé, Dakar, Amman and Kabul. These regional security advisors are under structure post contracts from KMZ (they are not deployed with SHA Unit contracts) and are integrated in embassies. The EG members are not systematically involved in SDC HA activities and there are only few deployment opportunities for its experts. The low number of deployments was reported to be due to a lack of understanding of what security advisors can bring to missions, the self-confidence of HA professionals in safety and security and the difficulty in measuring the added value of security experts in the HA interventions. The working relations between EG "Security", KMZ and the embassies was also presented as a challenge in the last years but with the new Head of EG, also acting as Deputy of the Security Section of the KMZ, the situation should improve.

**Information (INFO):** The EG is responsible for communications and media relations and fulfils three tasks: (i) Communication within the frame of RRTs, (ii) Conducting trainings, (iii) Production of the SHA Unit newsletter and the internal newsletter "The Humanitarian". The EG works in close collaboration with Information EDA. As current trends, members identified the digitisation and the increased use of social media at the expense of traditional media as a challenge. Furthermore, the speed of information distribution increased. There is a high potential of stories from the field, and the media usually show interest in articles and pictures documenting RRTs. The general thirst for images is shared by Information EDA and is an advantage for the EG. Nevertheless, there are also challenges. Communication about man-made disasters such as in the refugee camps in Greece or about protracted crises is much more complex and politically sensitive than communication about natural disasters. The EG has few deployments, but feels a need for having more members, especially digital natives experienced in video editing and the use of social media (Twitter, Instagram, Facebook).

**Technology and Communication (TECH/COM):** The main task is the establishment of communication networks (radio telecommunication, satellite specialists, setup of local area networks, etc.). It is mainly used for RRTs and closely related to the Swiss Rescue Chain. Main issues are: (i) Mobile communication and internet access have become (almost) universal, and demand for broadband (photo/video) transmission needs expensive satellite connectivity, (ii) The diversity of gadgets and standards has led to the slogan "bring your own device" and (iii) There is a lack of real missions and respect for FDFA IT standards. There is the open issue of whether the older radio technology – which is closely linked to the Swiss Rescue Chain – is still needed.

The following figure about trends in deployments (abroad)<sup>11</sup> for the various EGs indicates that the overall number of deployment events has diminished, especially for certain EGs “Medical” and “Construction”, but it has increased for “Protection”.

**Figure 8: Development of the number of deployments abroad for the various EGs**



Note: Considering also deployments in Switzerland (35 deployments in 2019), 14 were with the EG “COOR/ADM” and 14 with the EG “PROT”. The remaining 7 were distributed among the other EGs.

Source: Personnel statistics 2010–2019

There is a strong motivation among corps members and a high level of identification with the proper EG but also with the SHA Unit and its primary purpose – to alleviate human suffering. While the overall values are broadly shared, there is yet a lack of vision and a fragmented perception about SHA Units deployment modes and their relevance for SDC HA.

The strong identification with the EG and the competition for deployments result in a rather strongly disconnected working style of the EGs. There are a few joint platforms facilitating exchange across EGs (such as training courses, seminars or annual conferences), but the needs in the field are becoming more complex, requiring experienced people and often more specialised thematic needs that cut across the current EG structure (e.g. DRR, protection and governance topics) and requiring linkages to the thematic networks of SDC.

The interviews clearly demonstrated that although each EG has a mid-term concept aligned with the Federal Dispatch, a better-defined profile of each group and its members would be helpful. This seems mainly to be an issue of communication. For example, it is not possible to see the profiles of the experts on the internal “closed user group” platform.

#### 4.3.4 Financial resources

The provisional budgets for the SDC HA are outlined in the Federal Dispatch (2017–2020 and 2021–2024, respectively) which provides the frame for Switzerland’s HA commitments for 4 years. Commitments from SDC are based on credit proposals and must be approved by the Operation’s Committee (OpCom) if proposals exceed CHF 2 m.

<sup>11</sup> Without Geneva-based secondments.

Roughly speaking, the available financial means (CHF 452 m in 2019) are allocated on the following planning parameters: (i) 1/3 is for multilateral organisations of the UN (WFP, UNHCR, UN-OCHA, etc.), (ii) 1/3 is allocated to the ICRC (core and multi-bi contribution), and (iii) 1/3 is for bilateral contribution (e.g. NGO) and “cash” for emergency activities and reconstruction (incl. the costs for DAs in the field: goods and equipment, local staff, operational costs). These expenditures fall under the so-called transfer credit for project costs abroad as outlined in the Federal Dispatch.

Since 2017, the salary costs of SDC HA (structure posts at HQ and Geneva) and the salaries of SHA experts deployed under the various modes have been charged to a global credit of the FDFA (this includes local staff at representations). However, the costs of training and operating expenses (duty travel) of SHA experts in DAs are charged to the framework credit above. For each SHA expert deployment, a so-called “Internal Order” is defined.

For DAs, this means that the overall costs have to be split across the two credits lines in the credit proposals. While the guidelines for handling financial reporting are clear, the administration of this financial scheme poses challenges which results in additional work in the field. Already Campbell and Schüle (2017) concluded that the financial management of the DAs is a burden for the embassy and the HQ.<sup>12</sup> This view was confirmed by the interviews and online survey.

The following table provides the overview of SHA expert salary costs as per categories of SDC HA and not strictly according to the four deployment modes. This does not include indirect costs (e.g. travel costs and allowances for experts abroad). Including such costs of around CHF 4 m per year, the costs of the SHA Unit (around CHF 26 m per year) oscillate around 5% of the total Swiss HA.

**Table 3: Salary costs of SHA Unit 2015–2019 (m CHF)**

Category	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	Change 2015/19
SHA Unit Switzerland						
- HQ	3.6	3.3	2.7	3.0	2.6	+46%
- Geneva (secondments and bilateral activities)					2.8	
SHA Field						
- RRTs*	17.5				0.25	n.a
- DAs abroad					7.3	n.a
- Secondments abroad					9.3	n.a
Total	21.2	21.4	20.5	21.2	22.25	+5%
Direct Actions SDC HA ( <u>incl.</u> costs of SHA experts)	47.3	35.2	35.2	35.1	36.1	-24%
Total SDC HA	539.9	481.1	447.3	473.8	463.1	-13%

\* Note: This table does not include the costs of maintaining the RRT structure, which includes training activities of the Swiss Rescue Chain (CHF 1.8 m), nor does it include the costs of the Equipment and Logistics Section's maintenance of several depots for storing emergency material.

Source: SDC HA Staff Section

<sup>12</sup> An integrated view is additionally complicated due to the fact that, within SDC, the HA is under a different framework credit than SC. However, a combination of these framework credits was rejected in 2019 in the context of the nexus evaluation (SDC 2019).

The overall expenditures for DAs, of which the SHA experts are usually the smaller part of project costs, are in the range of just below 10% of the total SDC HA expenses. To maintain this threshold is a planning parameter of SDC HA.

Average salary costs per day of deployment of SHA experts vary according to deployment mode and are, on average, around CHF 500 per day. These costs appear to be lower than those of the recently established ICRC Rapid Deployment standing team based in Geneva, with budgeted costs of approximately CHF 600 per day (ICRC 2019).

Benchmarking costs is complicated because cost structures vary from organisation to organisation and, in the case of SDC, the overhead costs at HQ (recruitment of SHA experts, contracting, etc.) and in the embassies (administration, supervision, etc.) are not recorded and thus not known.

The remuneration for deployed experts is attractive (interviews) but not the main motivation to join. It is noteworthy that there is a salary gap in the IC sector in Switzerland, where government posts earn on average more than in the private sector (-17%) or in NGOs (-24%), partly owing to the circumstance that many government positions have management functions (cinfo 2019, p. 13).

#### 4.3.5 Human resources, staff and skills

**General:** As per 31.12.2019 the staffing comprised 101.15 FTEs for the SDC HA Department in form of structure posts ( ) and the 466 SHA Unit deployments in all modes represented 131.3 FTEs (in total for 2019). On average for 2010 to 2019, DAs<sup>13</sup> made up for 37%, secondments abroad 33%, HQ support 14%, secondments in Switzerland 13% and Rapid Response 1.5%. While secondments in Switzerland grew most prominently from 0 to around 16 FTEs, DAs abroad show an oscillating but general declining trend in this period from ca. 70 FTEs in 2010/11 to 48 FTEs in 2018/19<sup>14</sup> (for details see Table 10 in Annex 5).

Whereas SDC HA structure posts are subject to the rotation policy, the SHA experts are contracted based on need for deployments. While the contract duration can be a few days for RRTs, the maximum duration is up to one year but can be renewed and thus last several years. In the case of long-term deployments, it was reported that SHA experts – while being external experts – were brought in to respond to temporary needs, and they were in practice the staff with the best knowledge about the portfolio, programme or project (evidence from case studies). SHA Unit contracts have specific contractual modalities (“Verordnung über das Personal für die Friedensförderung, die Stärkung der Menschenrechte und die Humanitäre Hilfe”, or PVFMH), which differ from SDC structure posts but are similar to the contracts used by Human Security Division (HSD). Local staff mentioned the integration of both types of personnel in cooperation offices with different contractual conditions and with various career development perspectives as a potential area of confusion and friction (National Project Officers). This was specially an issue in long-term deployment of SHA experts to the field. Overall, management, coordination and thematic backstopping were reported as gaining importance at SDC HA. While SHA members rather see this development as a loss in specialised expertise, the creation of structure posts also shows that (i) Increased HA budgets require additional human resources, and (ii) Temporary support should be converted into regular SDC HA posts when the need persists over a longer period (for example the security advisor position in the SCO of Amman). This also shows that longer-term HA needs may move closer in the direction of nexus and cooperation activities.

<sup>13</sup> Support to field representations abroad was (until recently) classified as direct actions. This should not be mixed up with the DAs as deployment mode described before.

<sup>14</sup> DAs increased especially after big earthquakes such as in Haiti 2010 and Nepal 2015 when bigger DAs were conceived to support recovery/rehabilitation.



**Required expertise:** SDC as a donor also needs generalists to manage its portfolio and promote dialogue on HA and development aid with stakeholders. While those activities are primarily the role of SDC structure posts, SHA Unit experts are also deployed to support in such functions.

Deploying experts with the adequate level of expertise in alignment with the various deployment modes and activities (matching skills to needs) was highlighted as critically important to the success of the deployment. At the same time, it was also mentioned as a major challenge as there is no 'one size fits all' solution. For instance, some situations may require a programme manager with sound knowledge of water and sanitation in the HA context to ensure dialogue with WOGA and other stakeholders and to monitor programme progresses; other situations may require a specialist to provide advice on the specific design and construction of a water delivery system. The profiles are thematically in the same field, but the skills and experience required are different. A good understanding of the reality in the field and of the various deployment modes were both considered important but not always sufficiently promoted in-house (interviews and case studies). At the EG level, a decrease or loss in the level of specialisation in thematic areas of the Unit's experts was also mentioned, this in connection with a shift in deployment modes (e.g. promotion of secondments). Additionally mentioned was that some experts may want to continue their career within SDC in a structure post, which would make a generalist profile more promising than highly specialised technical expertise.

Additionally, technical experts have to fit in diplomatic and developmental contexts of the Swiss integrated embassies and the UN institutional environment, requiring also adequate social and cultural skills. Experts interviewed from the SHA Unit as well as partner organisations pointed out that SHA experts often are ill equipped to work in complex HA and development cooperation environments because they lack contextual information, language and cultural sensitivity and understanding of SDC procedures. The interviewees therefore pointed out the need to strengthen initial training to get a broader introduction to the diplomatic and development work contexts, briefing and coaching but also enable regular deployments to ensure that experts gain experience gradually in such an environment.

**Mobilisation process for deployments varies:** The mobilisation of RRT members is coordinated by the ad-hoc installed 'crisis cell' led by an SDC HA staff member. The head of this cell then coordinates the deployment in cooperation with the other stakeholders of the cell. RRTs consists of experienced SHA Unit members but can also include specialised experts who were not recruited into the pool (e.g. members from the Swiss Armed Forces). During the selection process, the heads of the respective EG are often consulted. The overall selection process was often presented as not transparent and more guided by in-house influences rather than based on previous performances of experts deployed in the field and in-house coordination (interviews and online survey). A common concern expressed by EG members was the lack of information flow on how experts are mobilised, especially for RRT. There is a perception that deployments are arranged in an inner circle and that opportunities are often not announced to all potentially interested and competent experts in a transparent manner (e.g. through SMS).

While the mobilisation for DAs is managed by the concerned SCO (or integrated embassy), the mobilisation of deployments for HQ/field support and for secondments is mainly done by the geographical desks in cooperation with the Field Resources Section, the field office and the receiving partner. Opportunities are firstly published on a 'closed user group' (an intranet) and, if there is no available pool candidate, candidates are recruited through open publications (e.g. on the cinfo platform). Several times it was mentioned that these procedures can be quite lengthy until the final contracting is issued.

Some voices mentioned that debriefing after deployments does not appear to be an appropriate forum to raise concerns and criticism, specially from experts seeking further deployments with the SHA Unit.

The experts described the overall management of expertise available within the pool, performance monitoring of experts and career interest as rather insufficient and lacking proactiveness, while some of those challenges were also presented as inherent to the pool structure of the SHA Unit.

The so-called 'programme vert' was specially designed to respond to recruit staff with no or little field experience. Over the last 10 years, around 17 experts per year participated in this programme. The trend appears to be declining, as in the last 3 years only 10–15 people participated. This programme is appropriate provided the candidates bring in relevant skills for the deployment modes. While feedback from individual interviews were positive about the 'programme vert', feedback on the retention of programme vert experts was mixed (some continued their deployment after the programme vert period, other were deployed again at a later stage, some were never deployed later, and some continued their career and were integrated into an SDC structure post).

**Retaining SHA experts:** The retention of qualified and experienced experts is hindered by the '10-year rule' in place since 2013.<sup>15</sup> Due to this rule, which sets a maximum 10 years for the cumulative duration of deployments, the SHA Unit loses some of its most needed experts. By doing so, the SHA Unit faces, on one side, a shortage of technical experts with the adequate experience and cultural as well as social skills to efficiently work in complex emergencies or protracted crises (e.g. typically in RRTs, support to Swiss representations abroad or DAs) and, on the other side, it lacks experts who can hold strategic senior positions (typically for strategic secondments or support to Swiss representation on strategic issues in the HA policy dialogue). However, the consequences of this rule on the career of SHA Unit experts are drastically different for experts who have a professional basis in Switzerland and go on short-term deployments (RRT, punctual contribution to DA or support to Swiss representations) and for experts deployed on secondments for one to several years and support to field office on a longer-term basis. Short-term deployed experts can easily combine SHA Unit deployments during almost their whole career time. For longer-term deployed experts, the 10 years are reached much faster, and the types of deployments do not leave them time to establish another professional career in parallel. Experts interviewed who reached the 10-year rule highlighted the lack of clear information on the requirements to be able to join the SHA Unit again in the future (e.g. how many years should they work for another employer). The Field Resources Section confirmed that the decisive factor is for the expert to demonstrate that she/he has built 'a second professional leg'. This was confirmed by a few experts who have rejoined the SHA Unit after having worked for another employer (e.g. MSF or ICRC).

**Gender:** Women appear underrepresented in most EGs, be it at the member's level or at the EG head or deputy level. On the positive side, the proportion of women in deployments has increased over the years, from 25% in 2011 to 36% in 2019 (Source: SKH Personalstatistik 2019), mainly due to more women deployed in secondments from the EG "Protection". Some of the case studies of this evaluation, e.g. in Jordan and in Haiti, demonstrate also an increase in the number of working days in the field in the last couple of years. Female interviewees expressed some challenges to continue SHA Unit deployments if they want to establish a family life with children.

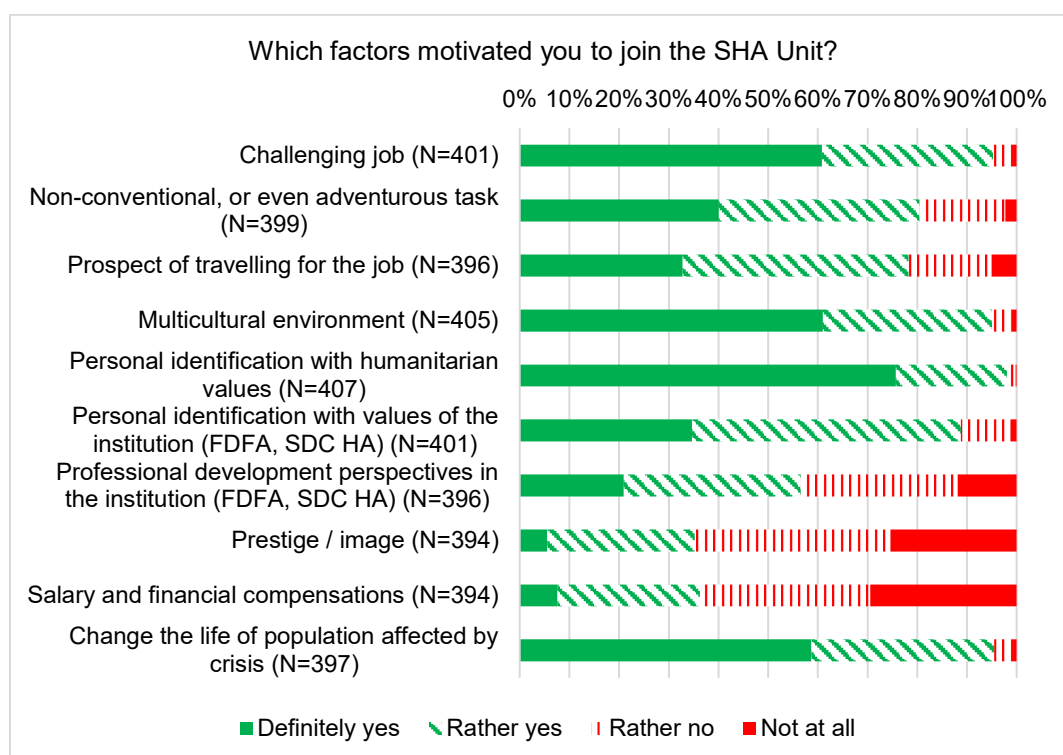
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<sup>15</sup> The 10-year rule was institutionalised to avoid a dependency for the experts on one employer over the years.

Efforts were made in the past year to recruit female heads or deputies for EG, compared to 2 years ago when no female EG leadership was in place. Today, three EGs have either a female head or deputy.

**Motivation:** The main reasons to join SHA Unit are the identification with HA values, contributing to improving life of affected populations and a challenging job in a multicultural environment. The professional career within SDC, salaries and the prestige of working for SDC HA are rather low on the list (see Figure 9 below for details).

**Figure 9: Factors motivating experts to join the SHA Unit**



Source: Online survey

**Recruitment procedures:** These have been described by interviewees as long and thorough. They are well established, clearly structured and documented as well as based on many years of experience. Nevertheless, some interviewees mentioned that the process has not developed and changed much over the years, making the tests and interviews easier to prepare for and pass if the applicant knows experts who underwent the recruitment successfully in the past, while complete newcomers into the system may fail even though they are qualified experts. Experts can belong to several EG, which many experts actually do. This shows the multidisciplinary profiles of some of the experts as well as the interlinkages among thematic areas/EG. However, the application to be accepted into other EGs was described as intransparent and reasons for not being accepted was not always clear. Compartmentalised 'silo thinking' may contribute to experts who are strongly identified to a given EG not being accepted in another EG or not considered as an asset.

A trend appears to be that more and more types of specialised expertise are required and that for some expert profiles (e.g. in protection), no corresponding Swiss labour market profile is available. Such factors appear to hinder the identification of experts as well as the reintegration after the deployment (especially after longer-term deployments for secondments, for instance).

Several interviewees described the overall management of expertise available, performance management of experts and career interest as rather insufficient. While some of those challenges were presented as inherent to the pool structure of the SHA Unit, more guidance

and counselling from the Field Resources Section was wished for. The handling of the corps roster is now more complicated, especially regarding the different requirements for the applicants. It is a difficult task to recruit and train experts simultaneously for short-term and for long-term assignments, especially in the face of ever-increasing demands.

**Training:** Each EG organises training for their members on technical topics (e.g. water laboratory for “WASH”) or as a joint training among EGs (e.g. “WASH” and “DRR”). Some courses are on cross-cutting issues which experts from various EGs can attend (e.g. security training) as well as a series of courses designed specifically for RRT experts which happen on a yearly basis and target various levels, ranging from introduction to refresher or team leader levels. SHA experts reported that training on their role in the field as well as on SDC and embassies’ roles could be strengthened and that, in some cases, introduction about WOGA should be offered to experts expected to work in such an environment.

#### **4.3.6 Knowledge management**

Internally the missing thematic exchange across different EGs was a constant topic of discussion and concern. It was criticised that cooperation with other EGs is lacking. There are only limited cross-cutting workshops planned and executed that would allow to reduce ‘silo thinking’.

Concerning the various knowledge management tools relevant for SHA experts, the overall rating in the online survey is quite good: more than 3/4 of all respondents gave a positive rating and the majority of ratings for all tools was “rather satisfactory” (see Annex 4), leaving room for improvements. However, there were also many critical comments on what should be improved. Many experts stated that, despite the Shareweb, a unified tool or place where relevant information is stored does not exist and that knowledge management is limited to regular trainings and occasional meetings with other experts. While the trainings are well rated, and online courses have been offered on some topics since 2019, there is no institutional knowledge management such as a community of practice, a cloud-based interactive forum or other innovative online tools.

Concerning the Shareweb and the EG websites, many people stated that these tools are not updated, are difficult to access and are not user friendly, thus making it difficult to find the right information. This is linked to the comment of other members who did not even know that a Shareweb exists or never got an introduction to it. Furthermore, the webpages are not adapted for mobile mode. Various experts stated that not all EGs have websites, and if they do, they are not systematically promoted and are usually outdated.

The newsletter “The Humanitarian” is a half-yearly bulletin for core members and received a very good rating in the online survey. Only very few voices noted it could be shorter, contain more usable information and be more self-critical.

Mission Debriefing Personal Notes (MDPN) and end-of-mission reports received positive ratings. Most people commented that the main issues of MDPN are (i) that the forms are too long, repetitive, redundant and not suited to report in adequate manner (e.g., on secondments and HQ deployments) and (ii) that they are barely read by HQ, which is why follow-ups are also missing, according to the corps members. On the latter, some interviewees also mentioned that some issues with the host organisation in the case of secondments are raised only at the end of the deployment, which limits the possibility of corrective measures while the expert is being deployed.

Several persons interviewed noted that there was no real knowledge management system. The lessons learnt and experiences made by SHA members in the field are neither exploited nor institutionalised, and several interviewees deplored the fact that valuable information is

getting lost. They also felt that their reports did not have any influence on the future work in the field. They noted that a thematic exchange would be essential for SDC to learn and develop.

SDC operates 15 thematic networks, including the DRR network managed by SDC HA. The DRR network is part of the green network, together with water, climate and food security networks. While those are a forum for and are responsible for thematic exchange of information and experiences, those networks were little mentioned in the interviews with SHA experts. From the DRR network perspective, there is a lot of knowledge and expertise available, and the various networks need to bring this to the different EGs. While doing so, the relevant EG of the SHA Unit as well as other stakeholders (of the federal administration as well as universities) have a role to play. Based on the group discussions with the EG “DRR”, the participation of EGs (head, deputy or member) in relevant thematic networks should be more systematic. For instance, the EG “DRR” is represented in the DRR Network but not in the Water Network.

Last but not least, it is noticeable that, in many analysed case studies of DAs, hardly any independent evaluations were executed. It was also stated that in further countries (not analysed in this evaluation), external evaluations were executed by SHA experts. Yet, this practice might raise conflicts of interest and question the independence and credibility of these findings.

It would be important to have activities regularly assessed from an outside perspective, especially for those with the dual role of a donor and implementer.

#### **4.4 Additional insights derived from case studies**

The case studies were selected to illustrate a diversity of contexts and types of deployments. This variety led on one side to the identification of recurring aspects and common trends and on the other to the role of context specific issues. Selected core messages from the case studies are presented hereafter. Background, overview of deployments, details of the finding and further information on the conclusions for the five case studies (Haiti, Jordan, Mozambique, Myanmar and Ukraine) are attached in Annex 7.

From the onset, it is interesting to note that in two of the five case studies (Jordan and Myanmar), no RRTs were deployed in the last couple of years. These two case studies are coincidentally also the in-depth case studies. This illustrates well that HA interventions and expert deployments in contexts with high HA needs are nowadays also achieved through longer-term deployments. This shift from emergency support as core business of the SHA Unit to secondments and other longer assignments contributes to the confusion of the vision and focus of the SHA Unit.

The combination of RRTs with early-recovery DAs and capacity building as well as short-term secondments presents the advantage of bridging them with future humanitarian assistance and other development projects (Mozambique).

RRTs as well as DAs can gain high visibility, both in the countries where they are enacted as well as to a certain extent as presented to the Swiss population by various media. While visibility can be sometimes the driving force, this should be combined with the issue of sustainability, which sometimes creates a dilemma in the field.

The number of days of deployments varies significantly depending on the context and the needs for assistance presented in the case study countries. In Jordan and Haiti, the proportion of days of deployments performed by women experts have seen a significant increase, which could possibly be explained by the deployment modes (e.g. more support to SCOs and

secondments) and the thematic areas (e.g. more deployments on DRR and protection). The availability and mobilisation of experts from the SHA Unit (active and reserve members) has improved over the years, making the use of former and non-members very marginal in all case study countries except in Mozambique. The composition of the experts deployed to Mozambique in 2019 stands out with more than half of the experts' days done by former and non-members. The deployment of reserve members is still a common practice in most of the case study countries, showing a possible recurrent challenge in identifying and deploying experts with right mix of technical, field and SDC HA experience.

The SCOs operate to a large extent thanks to SHA Unit experts on deployments (Myanmar and Jordan). On the positive side, it shows that the SHA Unit can respond to needs and contributes to the achievement of the SDC HA agenda. On the more critical side, support, especially to SCOs and field offices, should remain a response to a temporary need and not fill a gap in the structure over the long term.

In such environments where many experts stay longer in posts than in countries with rather rapid emergency responses, the ceiling of 10 years of cumulative deployments is reached much faster by experts. Once they have gained more exposure to SDC as an institution with its procedures, a better understanding of the WOGA and other partners as well as more managerial and intercultural skills, they have to leave the SHA Unit, leading to a loss of senior experts able to take higher positions and more managerial responsibilities when needed. This was commonly and highly rated as a concern in all case studies.

The cases also show examples of how diverse DAs can be in terms of scope and duration. In this context, issues of definition, understanding and acceptance of DAs are not easily solved. The duration of the DA as well as the duration of the experts deployed on DAs were all mentioned as critical aspects. In terms of the deployments, too-short deployments of experts on DAs have led to too many experts being involved in a DA (e.g. Haiti), which adds challenges of handover procedures to ensure continuity in the implementation. The reality is also that it has become more and more difficult to identify experts willing to be deployed on long-term assignments in fragile contexts and in general due to security concerns. Overall, the identification and deployment of the right expert (with the right level of technical expertise and an adequate combination of field experience and intercultural skills) at the right time and to the right place is the main challenge of the SHA Unit. Understanding the requirements of the field and matching these with the profile of the experts is a tricky exercise in which there is room for improvement at HQ and in the field.

Implementation of DAs is highly dependent on the support of the ambassador and head of cooperation in the country, as well as on the expert(s) deployed to implement it. The support of the ambassador and head of cooperation throughout the implementation was also mentioned as one of the success factors.

Another common aspect is the confusion about the mode of deployment of some of the experts in the field when they are not deployed on RRTs and secondments. Their role is categorised as 'bilateral – direct action' by the Field Resources Section, which actually combines experts supporting Swiss representations abroad and experts working on DAs.

On the shift from HA intervention into the nexus, Myanmar is a good example of common understanding of the complementarity between HA and other SDC instruments; in Haiti, the transition to developmental project was good; and in Jordan, SDC is at the scoping stage of developing longer-term programmes. This could also be seen in the DAs and their shift from infrastructure building to activities based on expertise transfer and more involvement of local communities and local actors. The balance of SHA experts and local experts as well as the involvement of SHA experts in more developmental activities (and the expert profile required

for these) remain questions to be addressed in the future. In the nexus, challenges remain regarding the design of projects and deployments, the use of existing organisational structures, the availability of the right experts and the optimal duration of deployments.

It is difficult to compile conclusions about the contributions of secondments. Nevertheless, secondments are particularly relevant in areas where SDC has no presence and in situations where the expertise provided to an organisation also complements DAs and financial contributions. Strategic secondments (P4 and P5 levels) reinforce Switzerland's profile and presence in such countries.

The UN host organisations are generally satisfied with the technical expertise and professional level of the secondees but also have critical observations. Due to legal reasons, the secondees can only be used to a limited extent to supervise staff or issue instructions in administrative processes. In addition, they are in general only at a location for one to two years, which is too short for complex contexts unless assignments are very specific. The limited duration of deployment makes it also impossible to deploy secondees for a higher management position. In some cases, secondees did not have any experience or previous knowledge of the UN system, which made the familiarisation period more difficult.

Secondments are mainly of great advantage for host organisations if a large number of employees have to be deployed quickly due to a sudden change in circumstances. At such a peak time, abbreviated recruiting procedures with sending organisations can save a lot of time in staffing.

It is important to reinforce the fact that it was methodologically impossible to systematically aggregate observations about results of HA interventions in the case study countries. For example, the results of a DA can be assessed as a project or as the result of the deployment of Swiss expertise in the DA only. The two aspects are inter-related, but assessments might be different for each perspective. This evaluation does not allow us to conclude on the appropriateness of the DAs as a whole. In addition, external evaluations are rare.

## 4.5 Alternative organisational options

### 4.5.1 Setup of other organisations

The evaluation had the task to also reflect on alternative organisational options. The exchange with other like-minded organisations provides many interesting insights and ideas in this respect (see also Annex 8). This chapter, however, is not a blueprint for the change needed for the SHA Unit but can serve to prioritise options to be further analysed. It provides relevant information about the setup of selected other HA organisations or rosters.

A comparison of the SDC RRT deployment mode with the [ICRC](#) offers interesting insights. In an emergency, the ICRC does not recruit the necessary specialists from an external roster but has an internal standing team for this purpose. Until 2019, there was a Rapid Deployment Mechanism (RDM), an internal roster, where individual employees could apply. But that worked only to a limited extent because people were often unavailable or otherwise already overloaded.<sup>16</sup> For this reason, a "Rapid Deployment Standing Team" (RDST) was established last year. This team consists of only 9 people, all with a different function, e.g. as team leader or expert.<sup>17</sup> Therefore, the best and most experienced people with many different skills are immediately available for new tasks after a disaster or, if necessary, also for a longer period.

<sup>16</sup> ICRC was not able to mobilise experts within one week and most of the deployed were juniors (max. 2 years of ICRC experience).

<sup>17</sup> The functions comprise: Management, Protection, Health, WASH, EcoSec, Finance & Administration, Logistics, Information and Communication Technology, Human Resources and Participating National Society.



If there is no emergency, the team members are allocated to other tasks according to clear criteria, where they can be replaced immediately.

A comparison of the SHA Unit was also made with rosters from Ireland and Norway that also serve UN organisations with secondments or implement HA projects. The roster from [Ireland's Rapid Response Initiative](#), with 120 members, recruits new candidates in cycles (usually every four years), and it is noticeable that members without assignments are removed from the roster every two years. The pool is internationally diversified. As a comparatively small donor, Ireland is focusing its secondments on four key UN organisations, with which it has Standby Partnership Agreements. The secondments additionally focus on a fast reaction after disasters (as surge capacity) and usually last 6 months, extendable to maximum 9 months. In 2019, 23 deployments were carried out.

[NORCAP](#) is the roster of the Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC) with more than 1'000 experts. It was established in 1991 and spent CHF 38.3 m in 2019 for deploying 270 FTEs. The roster is widely supported by several donors (Norway, Sweden, bilateral agencies and the private sector). The pool is international and the variety of nationalities and language skills allow a wider range of opportunities for deployments. In contrast to the Irish roster, it covers most of the topics that are important in humanitarian aid, peace building and the development sector. Also, regarding the secondment partners, there is a wide range of possibilities for deployment. In addition to the full range of different UN agencies, local governments and local organisations can also request secondment support, for which a separate form is available on the website.

When outsourcing options are discussed, a look at GIZ or Swiss foundations might be interesting. [GIZ](#) is a special case as it manages a huge pool of technical experts (more than 22'000 of whom 15'000 are local staff) to implement all kinds of projects, mostly of developmental nature. Although GIZ is a GmbH, its two major shareholders are two ministries: the Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) and the Ministry of Finance (BMF). It largely depends on implementing projects for various federal ministries. GIZ acts as an employer in the market but also attempts to acquire mandates of other donors. The employees of GIZ are therefore not civil servants and can also be dismissed if necessary. This allows GIZ to maintain a high degree of flexibility, especially in light of constantly changing circumstances and needs. Another advantage of this outsourced structure is the clear division of roles between the contracting authority and the executive body. This is illustrated in the independent international audits GIZ undergoes in 3-year cycles.

A similar setup in Switzerland – although at different scale – is [cinfo](#). It is a foundation originally initiated by SDC. It provides counselling services for individuals in international cooperation (including HA), operates a job platform (where SDC HA also advertises jobs that cannot be filled by SHA experts), offers career planning and supports organisations in recruitment. It has a mandate from SDC and SECO to strengthen Switzerland's presence in multilateral organisations (e.g. UN organisations such as the UNDP plus international finance institutions such as the World Bank and others). Soon, HA organisations will be added (e.g. WFP, UNHCR and OCHA). It is a foundation initiated by SDC, but SDC is no longer represented in the board. Thus, there appear to be interfaces with the recruitment/deployment of SHA experts that have not yet been fully clarified.

Another example for a public-law foundation belonging to a federal office – although in a different thematic area – is [Pro Helvetia](#), the Swiss arts council. It has the task to promote Swiss cultural activities abroad and has cooperation experience with SDC and embassies.

SDC HA is exploring some cooperation with private companies (e.g. for construction and water interventions) but there will be procurement issues if it is scaled up. A private sector option (such as the DFID model with Crown Agent) was not considered as a real option for the Swiss



context given the presence of the ICRC, Swiss Solidarity and the Swiss NGO landscape in the HA domain.

#### 4.5.2 Possible organisational alternatives

Based on the interviews conducted during the evaluation, it is assumed that rapid response (Swiss Rescue Chain and RRTs) to disasters will continue to be a key task of SDC HA's mission. The other deployment modes are more questionable according to the opinions expressed by the various stakeholders consulted.

Based on the above information, the following selection of organisational setups presents a list of potential organisational options for SDC:

**Option 1: SHA Unit 2.0:** The current institutional setup within SDC HA is maintained, including the SHA Unit, but its management and structure are optimised along the recommendations presented in Chapter 6. This would include a stronger management (clear vision), performance-based HR management, possibly a smaller corps, restructuring of the EGs, clear profiles of available experts and more flexible contracting.

**Option 2: Standing Team for short-term deployments:** Instead of a standby corps, SDC HA maintains a core pool of 25 to 30 HA professionals within SDC HA who represent various required competences, similar to the ICRC pool. Thus, SDC HA would refocus on short-term deployments and strengthen capacities in this area. The standing team could be deployed for RRTs (primarily), to support HQ and/or field offices and to implement timely limited DAs, bridging the emergency to early recovery. Under this option, the secondments would be outsourced or no longer part of the mission of SDC HA.

As a sub-option, a small corps of around 100 to 200 experts (a mini SHA 2.0) could complement the standing team if needed to cover all thematic areas and duties and to increase capacities to address crisis situations when needed.

**Option 3: Outsourcing of deployment modes:** This offers the possibility of outsourcing individual deployment modes to the most competitive or suitable partner. This could include outsourcing RRTs to SRC or an alliance of Swiss NGOs, DAs converted into mandates for Swiss or other actors engaged in emergency/reconstruction operations and for secondments for which there are already some interfaces with other institutions (e.g. placements of Swiss in multilateral organisations by cinfo).

**Option 4: SHA Unit as an independent foundation:** SDC's creation of a new humanitarian aid foundation responsible for all the deployments of SHA experts (and possibly other nexus-related experts, such as those from the HSD) would preserve the flexibility of the Unit with the aim of decreasing administrative hurdles in the future. This would require a completely new legal setup and governance structure, with new laws and by-laws, and the elaboration of a performance agreement and outlining of cooperation modalities with WOGA partners in order to be able to deliver rapid response activities.

#### 4.5.3 Strengths and weaknesses of the options

While option 1 could be implemented based on existing structures and procedures, the other organisational options would involve fundamental modification and necessitate an organisational transition phase.

**Table 4: Assessment of options for the future SHA organisational setup**

Option	Advantages	Disadvantages (or challenges)
<b>1. SHA Unit 2.0</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Uses existing structure and procedures (e.g. rapid mobilisation of RRT);</li> <li>• Retains strong 'Swissness' and visibility;</li> <li>• Funding is secured;</li> <li>• Flexibility and agility combine the four deployment modes;</li> <li>• Technical expertise is maintained; FDFA remains an operational actor in the field (localisation potential).</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Remains limited by FDFA procedures with limited flexibility;</li> <li>• The primary task comprises short-term and long-term deployments, hampering clear positioning;</li> <li>• Transformation into a new SHA Unit 2.0 might face internal resistance.</li> </ul>
<b>2. Standing Team for short-term deployments</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• "Swissness" and visibility can be further strengthened;</li> <li>• The best and most experienced people are available at short notice;</li> <li>• No frictions (losses) exist between the standby system and the permanent structure;</li> <li>• Standby personnel are aware of the task and trained accordingly;</li> <li>• Focus may increase exchange and partnerships with like-minded organisations;</li> <li>• Provides better job security for experts.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No long-term deployment possibilities exist;</li> <li>• Good solutions for substitution while abroad must be found;</li> <li>• Surge capacity due to lack of standby pool of experts is limited;</li> <li>• Focus is on one deployment mode only;</li> <li>• Such a model was experimented with during the 1990s (with 10 experts), but it was concluded that the standing team had the wrong experts and it was dissolved.</li> </ul>
<b>3. Outsourcing of deployment modes</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• More possibilities exist for finding suitable long-term staff;</li> <li>• Flexibility from FDFA administrative and financial procedures is increased;</li> <li>• Internationalisation of pool of experts for individual deployment modes becomes more easily possible;</li> <li>• Creates potential to select competitive partners. No duality in implementation modes (self-implementation and donor).</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Complicates consulting procedures with FDFA or other federal offices (e.g. like the Federal Department for Defense, Civil Protection and Sport);</li> <li>• Demands higher coordination and creates governance issues (contracting, visibility regulations etc.);</li> <li>• Branding and prestige is lost for SDC/FDFA;</li> <li>• Makes compatibility difficult in integrated embassies.</li> </ul>
<b>4. Independent foundation</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A foundation allows for more flexible operations, recruitment, etc.;</li> <li>• Gives more possibilities to find suitable long-term staff;</li> <li>• Internationalisation of pool of experts is more easily possible;</li> <li>• Clearly separates between roles of donor and implementer;</li> <li>• Co-financing from other donors is possible.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Makes an additional actor in an already fragmented NGO landscape in humanitarian aid and development;</li> <li>• Creates longer and more complicated coordination mechanisms with federal offices;</li> <li>• Creates difficulty in compatibility with integrated embassies;</li> <li>• Opens governance issues (board representation of SDC, or not);</li> </ul>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Creates more visibility for the foundation and less for SDC as major donor.</li> </ul>
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Based on the comparison of a limited number of other organisations providing HA experts and the assessment regarding their feasibility, practically all of the above options seem to be realisable. Options 3 and 4 appear particularly interesting given the context changes (internationalisation of the expert pools and enhancing operational flexibility). The competence and the preparedness in the pool could be expanded to include well-qualified international experts. This could considerably alleviate problems of recruiting suitable, long-term staff in complex environments.

## 5 Conclusions

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The conclusions are structured along the three chapters and related evaluation questions of the Evaluation Matrix presented and approved in the Inception Report.

### 5.1 Relevance, SHA Unit's contribution and added value

#### 1. What are the most important developments relevant for humanitarian aid (global humanitarian needs, political and institutional requirements and frame conditions)?

There are not fewer natural catastrophes, but the number of casualties has on average been dropping during the past 20 years. This is most likely because of better coping capacities (national rescue teams) and better resilience structures in most countries. On the other hand, however, the number of displaced persons and refugees has increased massively in the past 25 years (from 22 to 72 m people),<sup>18</sup> and the number of protracted crises has also increased.<sup>19</sup> Although the funding to the sector has increased more than tenfold to USD 24 bln in the past 20 years, the needs for HA are higher than what the aid system can deliver. The delivery of HA is better coordinated (e.g. through thematic clusters under UN leadership), but timely and effective delivery of goods in emergencies remains a challenge.

The HA sector and major actors have substantially grown (ICRC and MSF have budgets above USD 1 bln and the WFP has a budget of over USD 7 bln, of which more than USD 2 bln are for cash financing). The sector employs more than 570'000 staff, which resulted in (i) a professionalisation of staff, (ii) an internationalisation of expertise,<sup>20</sup> and (iii) more and new players (e.g. private companies, China and OPEC funded organisations, etc.).

The localisation of HA has become an important issue as local actors are closer to the people in need and are often the first to respond. Thus, stronger partnerships with local partners (governments or NGOs) have become an important commitment for donors. This has become even more prominent in recent years as access to the field has become constrained due to security considerations or recently because of COVID-19 related travel restrictions. In the future, climate-change-related risks will directly or indirectly impact water availability and migration flows.

Another trend appears to be the bureaucratisation of humanitarian aid, which is also evidenced by the numerous standards applicable to HA.<sup>21</sup> Accountability to taxpayers as well as to local partners has become more demanding, not least because information and news spread faster over continents. Anti-terrorism clauses in funding and contracting further complicate procedures in order to ensure that funds do not fall into the wrong hands.

#### 2. What is the SHA Unit's contribution to the mandate of Switzerland's HA and its positioning?

The expertise of the SHA Unit, with 600 active experts, supports Swiss HA in various forms and therefore contributes to the triple role of SDC HA: as direct implementer in responding and preparing for crises and emergencies, as funding agency of other organisations and projects as well as a partner in advocacy of HA principles. More concretely, SHA Unit experts provide expertise to (i) respond to crisis and emergencies (e.g. in form of RRTs), (ii) directly implement

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<sup>18</sup> See: [The New Humanitarian](#).

<sup>19</sup> While Bosnia & Herzegovina was the biggest HA recipient in 1995 with USD 470 m, in 2019 USD 3.6 bln were allocated for Yemen.

<sup>20</sup> Similarly, the overall HA workforce in Swiss-based organisations has become much more international and the proportion of Swiss has been falling to 34% in 2018 (info 2019).

<sup>21</sup> Good Humanitarian Donorship (GHD), Core Humanitarian Standards (CHS) and 'The Grand Bargain' (TBG).

projects on the ground and in cooperation with local partners (in form of DAs), (iii) support temporary Swiss embassies/SDC field offices and HQ in implementing their portfolio, and (iv) provide secondments to UN and other organisations. Overall, it provides a flexible and diverse pool of expertise.

Although Rapid Response in the SHA Unit's overall portfolio is small (ca. 1–2% of deployments), it is still perceived by the Swiss general public and by the political actors as a core activity and Swiss solidarity. The rapid response capacity in the form of RRTs constitutes an important contribution to the Swiss public and successfully represents the public image of Swiss HA. While the public image and its rapid response have remained the same, its functions have expanded and clearly shifted from rapid response to longer-term deployments, such as secondments. This creates a dilemma: the original rapid response is a rather visible niche while the longer-term secondments increased in importance. This gap is the source of the perception that a common vision for the SHA Unit is lacking.

This shift has taken place also because the environment of humanitarian aid has changed and SDC HA strategically reoriented the corps' deployments to where opportunities existed. But the SHA Unit, with its standby corps and targeted "Swissness", has come up against limits. The demands arising from complex contexts have substantially risen and many more skills are required in addition to expert knowledge. Last but not least, the recruitment of Swiss experts in Switzerland depends on the labour market situation. In this regard, it has also become increasingly difficult to recruit and deploy Swiss experts to work in remote and fragile situations, especially those who are willing to take on longer-term tasks.

The SHA Unit – as evaluated here – is mainly a technical advice instrument complementing other financial contributions of SDC HA. Its costs of around CHF 26 m per year (excluding overhead costs) represent around 5% of the total Swiss HA expenses, and the prestigious RRTs represent only 0.5% of the budget (including the standby costs).

### **3. What is the value added of the SHA Unit compared to and in combination with other instruments of HA?**

The SHA Unit provides a diverse pool of qualified experts, with working experience both in the Swiss environment as well as from deployments abroad. The standby corps allows Swiss HA to mobilise the experts swiftly and according to need across different scales (from small teams to bigger formations). To be best used and put into context, the expertise needs to be a balance between the right mix of technical expertise required in the field and institutional working experience in the SDC, embassy or UN context.

The SHA Unit brings expertise on site, whether as secondments or rapid response. Interventions, and therefore Swiss expertise, are visible in the countries where experts are deployed but also in Switzerland through media reports. This is particularly evident for RRTs and DAs. RRTs, even if a very small proportion of Swiss HA and only representing 1% of SHA experts' deployments, are indeed very visible in the media and receive high levels of acceptance by politicians and the general public. DAs can open doors for further collaborations, partnerships and political dialogue on HA and development cooperation. This visibility is especially important in combination with financial contributions to international HA organisations, as Switzerland is a rather small donor country. Combining financial contributions with direct interventions on the ground, be they RRTs, DAs or secondments, has proven to be relevant in achieving results and in raising the Swiss profile in certain thematic areas (e.g. CTP and WASH).

Strategically linking SHA Unit deployments (i.e. through DAs and secondments) with Swiss cooperation strategies and domains of interventions implemented in partner countries offers

scope for synergies along the nexus and can increase the potential for longer-term systemic changes. The presence of SHA experts at the field level, in the embassies and in UN organisations as secondments is seen as an asset to generate insights and knowledge useful for the multilateral policy dialogue and to address critical issues in bilateral relations.

As originally intended, the SHA Unit is a flexible instrument of SDC HA, not only when it comes to rapid response but also when deploying experts to support embassies/SCOs or when implementing DAs. The SHA Unit is recognised to be often the primary solution for responding to emerging or rapidly changing needs in countries due to natural disasters or other crises situations.

Considering that FDFA and SDC have various channels for secondments (e.g. SDC South Cooperation and global programmes or the Swiss Expert Pool for civilian peacebuilding), the cooperation potential of the SHA Unit for deployments and the synergies between these instruments seems not to be fully exploited. The strengths and complementarities of the various instruments (incl. the SHA Unit deployment modes) appear not to be well mainstreamed or understood among the WOGA partners.

#### **4. What is the contribution and value added of the SHA Unit in light of the identified expected developments in humanitarian needs and framework conditions?**

Analysing contributions and value added of the SHA Unit in the light of the context trends, first the efforts on promoting the CTP approach within the framework of The Grand Bargain can be highlighted. Approaches on CTP became mainstream in many organisations (e.g. WFP), not least because of SDC HA support on different levels. However, many actors, including local ones, are themselves up to date on HA delivery today, so support from SDC is no longer as unique and necessary as it was a few years ago.

Concerning the 'localisation agenda', DAs offer a great opportunity through the direct presence in the field and the proximity to beneficiary groups as well local actors. However, the case studies show that this requires a great deal of contextual knowledge and soft skills that are not easily available in the pool. Opportunities for greater empowerment of local stakeholders remained underexploited over a long period of time, while the focus was on the own implementation of programmes.

In the context of the increasing number of protracted crises, the integrated embassies and the closer cooperation with other SDC departments were particularly important. Especially if the ambassador and the head of cooperation could understand and engage with the different deployment modes of the SHA Unit, the nexus linkages could be developed during the last years. Both the ambassador as well as the head of cooperation should understand and act upon the respective comparative advantages of SDC's and FDFA's aid instruments. When mutual understanding and respect were present, cooperation and projects were successful. A constraint in this context is the high turnover of SHA experts observed in the case studies, as many experts only stayed in a country between 5 and 16 months, whereas an assignment of at least 3 years would be desirable and appropriate in a complex environment.

In connection with the integrated embassies, a growing bureaucratisation of HA work is noted. SHA experts have had to adapt to many new procedures and administrative requirements. But the SHA Unit has been able to maintain a certain flexibility thanks to the SHA deployments through the Field Resources Section and is still able to launch its programmes faster than other SDC departments.

HA needs are projected to increase, especially as a fallout of direct and indirect impacts from COVID-19 (as displacements and refugees flows grow), and financial means of donors might shrink due to massive public deficits. The SHA Unit can play a complementary role in vital

niches as long as it is well targeted and strategically focused, since Switzerland is a relatively small donor.

## **5.2 Appropriateness of SHA Unit's strategic orientation (deployment modes, specialisations and competencies)**

### **5. Are the four deployment modes of the SHA Unit (rapid response, direct implementation, support to HQ and representations, and secondments) appropriate in light of the humanitarian needs and the mandate of the SDC HA?**

Strategic appropriateness is given provided the SHA Unit tailors its expertise to local needs, enhances ownership and capacities, provides accountability and is cost effective. The answer can be described along a timeline:

(i) Short-term deployments in the range of a couple of weeks to a couple of months respond to acute needs triggered by a crisis or a drastic change in the context, requiring additional expertise to contribute to SDC HA efforts in implementing their programmes and supporting countries and their affected population. The possibility to deploy expertise using various modes of deployments enables SDC HA to choose the most appropriate mode to the situation as well as to combine them to tackle an issue from various angles and perspectives.

RRTs are a well-functioning system benefiting from decades of experience and well-established routines. The leadership from HQ stands as good practice. RRTs are flexible and have been shown to be agile to adapt to rapidly changing needs and changes on the ground in order to provide relevant support.

Short-term support to HQ and SCO is aligned with emerging HA needs and increases temporary management capacities at HQ and in field representations abroad. This also enables interventions which would not be possible otherwise.

(ii) Critical points for long-term deployments (for all modes except RRT) involve the appropriateness of using the SHA Unit as an instrument for placing experts in the field or in partner organisations on longer assignments. The duration of deployments needs to be carefully and critically considered to ensure that the deployment complements the available capacity of the host organisation.

The question of the localisation of expertise is an essential aspect which has become more prominent in the delivery of HA, especially for DAs (e.g. as part of 'The Grand Bargain' workstream 2). While the potential for localisation is intensively debated at SDC HA, there appears to be pressure to create sufficient deployments, thus compromising on localisation and partner ownership.

It must be emphasised that the answer to this evaluation question is particularly difficult with regard to DAs, as it needs to address both the deployments of Swiss expertise to implement a DA but also the DA as a project. DAs' effectiveness and therefore their appropriateness are highly dependent on the context, their management and the experts deployed to implement them. Therefore, there is not one single answer to this question for DAs, so there is no 'one fit-for-all' solution for the future.

Secondments are different to the other deployment modes in the sense that they contribute to SDC HA through multilateral support and their contribution is, in that sense, more difficult to assess. They are also less visible to Swiss and local authorities compared to a DA.

Nevertheless, secondments raise Switzerland's profile as a reliable HA partner vis-à-vis the organisations where the secondees are deployed as well as, depending on the activities of the secondees, the UN system in the country. Secondments also provide interesting feedback for

SDC when based in regions without an SDC presence. For all those reasons, opening them to other SDC departments could be relevant.

Be it in the context of short-term or long-term deployments, accountability of HA interventions and the deployed experts to taxpayers and local authorities have become more important. The visibility of HA assistance provided in the field has increased due to an increased access to information (media and social media). RRTs and DAs are the deployment modes most directly impacted by this. Both their successes and failures will be quickly put in the spotlights and make headlines in the news and influence public opinions.

## **6. Which scope of duties and specializations will become more or less relevant in the future?**

The discussion regarding the right profile of SHA experts is complex because short-term deployments require different profiles and duties than long-term secondments. And it is the hen-and-egg discussion: should the specialisations be done based on emerging needs of HA recipients (demand-driven) or a clearly formulated strategy (supply-driven)? In praxis a smart combination of both might offer the best results. In this regard three issues are at stake. (i) On the one side, more specialised experts are required, for example experts to assess the structural integrity of buildings (schools, hospitals, etc.) after disasters; but on the other side, experts with general management skills, cultural sensitivity and capacity as well as policy development experiences are required. (ii) For all deployment modes, a pool of generalists with ample professional experience in different contexts are in high demand as team leaders and managers. (iii) Knowledge of the UN system and its HA architecture is becoming more important as most humanitarian interventions are coordinated by UN organisations through their cluster approach which includes close inter-agency cooperation and coordination with national disaster management authorities.<sup>22</sup>

The aspiration for longer-term careers with long-term deployments favours generalists because those are in a better position to be redeployed. The current system of SDC structure posts, for which many SHA experts also aspire, do favour general profiles as well. In the end, professional expertise and general management skills are not seen as contradictory but as complementary. Competencies that are missing (e.g. operation of drones) could be added by mandates or partnerships with related private-sector or NGO partners.

A big potential for SHA expertise is seen in technical backstopping, advisory services or project coaching (of other SDC departments and other partners). There seems also to be a potential to engage in projects with a multi-year perspective by taking over commitments for Swiss presence in supporting partner organisations or governments (e.g. WASH or medical support in refugee camps, migration related support, etc.) while the SHA members would rotate in shifts of a couple of months up to one year. This would require specific technical profiles (WASH, Logistics) that have experience in capacity development and empowerment concepts. For deployment in integrated embassies, generalists and mixed profiles are in demand. The ability to work in an integrated embassy setup is important, especially for newcomers, and generally more soft skills (in governance issues, negotiations in multi-stakeholder setups, intercultural competences, etc.) are required for SHA experts. Concerning the 'localisation agenda', with the aim to promote, enable and empower local staff, local partner organisations and ministries would require expert profiles with more knowledge in partner and beneficiary assessment and capacity development tools.

While the corps rated the current thematic positioning of the SHA Unit quite favourably in the online survey, interviewees from the corps and others are more critical. The thematic diversity of the 11 EGs reflects relevant themes and needs but should be reduced, also in order to foster

<sup>22</sup>

See: <https://www.humanitarianresponse.info/en/coordination/clusters/what-cluster-approach>



cross-thematic exchange. This would not mean less thematic specialisation overall but more interdisciplinary exchange that allows them to operate in complex contexts.

**7. Which competencies should be fostered/reduced within the SHA Unit in the future and which expert group setup appears to be most effective to adapt to changing needs in the humanitarian sector?**

Thematic priorities in the HA context are gradually changing. Compared to 10 years ago there is less demand for DRR and (re-)construction expertise and more for health and migration issues (labour market survey, cinfo 2019). Thematic competition has increased: (i) Approaches on CTP have become mainstreamed in many organisations (e.g. WFP) and (ii) MSF maintains a broad global presence in the health domain by addressing urgent crises (e.g. Ebola). WASH remains important and could be built upon due to the good networking on a strong Swiss-anchored cluster of expertise. This is also relevant to climate change and dwindling freshwater resources due to overutilisation. DRR & Environment is especially relevant for enhancing disaster preparedness. Thus, these interventions require rather long approaches to reform local systems and increasingly require combined profiles (e.g. construction or DRR expertise combined with governance & policy development know-how). DRR expertise is also in high demand in developmental projects and could be used to strengthen the backstopping or the SDC thematic network on DRR. Generally, it can be said that profiles required change regularly. It is important to maintain flexibility and look into new forms to gather needed experience, i.e. by expanding existing collaborations with universities and the private sector.

Awareness of the interlinkages and the interplay of FDFA's instruments in the triple nexus (incl. HSD) would allow a better fit of the various deployment modes (see also the nexus evaluation by SDC in 2019).

Repositioning the EGs could better shape the thematic profiles yet emphasise the integrated aspects required from the SHA experts – aside from the solid professional experience gained in Switzerland and through deployments. The expertise of the EG “Protection” is high in demand (in secondments) but faces the challenge that this is not a professional field in Switzerland, thus poses challenges in re-integration into the Swiss labour market. The precise role of the EGs “Rescue”, “Security” and “Technology & Communication” appear to be unclear at present and their profiles should be checked.

A possibility could also be that SDC focuses on certain topics where it has a clear added value due to the Swiss context compared to other actors (e.g. in e WASH and DRR). This could also be coordinated in terms of achieving a more prominent distribution of labour with the SRC, which maintains two EGs for RRTs (health and logistics). To further promote mixed profiles and foster the triple-nexus approach, more cross-sectoral thinking and cooperation across the EGs appears to be needed. This would also mean closer cooperation and exchange with other WOGA partners (e.g. the HSD).

Further professionalism of the SHA Unit, mainly in the area of soft factors, is important as some of the corps members are too distant from the SDC and UN spheres. Overall, having experienced SHA Unit experts who might have started as very technical experts but who have gathered experience and interest in the broader picture of managing, coordinating and delivering HA in view of nexus, coordination with WOGA and UN, must be addressed in trainings in order to remain fit for purpose.

Concerning the various knowledge management tools relevant for the SHA experts, the overall rating is quite good. However, there were many critical comments on what should be improved. Many experts stated that, despite the Shareweb, a unified tool or place where relevant information is shared does not exist and that knowledge management is limited to regular

training and occasional meetings with other experts. While the trainings are well rated, there is no institutional knowledge management such as a community of practice, a cloud-based interactive forum or other innovative online tool.

### **5.3 Appropriateness of SHA Unit's organisational and managerial structure**

#### **8. Which institutional, organisational and managerial aspects are currently conducive/ obstructive for the functioning of the SHA Unit?**

The following factors focus on internal aspects that influence the optimal deployment of SHA experts. Having the right expert at the right time in the right place is the core task of any deployment and a formidable challenge. The most important conducive factors for the current operation of the SHA Unit are:

- High motivation of corps members and strong identification with the overall goal of Swiss HA;
- Improved exchange of information within SDC departments and FDFA, also thanks to the establishment of integrated embassies resulting in better coordination of the activities in the field;
- Short communication channels between various actors at HQ (incl. Krisenmanagement-Zentrum) and the field allow for rapid decision-making and mobilisation in case of emergencies. This results in smooth and swift deployments;
- A solid standby roster system to mobilise expertise from a broad pool of experts on a demand-driven basis;
- Strategic guidelines from the Federal Dispatch 2017–20 and 2021–24 for setting priorities for the work of the various EGs;
- Increasing inception and follow-up trainings to combine various EGs and address soft skills and cross-cutting issues (governance, negotiations, etc.).

The most important obstructive factors for the current operation of the SHA Unit are:

- Recruitment of experts for fragile contexts is difficult and often lengthy, and there are high rates of fluctuations also in longer-term projects (e.g. DAs). These complex contexts require experienced experts with broad soft skills whose availability is limited.
- Coordination of the 11 heads of EGs is rather not a part-time job with limited directive authority. Keeping the members fit for purpose and informed requires a lot of effort from the heads and deputy heads of EGs. As some groups have no head or deputy head as a structure post, this opens possible information gaps.
- The great work of the Field Resources Section is acknowledged due to its flexibility, supportive attitude and good contacts in the network but was also labelled as “old-school”. There appears to be room for improvement in terms of recruitment, caring for staff and coaching support for deployed experts.
- The legal enforcement of the 10-year ceiling for corps membership (calculated as accumulated time spent on deployments) since 2013 was meant to strengthen the labour rights of staff. This, however, has the unintended effect that experienced SHA experts have to leave the corps before reaching that ceiling. Therefore, the SHA Unit loses well-qualified members, reducing the accumulation of a sufficient pool of experts who can be deployed in fragile and complex contexts. This results in an administratively ordered brain drain.

- Information flow for new deployment opportunities is enabled through a “closed user group” platform and SMS. The impression that deployments are made in a rather untransparent manner is widespread and requires improvement through clearer communication and online tools or apps.
- The deployment pattern shows a strong asymmetry. There are many experts with no or only 1–2 deployments (52%), while a few members accumulate the most deployments. (4% of corps members make 46% of deployments according to the online survey.) Regular exposure from deployments is vital to stay updated and fit for purpose. (Training alone does not compensate for the lack of deployments.)

## **9. Which options for institutional, organisational and managerial changes should be envisaged in order to enable the best possible frame conditions for the SHA Unit to fulfil its mandate?**

There are various aspects to this: (i) Alternative organisational setups, (ii) Restructuring of the EGs and (iii) Optimisation of the expert pool's management.

(i) Embracing contextual changes and considering the findings of this evaluation, four options are outlined in this evaluation report: (1) SHA 2.0, an optimised version of the current pool, (2) Creation of a standing team for short-term deployments, possibly complemented by a small pool of experts, (3) Outsourcing of deployment modes, and (4) Creation of an independent HA foundation.

Advantages and disadvantages are associated with each of the options and are presented in this report: e.g. options 1 and 2 may offer more “Swissness” and SDC visibility as an operational actor in the field but options 3 and 4 offer more flexibility in their procedures and more possibilities for internationalisation of expertise.

As outlined on the appropriateness of the deployment modes, the timeline and duration of the deployments are important factors. Short-term deployments function well and are aligned with a response to emerging HA needs. The management of long-term deployments, beyond the recovery phase, is more questioned. Long-term deployments also come with other requirements for follow-up and support from HR, different career development and the need for other contractual conditions (e.g. regarding the 10-year rule). In outsourcing secondments, there is a high potential for synergies with other SDC departments and the HSD, as well as with other Swiss actors, Swiss NGOs and the ICRC. More flexible procedures could allow local governments and local organisations to request expertise and secondments, thus also contributing to strengthening local capacities and the ‘localisation agenda’.

The internationalisation of the pool of experts is an expansion, which other pools of experts have done to maximise chances of identifying experts with the right set of skills and availability for deployments. The examples from the NORCAP and Irish rosters – both broadly and internationally diversified – show that an opening of the corps for non-Swiss could considerably alleviate the problems in recruiting suitable, long-term staff to complex environments or fragile contexts. It would also be more in line with the internationalisation of the labour market in HA.

It is important to mention that the options proposed are not mutually exclusive. It could be envisaged to work on a concept of SHA Unit 2.0 and to outsource secondments to an external partner (e.g. cinfo). Another possibility could be to develop a standing team for short-term deployments on RRTs (primarily), HQ and/or field office support, temporary support of DAs and to outsource/create a foundation for long-term deployments (primarily projects to replace DAs and secondments). As a sub-option, a small corps of around 100 to 200 experts (a mini SHA 2.0) could complement the standing team to cover all thematic areas and duties and to increase capacities to address crises situations when needed.

More discussions and further exploration are encouraged at SDC HA to identify the best possible setup as well as a realistic transition process. Ideally, an organisational development process should be initiated in close coordination with the whole SDC management team, taking into consideration SDC's "2030: Fit for Purpose" process, the co-location of the SDC departments (foreseen for 2023) and the future Federal Dispatch 2025–2028.

(ii) The current EG setup provides impressions of fragmentation and unclear positioning of the EGs. A restructuring allows a rebranding and better positioning of key EGs and would define common issues to enhance mixed profiles. The six most important thematic areas in terms of needs and themes (also covered by other HA organisations, see Table 13 in Annex 6) are coordination and leadership, WASH, protection, shelter, health and logistics. Thus, the current 11 EGs could be regrouped by creating 6 core groups reflecting those issues: For example "Coordination & Management", "Protection" (incl. SGBV), "WASH and Shelter", "Health and Nutrition" and "Logistics and Support". The "DRR" theme is not a standard topic with other HA organisations thus such an EG could be promoted as a specific field of Swiss complementarity in the HA architecture.

These core groups would be complemented by a support group with the other themes (security, rescue, information management and technology). A series of cross-cutting themes to be addressed by all groups, such as governance, gender, CTP, needs assessment and capacity development would strengthen mixed profiles.

(iii) The Delegate SDC HA is also the director of the corps. Given all the other portfolio functions she/he is rather distant from day-to-day management of the SHA Unit. The today's coordination of the Unit is fulfilled by a (part-time) desk officer of the SDC HA without directive authority. This task could be replaced by a stronger management position as a new "Head of the SHA Unit" which would report to the delegate. There is also a need to modernise the management of the corps through more transparent mobilisation of deployments, using online exchange platforms with updated profiles (for internal and external access and use), strengthening knowledge management and career counselling, and enhancing the duty of care for deployed corps members. Furthermore, the management of the EGs requires attention because the asymmetric constellation of internal/external leadership of EGs creates uneven access to crucial information (some EGs feel disconnected from SDC's internal information flow).

## **5.4 Results and impact of the SHA Unit's interventions**

### **10. What are the results (achievements) of the SHA Unit's interventions?**

It is methodologically unsound to aggregate the achievements of SDC's HA intervention in the five case study countries, especially because no field visits were possible and because the deployment of technical assistance by SHA experts is only one part of the overall Swiss contribution. Concluding observations from the desk studies are that there are positive examples of all deployment modes (e.g. capacity development through DAs and visibility of RRTs/DAs) or sectoral and institutional insights gained through secondments as well as essential support to SCOs provided by the SHA Unit's experts in managing thematic and programme portfolios. Yet, the same is also true for rather negative examples or assessments. However, these also very much depend on the institutional understanding of the complementarity of the SHA instruments vis-à-vis other instruments of Swiss foreign policy.

The nexus debate is conceptually clear but the implementation in the field is challenging owing to institutional divides and policy shifts (e.g. having a 15-year project in Haiti where the experts change every 6 months or must be recruited outside of the pool because of lack of candidates).

There are various (and mostly internal) instruments applied to reflect on achievements and processes (MDPN, field reports, reviews) but a culture of continuously reviewing deployments externally appears to be lacking. The views of the corps might be biased and soften criticisms because of the risks they could pose to receiving future deployments.

## **11. How efficient was the mobilisation and implementation of the deployments?**

The recent mobilisations of RRTs have shown that the system works well: In the case of the [earthquake in Albania](#) (26 November 2019) the team was operational on site within 21 hours, and in the case of the [Beirut explosion](#) (4 August 2020) it was there within 40 hours. The reaction to the fire in the Greek [refugee camp of Moria](#) (8 September 2020) showed that SDC HA is capable of deploying its SHA experts within 48 hours. This is thanks to the very short and good communication channels within the FDFA and with other Swiss government partners as well as local partners, and ultimately thanks to SHA experts who are ready to leave on a very short notice.

Except for the RRTs, the other deployment modes (DAs, HQ/field support, and secondments) lack an operational concept explaining their modality. For example, the “Rules of Engagement” for secondments (SKH undated) is a helpful checklist to prioritise deployments but there is not yet a concept or policy for the strategic selection of secondments. Especially the recruitment for secondments shows a rather high rate of non-realisation of planned deployments – while annually around 115 deployments are made successfully, 70 planned deployments fail for various reasons.

Measuring the efficiency of DAs is seen critically by several interviewees because usually the project objectives are achieved in all projects but a critical reflection about the invested resources is often lacking or judged controversially.

Comparing the SHA deployments with NORCAP's (270 FTEs with 1'000 experts), there appears to be a potential to more efficiently deploy the SHA experts or to streamline the corps and reduce the size of the active members to around 400.

## 6 Recommendations

The following recommendations are conceptualised as a basis for discussion about the ongoing strategic reflections for an SDC Vision 2030. While some refer to organisational options for the SHA Unit with far-reaching institutional and political consequences that have to be further scrutinised, others options are more operational in nature, specifically referring the option SHA 2.0's optimisation of the Unit within its current institutional setup within SDC.

### 6.1 Strategy and vision

- 1: SDC should continue deploying Swiss HA expertise and should further strengthen its expertise to support people with humanitarian needs after emergencies or during protracted crises.

There remain big unmet HA needs and it is expected that the gap is widening, not least because of the consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic (increased global poverty and public deficits in donor countries).

There is high political and public support for engaging in humanitarian efforts, especially as fast reaction after natural disasters. The SHA Unit has the expertise and has gained relevant experience during past deployments for effective support. It can also provide necessary support to people in need and their supporting partners during protracted crises. Rapid response capacities offer especially good visibility (especially the deployment mode RRT) and the scope to extend support into early recovery.

- 2: An organisational development process should be initiated to analyse whether the SHA Unit remains as the operational HA arm within the Swiss Government or whether an alternative organisational setup for the SHA Unit offers better prospects.

Four options are presented in this report: (1) SHA Unit 2.0, an optimised version of the current pool, (2) Creation of a standing team for short-term deployments, possibly complemented with a small corps, (3) Outsourcing of SHA deployment modes, and (4) Creation of an independent HA foundation.

While all options are applicable, options (1) and (2) keep the SHA Unit as operational body of the Swiss Government in HA, and options (3) and (4) would entail that SDC HA does not implement projects directly. Based on the analysis, outsourcing the secondments appears to be particularly promising and could open doors for a further expansion of the purpose. There is a high potential for synergies with other SDC departments, the HSD and with cinfo.

In connection with the observed trends of having international pools of expertise and the 'localisation agenda', an internationalisation of the pool of experts should be explored. This could considerably alleviate the problem of recruiting suitable, long-term staff in complex environments or fragile contexts and increase the matching success for secondments to UN organisations.

The organisational development process should be implemented in close coordination with the whole SDC "2030: Fit for Purpose" process and take into consideration the co-location of the SDC departments (foreseen for 2023), the future Federal Dispatch 2025–2028 and changes in the HA context (localisation, internationalisation and shifts in themes).

- 3: A new, refreshed vision for the SHA Unit should provide a clear common understanding about its deployment modes and their interaction with other Swiss HA and FDFA instruments in the triple nexus.

There is a need for a clarification of roles (SDC HA as donor, implementer and advocate), the combination of modalities (rapid response, secondments, DAs, support to HQ and Swiss field representations and backstopping) as well as their contexts.

This vision should be embedded in Switzerland's wider HA system and look at thematic gaps in the international humanitarian architecture that Switzerland could fill. Such a document could embrace centrifugal trends and map out a path on how to keep the corps a flexible instrument of Swiss HA,

how it interacts with other Swiss foreign policy instruments (e.g. HSD) and how the international trends and gaps in the HA architecture are coped with.

## 6.2 Structure, resources and coordination

**4: The management should be strengthened by the establishment of a head of SHA Unit who should have the authority to take operational decisions.**

The Delegate SDC HA is also the director of the corps. Given all the other portfolio functions, she/he is rather distant from day-to-day management of the SHA Unit. Today's coordination of the Unit is fulfilled by a (part-time) SDC HA desk officer without directive authority. There is also a need to issue strategic guidelines and to modernise the management of the corps. Additionally, the management of the EGs requires attention because the asymmetric constellation of internal/external leadership of EGs creates uneven access to crucial information. Therefore, the SHA Unit's management should be strengthened by the establishment of a Head of Unit position, with sufficient directive authority and reporting directly to the delegate. The Head of Unit should be strategically placed in the organisational structure and avoid creating additional layers in the structure.

**5: Selection and retention criteria of the corps members should be improved to ensure efficient management of the pool of experts.**

The management of the pool of experts should be enhanced and the pool streamlined (e.g. enhance performance management of the pool of experts). This requires concrete strategic guidelines from the management.

Concerning the Field Resources Section, the application and recruitment processes should be reviewed and updated. The status of pool members should be clarified and clear (Active/Reserve/Alumni). The section should adjust its capacities to manage experts deployed on various deployment modes and themes and provide adequate coaching support not only to short-term experts in the context of RRTs but also for secondees to the UN. It should also capitalise on strategic secondments better.

**6: The organisational structure and functioning of the four deployment modes of the SHA Unit should be optimised by:**

**6a: Strengthening the Rapid Response Teams (RRTs) by improving mobilisation and transparency (communication) of deployments.**

RRTs are one of the core tasks of the corps. The short-term availability of experienced corps members is crucial, and transparent mobilisation should be improved by clear communication of opportunities (e.g. sending pro-actively messages on emerging opportunities to qualified members). Clearer and more direct communication of deployment decisions and the posting location (also for the other deployment modes) would enhance transparency for SHA experts and avoid the perception of having an inner circle in the corps with privileged membership.

**6b: Carefully assessing the overall context and the added value of the Swiss expertise while designing Direct Actions (DAs).**

Overall, a clarification of the terminology of the DA is necessary. At operational and strategic levels, a new policy with new guidelines should be elaborated. The integration of all relevant stakeholders into such a process could release internal tensions on the topic.

Good prospects for a successful DA with real added value are most likely in the context of the nexus in the framework of integrated embassies. The precondition is an understanding of the ambassador and the head of cooperation of the advantages of a DA and their acceptance of the additional administrative burden.

DAs should basically be designed with a short-term orientation. If long-term, the management of the DA should in principle be assumed by structural staff in order to ensure the planning and continuity of the programme.

**6c: Strengthening the process for deploying secondees to ensure clear added value and achievable terms of reference (ToR).**

A policy for deploying secondments at operational as well as strategic levels is necessary. The current "Rules of Engagement" are not sufficient to define the purpose and types of secondments, expected results/achievements (clear and achievable ToR) and risks. These rules should be supported by a secondment policy.

The secondments in Switzerland should be carefully reconsidered and limited to strategically well-justified positions and be driven by demand rather than by supply.

**6d: Broadening the tasks and intensifying SHA expert support for technical backstopping, advisory services and coaching for projects of the other SDC departments, (Swiss) NGOs and local partners.**

A broadening of deployments could foster the deployment of SHA experts to Swiss NGOs (SRC and others) or other local public actors or NGOs. Interestingly, the original SHA Unit concept (1971) has already outlined this option. Because such technical support might be required intermittently or over a longer period, it is neither a clear RRT nor a secondment. It would also include partnership agreements or specific ToR. This could also include technical backstopping support of SDC developmental projects (e.g. in the field of WASH, construction or protection).

**7: Restructure, reduce and focus the current Experts Groups (EGs) to address future needs and rebrand their purpose and way of functioning.**

This allows for better profiling the content and functioning of the various EGs, which currently also differ greatly by size.

Inspired by the structure of other rosters, the current 11 EGs could be regrouped by creating 6 core groups reflecting those issues: "Coordination & Management", "Protection" (incl. SGBV), "WASH and Shelter", "Health and Nutrition" and "Logistics and Support". The "DRR" theme is not a standard topic with other HA organisations thus such an EG could be promoted as a specific field of Swiss complementarity in the HA architecture.

New specific cross-cutting themes could enhance cooperation across EGs: "Governance" (incl. cooperation with local actors/partner organisations), "Gender", "CTP", "Needs Assessment" (analytical tools) and "Capacity Development" (training and advisory approaches to strengthen partners).

Joint trainings on core themes and future-oriented, cross-cutting themes should promote the sharing of experiences and mutual learning. Other topics of common interest are the role of SHA experts on deployment, negotiation skills in multi-stakeholder setups and intercultural competences.

**8: Find a way how to retain experienced SHA members in the corps despite the 10-year-rule for SHA Unit contracts.**

The implementation of the 10-year-rule results in an undesired brain drain of qualified and experienced corps members, as they have to take up an assignment with another employer (for at least 2 years) before they have the possibility of re-entering the SHA Unit. Thus, contracts should include an article that crossing this limit does not result in any demand for changing into a permanent position.

Meanwhile, the Field Resources Section should proactively engage (i.e. with the Multilateral Division and cinfo) in coaching SHA members to find other engagements to acquire other institutional experience as well with the possibility (but no guarantee) to re-enter the SHA Unit.

## 6.3 Communication and knowledge management

**9: Improved mutual understanding within FDFA of the various HA, developmental and peace promotion instruments, including the four SHA deployment modes and their strengths and weaknesses, is required.**

Swiss politics and the public at large associate the SHA Unit with the RRTs that traditionally have high visibility but represent a very small proportion of deployments. Therefore, the communication of



a more realistic picture of the SHA Unit's functions and profiles should be promoted, i.e. on social media, where short clips of experts working for the UN could be highlighted.

The evidence from this evaluation illustrates that close cooperation between the SHA experts and the other SDC departments in the integrated embassies is challenging but adds value. Mutual understanding of the comparative advantages of various policy instruments (incl. the SHA Unit's deployment modes) is vital for using the synergies for the benefit of people in need and Swiss foreign policy. This requires a transparent and coordinated cooperation of Swiss actors in the field and at HQ.

The FDFA should establish clearer profiles for the various Swiss instruments at hand (SDC departments, the HSD and Political Directions) to coherently work on the triple nexus.

**10: SDC HA should review its evaluation practice to promote independent and/or peer reviews, enhance evidence-based learning and strengthen the knowledge management system.**

The current SDC evaluation policy is very generic in relation to the SDC HA (and the SHA Unit's activities). Independent evaluations, possibly also peer reviews, should be promoted in order to analyse relevance and outcomes as well as improvements in Swiss HA instruments and programming.

Especially with the dual role of a donor and implementer in DAs, it would be important to have SDC's own activities regularly assessed from an outside perspective. This would increase the accountability and credibility of SDC HA's work and achievements.

Moreover, user-friendly knowledge management systems are crucial and should be further reviewed, defined and implemented at the SHA Unit level. New digital tools to foster knowledge management should be explored, and a modernisation of the SHA Unit platform (with easy access to expert profiles, etc.) and tools seems timely and is therefore highly recommended.

**11: The utilisation and exchange of knowledge and best practices between SHA experts (and EGs) and the SDC networks should be fostered.**

Participation in SDC thematic networks should be promoted. As an example, the DRR thematic network is managed by SDC HA but all other thematic networks (e.g. water) by other SDC departments. SHA experts should be involved in all SDC networks relevant for HA to ensure synergies and successful collaborations (in recognition of cross-cutting issues and to reduce compartmentalised 'silo thinking' in EGs).

# Annex 1 Terms of Reference



Schweizerische Eidgenossenschaft  
Confédération suisse  
Confederazione Svizzera  
Confederaziun svizra

Federal Department of Foreign Affairs FDFA  
Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation SDC Humanitarian  
Aid and SHA

## MANDATE

**For society / consultant:** KEK-CDC, Dieter Zürcher  
**Mandate:** Consultant for External review of Swiss Humanitarian Aid Unit  
**Period from:** 08.06.2020 to 31.12.2020  
**Place of mission:** Switzerland, with missions abroad  
**Application no:** Z7FH14100022

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## 1. Goal and content of the mandate

### 1.1. Introduction

Saving lives and alleviating suffering – This is the mandate of the Swiss Humanitarian Aid (SDC/HA)<sup>1</sup>.

It is the expression of Switzerland's long and internationally recognized humanitarian tradition. In the SDC/HA's operations, the humanitarian needs of the affected population are consistently put in the centre of attention. Operating before, during and after crisis and disasters, the SDC/HA assumes the following triple role:

- Implement projects as a pragmatic and effective operational actor in the field;
- Be a reliable and flexible humanitarian partner and donor for humanitarian organisations;
- Be an advocate for the respect of the humanitarian law and principles.

In order to implement its mandate, the SDC/HA has various instruments at its disposal: 1. The Swiss Humanitarian Aid Unit; 2. Financial contributions to humanitarian partner organisations; 3. The provision of relief goods as well as 4. Dialogue and advocacy in order to facilitate access and ensure the respect of international law.

The main asset of the SDC/HA is its Swiss Humanitarian Aid Unit (SHA). The SHA – a pool of approximately 700 experts with various professional backgrounds - is based on decree 172.211.31<sup>2</sup> of the Swiss Government and Administration Organisation Act. The decree defines the SHA as being attached to the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC); describes the SHA's mission to carry out emergency relief, reconstruction and disaster risk reduction interventions; defines the leadership and authority of the Swiss Delegate for Humanitarian Affairs regarding the SHA.

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<sup>1</sup> Swiss Humanitarian Aid (SDC/HA) is part of the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC) and of the Federal Department of Foreign Affairs (FDFA).

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.admin.ch/opc/de/classified-compilation/19880091/>

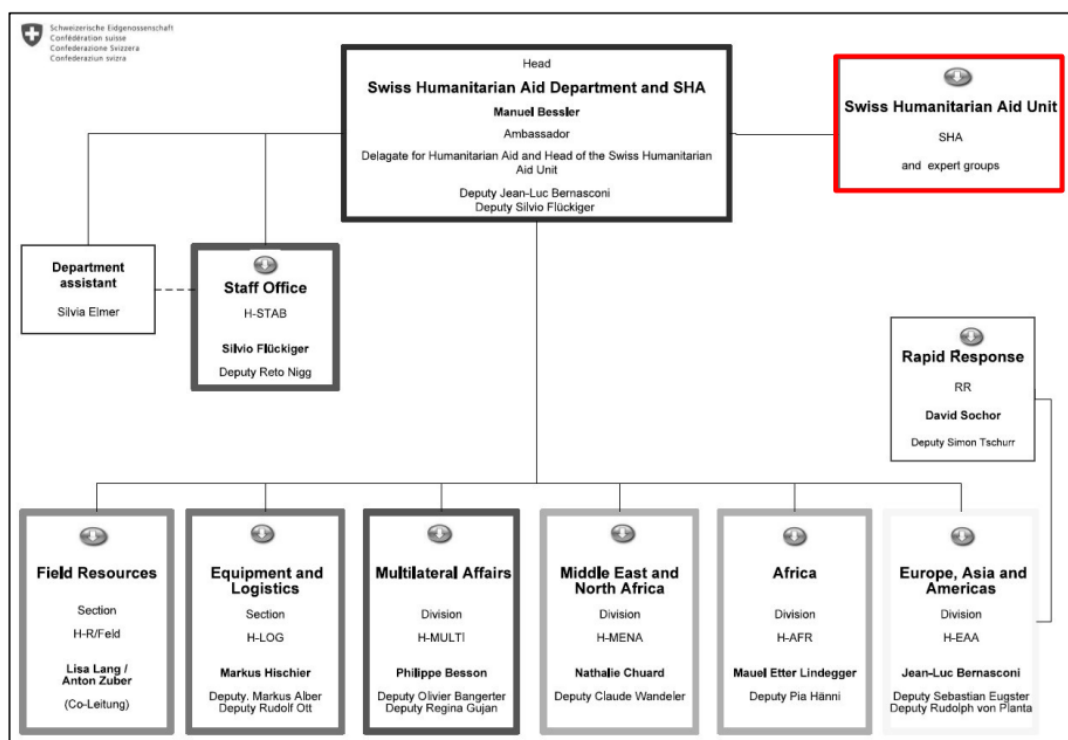


Figure 1 Organisational chart of SDC/HA

The SHA is currently structured into eleven expert groups as shown in figure 2 below.



Figure 2 The eleven expert groups of the Swiss Humanitarian Aid Unit (SHA)

SHA experts can be deployed at any time to wherever humanitarian assistance is needed, whether it is in crises, natural disaster or armed conflicts. They can be tasked to: 1. Carry out rapid response actions after sudden and onset disasters; 2. Implement humanitarian projects of the

SDC/HA (direct actions); 3. Provide technical expertise to partner organisations (secondments) and 4. Support the HQ or Swiss representations abroad (during crises).

In 2018, the Swiss Humanitarian Aid Unit celebrated its 45<sup>th</sup> birthday. It is in this context that the SDC/HA launched a process on the future of its operational arm, the Swiss Humanitarian Aid Unit.

## 1.2. The Future of the Swiss Humanitarian Aid Unit: Context and Rationale

Since the establishment of the Swiss Humanitarian Aid Unit in 1973, the humanitarian landscape has changed. The past years have shown an increase in the number of conflicts and humanitarian crises. In addition, humanitarian crises tend to be more complex and last longer. According to OCHA, 86% of the overall humanitarian funding in 2018 was invested in responses to protracted crises lasting longer than five years. As a consequence, emergency aid is increasingly becoming a longer-term need and must be combined with development cooperation measures.

At the same time, a behavioural change of affected countries can be observed with regard to natural disasters. Many disaster prone countries have strengthened their coping mechanisms and are increasingly willing and capable to deal with the crisis management and response. Therefore, affected countries tend to be increasingly hesitant to request or accept international assistance or have become very selective in terms of support, mainly focusing on neighbouring countries and regional actors.

The institutional context for the SHA has evolved as well over time. Along the past decade, the FDFA has undertaken measures to increase coherence, better integrate and mainstream the different directorates, services and representations, and to harmonize processes and instruments.

These changes have consequences and require adaptations from all humanitarian actors, including the SDC/HA. It is against this background that the SDC/HA has launched a process on the future of the Swiss Humanitarian Aid Unit. The overall goal of the process is to strengthen the Swiss Humanitarian Aid Unit as the operational arm of the SDC/HA taking into account the changing environment and parameters. In order to pursue this goal, the SDC/HA defined a series of short and long-term measures. The measures have been elaborated along the four tasks of the Swiss Humanitarian Aid Unit (see above). The scope and concrete objectives of this review are outlined in chapter 1.3.

## 1.3. Purpose, objectives and scope of the review

### 1.3.1. Purpose

The purpose of this review is mainly prospective (future-oriented) and formative (learning-oriented). The review shall hence allow SDC to learn from the review's findings and provide information useful for decision making about the future orientation of Swiss Humanitarian Aid Unit.

### 1.3.2. Objectives

Considering the evolving global environment, the main objective of the review is to determine the **relevance** and **added value** of the Swiss Humanitarian Aid Unit's contribution to the core mandate of SDC/HA which is saving lives and alleviating suffering.

Based on these findings, the review shall draw conclusions and formulate recommendations on how to strengthen the SHA as operational arm of the SDC/HA in light of the future orientation of Switzerland's international cooperation as foreseen in the federal dispatch 2021-24<sup>3</sup> and beyond. Accordingly, the review considers (i) the global environment and humanitarian needs, (ii) the Swiss added value as well as (iii) the Swiss interests in maintaining its Humanitarian tradition.

### 1.3.3. Scope

The scope of this review is limited to the Swiss Humanitarian Aid Unit. The conclusions and recommendations of the present review may however have implications on the SHA's framework conditions. The analysis of these implications shall form an integral part of the present review. The recommendations may also comprise changes in role, size and structure of the Swiss Humanitarian Aid Unit. The management response to the review and its findings will be assured by the Head of the Swiss Humanitarian Aid Department and Swiss Humanitarian Aid Unit. The review will be published.

A separate external review was conducted targeting "Swiss Rescue", Switzerland's INSARAG certified heavy USAR Team, which is one of Switzerland's rapid response instruments. The results and recommendations of this review shall be incorporated into the present mandate.

## 1.4. Indicative review questions

The preliminary review questions are:

- A) Relevance
  - i. What are the most important developments relevant for humanitarian aid (global humanitarian needs, political and institutional requirements and frame conditions)?
  - ii. What is the SHA's contribution to the mandate of Switzerland's humanitarian aid and its positioning?
  - iii. What is the value added of the SHA compared to other instruments of the Humanitarian Aid and in combination with them?
  - iv. What is the contribution and value added of the SHA in light of the identified expected developments in humanitarian needs and frame conditions?
- B) Appropriateness of the SHA's strategic orientation:
  - i. Are the four tasks of the SHA (rapid response, direct implementation, secondments and support to HQ and representations) appropriate in light of the humanitarian needs and the mandate of the SDC/HA?
  - ii. Which scope of duties and specialisations will become more/less relevant in future?
  - iii. Which competencies should be fostered / reduced within the SHA in future and which expert group set up appears to be most effective to adapt to changing needs in the humanitarian sector?
- C) Appropriateness of the SHA's organisation:
  - i. Which institutional, organisational and managerial aspects are currently conducive/obstructive for the functioning of the SHA?

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.eda.admin.ch/deza/en/home/news/dossiers/alle-dossiers/iza-2021-2024.html>



- ii. Which options for institutional, organisational and managerial changes should be envisaged in order to enable the best possible frame conditions for the SHA to fulfil its mandate?

The **indicative review questions** are only suggestions and shall be reviewed by the review team during the inception phase. The review team will be tasked to propose a detailed catalogue of review questions in its inception report.

The review team will be asked to propose **tasks** suitable to answer above review questions. Amongst others, the tasks shall include:

- Short analysis of most important developments relevant for humanitarian aid (global humanitarian needs, political and institutional requirements and frame conditions)
- Analysis of organizational structure of SHA
- Analysis of the staff structure (age, gender, experience, core competencies) of SHA according to different expert groups
- Analysis of organizational environment in which SHA operates (SDC, FDFA, employers of SHA members)
- Analysis of recruitment, training, development and deployment processes and instruments
- Analysis of results along the four tasks of the SHA (rapid response, direct implementation, secondments and support HQ and representations)

## 1.5. Methodology and process

### 1.5.1. Methodology

The independent review team (the consultant) will assess the review objectives and questions in a **neutral and objective** way.

The review team shall review and assess existing facts, processes, tools and instruments (summative part). Their findings, conclusions and recommendation shall be evidence based and formulated in an open, constructive and non-judging manner. The review team shall use or develop adequate rubrics and instruments for assessing all collected information within the review.

The review team will develop a **rigorous and appropriate methodology** during the inception phase, together with a **Theory of Change** which will set the framework for the review. It is expected to make use of a series of **different methodological instruments**, such as:

- Review of relevant documents from SDC, partners and other donors, as well as international research.
- Interviews and focus group discussions with SDC staff in Berne and abroad and with members of the SHA.
- Interviews with relevant persons representing partner organisations (multilateral agencies, donors, NGOs etc.).
- Interviews with other stakeholders in Switzerland and abroad.
- Two field missions to locations where SHA is or has been active.

The **Advisory Group** shall be involved in reviewing and refining the **recommendations** to the SDC/HA senior management – while the responsibility remains within the review team.

### 1.5.2. Process

The following work plan suggests the dates and responsibilities for the different activities of the review process. This work plan will eventually be adapted by the review team during the inception phase.

Activity	Date (tentative)	Responsibilities
1 <sup>st</sup> AG meeting: Kick-off in Bern (with review team) + first round of interviews for inception phase (in Bern and by phone)	June 2020	AG / Review team
Elaboration of the Inception Report: review of objectives, questions, design and methodology	June/July 2020	Review team
2 <sup>nd</sup> AG meeting: Feedback to Inception Report (with review team)	July 2020	AG / Review team
Finalization of the Inception Report (incl. AG comments)	July 2020	Review team
Desk study, interviews with stakeholders, partners, focus groups, workshops, field missions, e-discussions if relevant, data analysis	July-Sept. 2020	Review team
Draft report	Sept.-Oct. 2020	Review team
3 <sup>rd</sup> AG meeting: Feedback on draft report. Review of conclusions and recommendations (with review team)	November 2020	AG / Review team
Final Report	December 2020	Review team
Presentation to SDC/HA Senior Management	December 2020	Review team
Presentation to SDC Directorate	December 2020	Review team
SDC/HA Management Response		SDC/HA Senior Management

### 1.6. Deliverables

The following deliverables are required:

#### 1.6.1. Inception Report

The review team prepares an Inception Report - after an initial review of relevant documentation and some initial interviews. It shall present:

- the results of the first round of interviews and desk review
- conceptual framework(s) to be used in the review (including a draft Theory of Change which presents SDC/HA's logic regarding the subject matter of this review)
- the key review questions and methodology

- analytical framework for answering the review questions with rubrics or assessment scales that will be used for assessing the information, data sources and collection, sampling and key indicators
- first list of interviewees, proposal for participants of focus groups/workshops

The Inception Report also includes a **timeline for the review process**. It shall explain the **strengths, weaknesses and limitations** of the review approach and the **means used to address** these limitations. The review team should suggest a **tentative structure** of the final report.

The Inception Report shall be written in English and should **not exceed 15 pages** (excluding annexes). It will be addressed to the SDC/HA Senior Management, but will be discussed with the Advisory Group in Bern.

### 1.6.2. Review Report

A fit-to-print **Review Report**<sup>4</sup> in English containing **findings, conclusions and recommendations**, whereby the conclusions must be clearly derived from the findings and the recommendations be clearly based on the conclusions.

The review report should not exceed **40 pages** (including an executive summary; excluding annexes). The report should contain **clear references** of the important information / data available in the annexes. The **executive summary** (abstract) should correspond to the DAC-Standards and should not exceed **3 pages**.

Additionally, a **concise presentation (PowerPoint)** shall be prepared by the review team for SDCs use.

## 1.7. Roles and responsibilities during the review

### 1.7.1. SDC/HA Senior Management

SDC/HA Senior Management (i) approves the Terms of Reference, (ii) expresses their stand on the review recommendations through the management response and (iii) ensures appropriate information of the review results to the SDC Directorate and other stakeholders.

### 1.7.2. Advisory group (AG)

The Advisory Group (AG) accompanies the review process. The AG comments on (i) the review design (Terms of Reference), (ii) the draft Inception Report and (iii) the draft Review Report. At the 3<sup>rd</sup> AG meeting (see 1.5.2), the AG validates the review findings, conclusions and recommendations. The review process will include periodic engagement of the AG members and/or other relevant SDC staff for following activities:

- Provide support to the review team in better understanding SDC's approaches, structures and working processes.

<sup>4</sup> According to the formatting guidelines of the SDC Review and Corporate Controlling Division

<sup>5</sup> Namely the SDC/HA Head of Africa division.



- Comment the Terms of Reference and the draft Inception Report and provide feedbacks to the draft Review Report.

The AG is composed of representatives of the relevant divisions/sections of the SDC/HA (Human resources, Logistics, SHA expert groups, operational divisions, staff unit) as well as representatives of other relevant FDFA services. The AG is chaired by a member of SDC/HA's management team<sup>5</sup>.

### 1.7.3. Review Team (the consultant)

The review team of KEK-CDC is independent<sup>5</sup> of the FDFA/SDC and has not been involved in any activities covered by this review.

The review team shall offer expertise regarding review and partnership development, innovative thinking, the ability to combine established methods with new approaches and to critically discuss, evaluate and share results with stakeholders throughout the review process.

The review team consists of 4 consultants as indicated in the Technical Proposal of KEK-CDC (Annex 6) with complementary expertise and experience. More particularly, the experts are expected to bring along the following review and subject matter expertise and experience:

- Excellent knowledge of the humanitarian system with its actors, trends and challenges
- Strong knowledge of the Swiss political and public administration environment relevant for SDC/Humanitarian aid
- Strong knowledge of the orientation, structure and functioning of Swiss International Cooperation and the Swiss Humanitarian Aid
- Strong expertise in organisational development and/or strategic human resource management
- Solid performance record in conducting similar reviews
- Established network of contacts with state and non-state actors active in the field of humanitarian aid
- Experience in collaboration with humanitarian state actors
- Sensitivity for political implications within Switzerland and on international level

Furthermore, the review team members are expected to have:

- Ability to work and communicate in English, plus excellent writing skills in English. German and French comprehension is required (good reading skills). Good communication skills in German and French is an additional asset.

The chair of the Advisory Group (refer to chapter 1.7.2) will act as point of contact to the review team.

### 1.7.4. Volume of the mandate

A total number approximately **80-90 working days** between June and December 2020 (see chapter 1.5.2) is allocated to the independent review team. These working days may include field missions abroad.

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<sup>5</sup> Independence means that the members of the review team shall not have worked for the FDFA, especially the SDC, in the past five years (except having conducted other external review mandates) or have any other strong linkages or dependencies with the FDFA or the Swiss Humanitarian Aid Unit.

All the price details are indicated in Swiss Francs (CHF) excl. VAT. The price excl. VAT includes in particular insurance, allowances, social costs, transport, customs etc. VAT is indicated separately in the offer and in the financial reporting.

The consultant will not be reimbursed for any costs arising from the preparation or submission of the bid.

## **2. Additional points to be noted by the review team (the consultant)**

### **2.1. General Terms and Conditions of Business (GTC)**

GENERAL TERMS AND CONDITIONS OF BUSINESS (GTC) OF THE SWISS FEDERAL DEPARTMENT OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS (FDFA) FOR MANDATES (TYPE A for employed persons AND TYPE B for legal persons and institutions).

These General Conditions of Business (GTC) shall be deemed accepted by the contractor on submission of the offer.

### **2.2. Conclusion of contract**

The contract is concluded subject to the prior approval of credits by FDFA.

### **2.3. Bidding consortia**

Bidding consortia have been permitted in the bidding process.

### **2.4. Subcontractors**

Subcontractors are permitted, subject to the prior approval of the awarding entity. Subcontractors are allowed to participate in several bids. If the bidder engages subcontractors in order to carry out the work, the bidder will assume overall responsibility. It will list all the subcontractors involved, together with the roles allocated to them, in annex 1 "Bidder information".

Any contractual delegation by the contractor of performance of all or part of the present contract to subcontractors shall be subject to the prior written consent of the contracting authority. Subcontractors and their personnel must satisfy all conditions stipulated in the present contract and the appendices thereto. In the event that the contractor delegates performance of all or part of the contract, the contractor shall bear sole liability for the acts of any subcontractors.

### **2.5. Confidentiality**

All information of any kind that comes to the attention of the bidder in connection with the tendered mandate of the awarding authority is to be treated as confidential. The content of the present tender may only be made available to persons taking part in the preparation of the bid.

The tender documentation may not be used for any other purposes than preparation of the bid, even in extracts.

Bidders treat facts as confidential that are not public knowledge or publicly available. In cases of doubt, facts are to be treated as confidential. This obligation to secrecy remains valid even after conclusion of the tender procedure.

The awarding authority undertakes to maintain confidentiality about this bid towards third parties subject to the reserve of statutory publication requirements.

### **2.6. Integrity clause**

The consultant undertakes to take all necessary measures to avoid corruption, especially not to offer or accept payments or other advantages.

Consultants who violate the integrity clause are required to pay a contractual penalty to the contracting authority amounting to 10% of the contract sum or at least CHF 3,000 per violation. The consultant notes that a violation of the integrity clause leads as a rule to the cancellation of the award or to early termination of the contract by the contracting authority for important reasons. The Parties shall inform each other in case of any well-founded suspicions of corruption.

## 2.7. Protected rights

All protected rights that arise from executing the mandate shall be transferred to the contracting authority.

## 3. Security

On missions abroad the consultant shall observe SDC-directive No 150-0 DFA.

## 4. Annexes

No.	Annex
1	Form „Bidder declaration“
2	GTC FDFA Mandates (type A and B)
3	Information e-billing
4	Budget-form Type B
5	Fact sheet compensation for fees and expenses
6	Technical Proposal External review of the Swiss Humanitarian aid unit, 29. May 2020

Date: 03.06.2020

**Swiss Agency for Development  
and Cooperation**

Humanitarian Aid an SHA

Manuel Etter

**The consultant**

KEK-CDC, represented by  
Dieter Zürcher, Partner

## Annex 2 Evaluation schedule and List of people met

Figure 10: Revised itinerary of the mandate

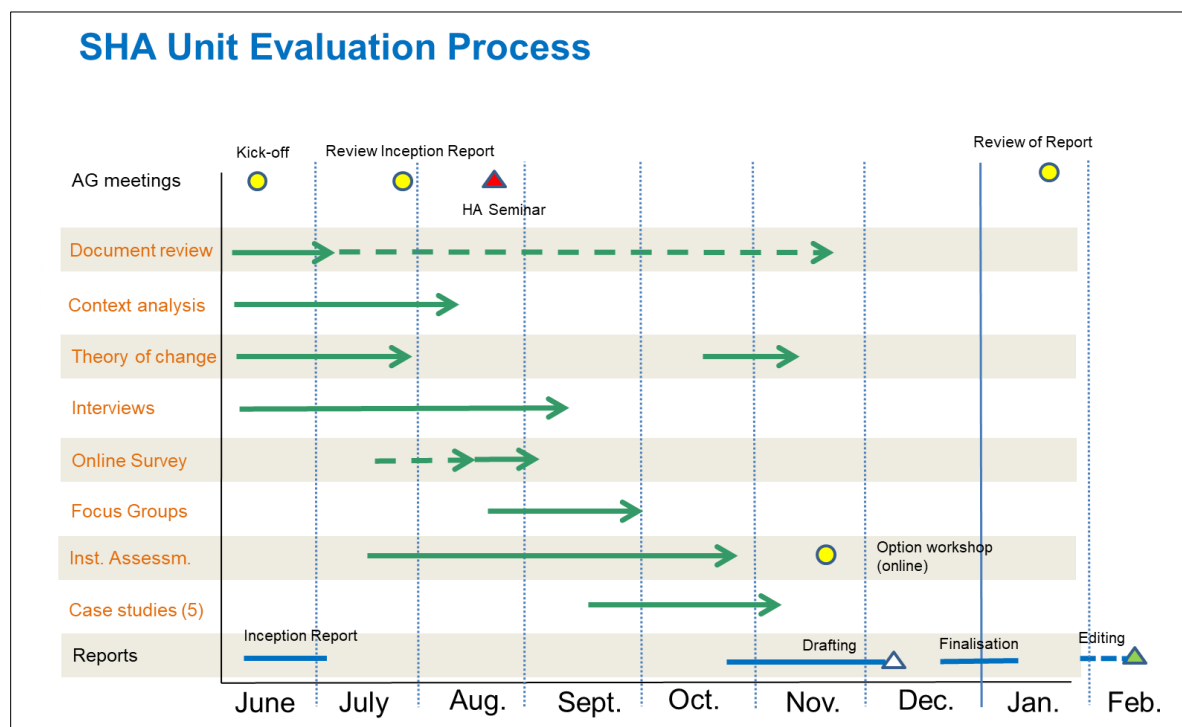


Table 5: Interviews conducted in the course of the evaluation

Name	Function	Date	Means of Interview
Ivan Vuarambon	Head EG Construction/SHA Unit	17.06.2020	In person
Ali Neumann	Head EG DRR/SHA Unit	17.06.2020	In person
Davide Vignati	Head EG Protection/SHA Unit	17.06.2020	In person
Marc-André Bünzli	Head EG WASH/SHA Unit	25.06.2020	In person
Hannes Hermann	Vice head EG Coord. & Admin/SHA Unit	29.06.2020	In person
Manuel Mutrux	Member of the EG Medical	25.08.2020	Online
Catharina Weule	Free Consultant GIZ	07.09.2020	By phone
Andreas Albrecht	Head of the EG Technology/Communication/SHA Unit	09.09.2020	Online
Markus Mader and Beatrice Weber	Director SRC Head of Division International Cooperation, Disaster Management	11.09.2020	In person
David Sochor	Head of Rapid Response	11.09.2020	In person
Rudolf Ott	Head of EG Logistics & Support/SHA Unit	11.09.2020	In person
Kathrin Knubel	Financial Management SDC HA	14.09.2020	In person
Michael Fichter	Head EG Information	14.09.2020	Online
Matthias Pfister	Head EG Rescue	15.9.2020	In person
Simone Mani	Chief, Human Resources SDC	16.09.2020	In person
Daniel Fasnacht	Director of the Expert Pool HSD	16.09.2020	In person
Roland Schlachter	Programme Officer and EG Coordinator	16.09.2020	In person
Hans-Peter Lenz	Ambassador, Head of Crisis Management Centre KMZ	16.09.2020	In person
Philippe Besson	Head of Multilateral Division HA	16.09.2020	In person

Holger Zahn	Sector Management Governance & Conflict, GIZ	18.09.2020	By phone
Samuel Heer	Head of EG Security/SHA Unit	21.09.2020	In person
Kristian Lempa and Michael Rohschürmann	Head and Deputy Head of Section Transitional Development Assistance, GIZ	23.09.2020	By phone
Felix Gutzwiller	President of the Advisory Commission for International Cooperation	23.09.2020	Online
Marian Schilperoord	UNHCR Geneva	23.09.2020	Online
Mailin Fauchin, Ivo Santo, Thomas Vanommen	WFP Rome	23.09.2020	Online
Sebastian Eugster	Deputy Head of the Division Europe, Asia and Americas	24.09.2020	Online
Pia Hänni	Head EG Protection	24.09.2020	Online
Regina Gujan	DRR focal point for DRR Network	24.09.2020	In person
Andrea Studer	Head of MENA-H	24.09.2020	In person
John O'Grady and Robert Meade	Former and new Deputy Director Humanitarian Unit, Development Cooperation and Africa Division, Irish Aid	25.09.2020	By phone
Patricia Danci	Director SDC	25.09.2020	Online
Rainer Prüss	Holinger AG and EG Wash	25.09.2020	By phone
Benno Kocher	Former Head of Unit Resource Mobilisation, ICRC	28.09.2020	By phone
Cecilia Roselli, Kaela Glass	Director of NRC Geneva	30.09.2020	Online
Bruno Husquinet	Helvetas, Humanitarian Response Team Leader	30.09.2020	Online
Markus S. Hischier	Head Section Equipment and Logistics	07.10.2020	Online
Hugo Fasel	Director Caritas Switzerland	21.10.2020	Online
Benedicte Giaever, Linn Bosgnes Miles	Director of NORCAP	19.10.2020	Online
Thierry Umbehr	Deputy head of the Division Europe, Asia and Americas	19.11.2020	By phone
Olivier Hagon	Head EG Medicine/SHA Unit	23.11.2020	By phone

= 40 interviews

**Table 6: Other meetings conducted in the course of the evaluation**

Meetings	Date	Means of Meeting
Short presentation of evaluation team and approach at SHA Unit expert group meeting	10.06.2020	Online
Kick-off Meeting in Bern with the AG	17.06.2020	Hybrid (online//in person)
Meeting with SDC HA core management group: Jean-Luc Bernasconi, Head of Europe Asia and Americas Division and Deputy Head of H-Domain; Silvio Flückiger, Head of Staff and Deputy Head of H-Domain; Manuel Etter, Head of Africa Division and Chair of Review AG; Roland Schlachter, Programme Officer and EG Coordinator.	17.06.2020	In person
Participation in the H-Seminar (two workshops with around 15 people each) and two key note speakers: Patrice Moix (SDC HA Syria and Jacqueline Lehmann SDC HA South Sudan)	21.08.2020	Online
Meeting with Lisa Lang and Magalie Jean-Richard (SDC HA Section Field Resources)	11.09.2020	In person
Focus group discussion with the EG Coordination/Administration: Lucas Riegger, Gabrielle Wilhelm, Noëmi Fivat, Nicolas Pitteloud and Stefan Bumbacher	15.09.2020	Online

Focus group discussion with the EG Technology/Communication: Armin Brunner, Ivan Caduff, Kevin Fuhrer and Fabian Biagini	15.09.2020	Online
Focus group discussion with the EG Wash: Marion Chambart, Walter Baumgartner, Patrice Moix, Claudio San Giacomo, Stuard Vallis, Gabriela Friedl, and Kim Müller	15.09.2020	In person
Focus group discussion with the EG Medicine: Jean-Daniel Junod, Daniel Thüning	15.09.2020	In person
Focus group discussion with the EG Rescue: Alessio Marazza, Christoph Scholl, Matthias Pfister, Basil Brühlmann, and Sebastian Neuhaus	15.09.2020	In person
Focus group discussion with the EG DRR: Eric Bardou, Stefan Tobler, Omar Bellprat, Urs Bloesch	15.09.2020	Online
Focus group discussion with the EG Logistics: Gaudenz Rüst, Jürgen Uwer, Aline Iosca.	15.09.2020	Online
Focus group discussion with the EG Security: Franziska Heizmann, Heinrich Schneider, Daniel Beyeler	15.09.2020	Online
Focus group discussion with SDC HA Programme Officers: Simone Droz (SDC HA Multilateral Division), Thomas Frey (SDC HA Africa), Simon Tschurr (SDC HA Rapid Response) and Tania Rohrer (SDC HA Europe, Asia and Americas)	16.09.2020	In person
Focus group discussion with EG Information: Georg Farago, Christina Stucky, Alex Kühni, and Johanna Estermann	16.09.2020	Online
Focus group discussion with EG Construction: Martin Bölsterli, Lea Moser, Tom Schacher and Peter Hilty	21.09.2020	Online
Focus group discussion with EG Protection: Petra Heusser, Noemi Fivat, Chris Middleton (Additional short interview with Dominique Reinecke on 22.09.2020)	21.09.2020	Online
Option workshop with SDC HA: Manuel Etter, Silvio Flückiger, Regina Gujan, Tania Rohrer, Roland Schlachter and Anton Zuber.	19.11.2020	Online

= 4 meetings, 12 focus groups and 2 workshops/seminars

**Table 7: Interviews conducted for the case studies**

Name	Function	Date	Means of Interview
<b>Myanmar (in-depth)</b>			
Adrienne Schnyder	Programme Officer Myanmar, HA, Bern	27.08.2020	In person
Frédéric Steck	Programme Officer Myanmar, SC, Bern	27.08.2020	In person
Thierry Umbehr	Deputy Head of Europe, Asia and Americas division, HA, Bern Former Head of Humanitarian Affairs, Yangon	31.08.2020	In person
Mark Häussermann	Co-Head Humanitarian Affairs, Yangon	27.08.2020	In person
Nadine Jäggi	Secondment UNHCR Myanmar	31.08.2020	In person
Tim Enderlin	Swiss Ambassador, Head of Mission Myanmar	11.09.2020	By phone
Kyi May Soe	Sr. Project Coordinator, Yangon	11.09.2020	By phone
Renate Lefroy	Head of Skills and Market Development, SC, Yangon	09.09.2020	By phone
Giacomo Solari	Deputy Head of Mission, Head of Intl. Cooperation Myanmar	18.09.2020	By phone
Lilian Bürgi von Arx	Former Head of Finance, Personnel and Administration, Yangon	22.09.2020	By phone
Barbara Dietrich	Programme responsible Myanmar Helvetas	01.10.2020	By phone
Peter Barwick	Head of Office, UNRCO Myanmar	14.1.2020	Online



Fumiko Kashiwa	Former Head of Office, UNHCR Rakhine State	18.1.2021	Online
<b>Jordan (in-depth)</b>			
Roland Schlachter	Desk Officer Jordan, MENA-H, Bern	17.09.2020	Online
Etter Manuel	Former Head of Cooperation Amman	18.09.2020	Online
Andrea Weber	Desk Officer Jordan, MENA-D, Bern	21.09.2020	In Person
Sandra Boulos	Desk Officer Syria, MENA-H, Bern	24.09.2020	In Person
Regula Lemus Polania	Head of Chancery, Amman	29.09.2020	Online
Sabine Rosenthaler	Head of Cooperation Jordan/Deputy Regional Head of Cooperation, Amman	29.09.2020	Online
Anders Pedersen	UN Resident Coordinator Jordan, Amman	29.09.2020	Online
Patrice Moix	Head of Humanitarian Office Syria, Damas	29.09.2020	Online
Stefan-Eric Hutter	Head of Administration, Amman	01.10.2020	Online
André Huber	Head of Regional Cooperation, Amman	01.10.2020	Online
Jill Schmidheiny	Project Manager School Rehabilitation, SHA Unit expert on DA	01.10.2020	Online
Kashka Huyton	Senior child protection Specialist, SHA Unit expert on secondment, UNICEF, regional office, Amman	01.10.2020	Online
Laurent Nicole	Former SHA Unit expert on DA (Jerash and Azraq) in Jordan	02.10.2020	Online
Hans Keller	Former SHA Unit expert on DA (Azraq) in Jordan	02.10.2020	Online
Annette Matur-Weiss	Desk Officer Middle East, SEM, Bern	05.10.2020	Online
Lukas Gasser	Ambassador, Head of Mission, Amman	05.10.2020	Online
Ettie Higgins	Deputy Representative UNICEF Jordan, Amman	05.10.2020	Online
Rai Pallavi	Senior Transition Advisor (Nexus), SHA Unit expert on secondment, UNHCR/UN Resident Coordination Office Jordan, Amman	05.10.2020	Online
Stephanie Petrasch	Head of Education Portfolio Jordan, Project Manager, GIZ, Amman	05.10.2020	Online
Julien Peissard	Head Iraq/North East Syria Programs, Former SHA Unit expert, Amman	06.10.2020	Online
Eveline Arnold	SHA Unit Expert WASH, Former Project Manager, Amman	06.10.2020	In Person
Ala'a Maayta	National Project Officer Protection/Education, Amman	06.10.2020	Online
<b>Haiti</b>			
Sandra Aeschlimann	SDC HA, Programme Officer Central America and the Caribbean	14.09.2020	In person
Martin Weiersmüller	Retired but active member of SHA Unit, various deployments, i.e. in Haiti	21.09.2020	Online
Fabrizio Poretti	Embassy of Switzerland to Haiti, Chef de mission adjoint et chef adjoint de coopération internationale	22.09.2020	Online
Martin Studer	Various deployments (i.e. in Haiti), today with MSF in Kongo	23.09.2020	Online
Genevieve Federspiel	Ex Ambassador of Switzerland to Haiti (2018–2020)	25.09.2020	Online
<b>Mozambique</b>			
Frank Bertelsbeck	SDC HA, Programme Manager, Desk South Sudan/Uganda and Southern Africa	23.09.2020	In person

Leo Näscher	Former Head of Cooperation, Embassy of Switzerland to Mozambique	24.09.2020	Online
Jürg Merz	Helvetas Country Director Mozambique	28.09.2020	Online
Gabriela Friedl	SHA Deputy Head of EG WASH, Backstopping of projects in Mozambique	29.09.2020	Online
<b>Ukraine</b>			
Dieter Dreyer	SDC HA, Programme Manager Europe	11.09.2020	In person
Alexandre Ghelew	SDC, Programme Manager Ukraine	14.09.2020	In person
Eileen Hofstetter	Embassy of Switzerland to Ukraine, First Secretary, Senior Advisor	18.09.2020	Online

= 47 interviews



## Annex 3 Interview guideline, online survey questions

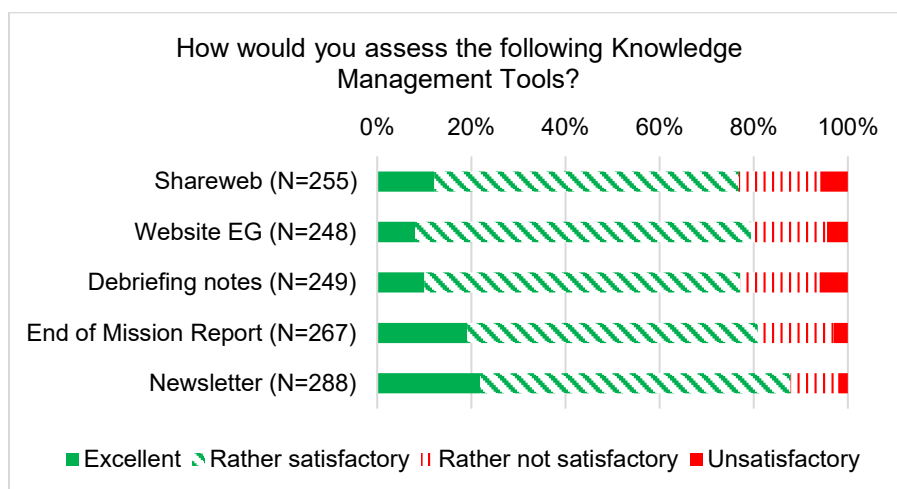
This is an illustrative example of 3 interview guidelines used.

**Table 8: Interview guideline for focus groups**

No.	Questions for members of Expert Groups
1	What are the most important development trends relevant for the SHA Unit and especially for your expert group?
2	How do you see the strategic orientation of the SHA Unit vis-à-vis these trends?
3	What are the most important strengths and weaknesses of the deployment modes of the SHA Unit: (i) rapid response actions, (ii) direct humanitarian actions, (iii) secondments, (iv) support of HQ and CH representations abroad?
4	How would you describe the interlinkages between the four deployment modes of the SHA Unit?
5	How do you assess the organisational setup of the SHA Unit as a whole and of your expert group in particular?
6	How do you assess the SHA Unit/expert group's internal cooperation and coordination?
7	<i>(If relevant)</i> How do you assess the cooperation and coordination with: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• other WOGA partners: SDC, Embassy, HSD, etc.? (Experiences?)</li> <li>• other donors/multilateral and local partners?</li> </ul>
8	What is important to remain relevant in future?
9	What institutional and organisational improvement(s) do you see in terms of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Recruitment (into the pool)</li> <li>• Deployment</li> <li>• Communication/information towards the corps</li> <li>• Management (integration into line management/Embassy)</li> <li>• Training and capacity development</li> <li>• Knowledge management (incl. reporting, sharing of experiences, etc.)</li> </ul>
10	Do you see organisational alternatives to the current setup of the SHA Unit? If yes, what are the alternatives? If no, why? (other donor experience?)

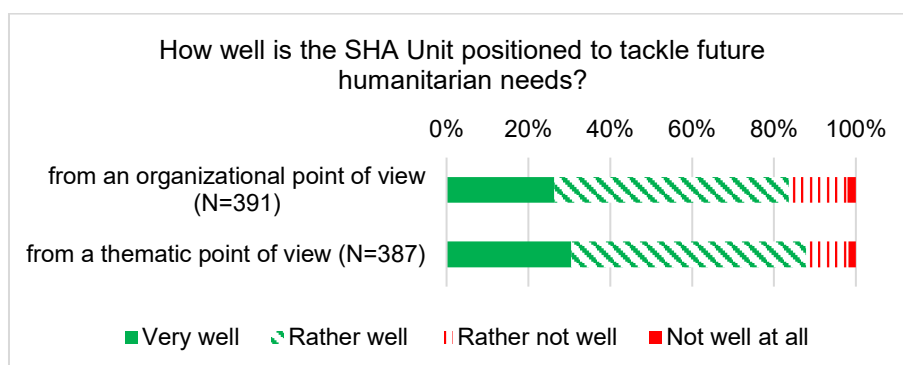
## Annex 4 Key results from online survey

Figure 11: Assessment of knowledge management tools by SHA experts



Source: Online survey

Figure 12: Positioning of the SHA Unit to tackle humanitarian needs



Source: Online survey

### Feedback to open questions: Online Survey SHA

In the following, the answers to the open questions from 411 respondents of the survey are summarized. It should be noted that the open questions were only available if the respondent gave a negative rating to one of the questions. If they did, a follow-up question appeared, where they were able to explain, why they had given a negative rating. Nevertheless, various people confirmed the importance and value of the SHA for them before explaining the issues, where they saw potential for improvement.

Because of this setup, the following comments and answers may seem rather too negative, but can be explained by the fact, that no space was given to elaborate on positive ratings. This selection was made due to limited resources and a focus on the potential for optimization.

The following paragraphs summarize the answers given to the open questions.

#### Question 9b: You stated that the recruiting and contracting process by SDC HA (SHA Unit) was rather not satisfactory/unsatisfactory. Please explain why. (n=44)

Several people stated that the recruiting and contracting process was confusing and not transparent, as for them it seemed incomprehensible, who would get deployed or receive a

training. Several people complained that the procedure was long, bureaucratic, and complicated. According to a few, the lack of transparency is further intensified by bad or insufficient communication and the fact, that not all the deployments seem to be publicly advertised. A few people stated further, that despite a rigid process, the best suited people are not always chosen. One person wrote, the assessment did not target operational competences. Another one was wondering, if there was no database, listing the skills and know-how of people. Several people mentioned a set-up with an “inner and outer circle”, where people belonging to the inner circle would get most deployments. Someone mentioned a preference for German-speakers. At the same time another person mentioned that it was difficult to exclude non-performing-people from the EGs.

**Question 14b: You stated that the preparation and training received was rather not satisfactory/unsatisfactory. Please explain why. (n=49)**

Over 10 people stated that they did not receive any training before deployment, whereas almost 20 said, that the training they received was not useful or not adequate. A few of them explained, that they only attended the introductory course, which was focusing on RRT and Direct Actions, but not on secondments and long-term assignments. Several people mentioned therefore, that as secondees, they felt, they did not get the necessary preparation, neither by SDC nor by the organisations they were going to work for. Several people highlighted the importance and added value of good trainings, while others acknowledged the lack of time due to deployments at very short notice and also because SDC sometimes lacks the skills to offer a proper training or briefing on specific issues. A few people complained that sometimes, not even the ToR, the content of work and aim of one’s role were clear. One person proposed guidelines for secondees to the UN, while another person was wishing for feedback and documentations of earlier deployments into the same context/country or programme. This was also mentioned by several people in comments to further questions.

**Question 18b: You stated that the debriefing opportunities after deployment were rather not adequate/ not adequate. Please explain why. (n=36)**

Regarding debriefing opportunities, several people stated, they did not have any debriefing opportunities or that the debriefing was not adequate. Altogether, most feedback did not concern the lack of debriefings, but of interest, preparation and knowledge management at HQ. MPDN are by several people seen as focused too much on administration and less on the content of work. There were many voices calling for a better knowledge management and sharing of information. Several people noted that they had to request an exchange with the Head and/or members of their EG or that they would appreciate such an exchange. Different people regretted that there was no follow-up on suggestions and recommendations made in the MPDN, a statement confirmed by several people in the following question on Knowledge Management Tools. Most of the respondents stated that SDC was missing a great opportunity to institutionalize the acquired know-how through MPDN and debriefings and make it accessible for future deployed experts. A few people wrote that they even proposed to be present at their successors briefing but were not contacted afterwards. Other issues mentioned by individual voices are that WOGA partners are not systematically addressed or considered in the debriefings. It was also specified, that the lack of interest shown from HQ was felt as a non-recognition of the sometimes difficult work of the SHA members. Finally, it was mentioned, that problems (be it the non-performance of the SHA member or difficulties he or she experienced in the field) were not addressed in the debriefings and that SHA members did not even feel free to raise problematic issues.

**Question 19b: You stated that the Knowledge Management Tools were rather not satisfactory/not satisfactory. Please explain why. (n=100)**

**General:** Almost a fourth of all respondents gave a negative rating about the knowledge management tools leading to a total of 100 comments. Several people stated that the knowledge management is not consistent and institutionalized and that the tools in place are too technical and not specific enough for the missions. Especially secondees noted, that a better introduction into the organisation they were deployed to would have been appreciated. Many people stated that a unified tool/place where information is shared, does not exist and that knowledge management is limited to regular trainings and occasional meetings with other experts. While the trainings are well rated, there is no institutional knowledge management such as a community of practice, a cloud-based interactive forum or other innovative online tools. Furthermore, various people stated that the mentioned tools did not serve as knowledge management tools, as there is no follow-up, learning or exchange. Again, several people stated that it is a missed opportunity not to use the knowledge and experiences of people who have been deployed. Some people noted that time constraints and lacking resources might be factors hindering a successful knowledge management.

**Shareweb/Websites EG:** Most people who had stated that they found the Knowledge Management Tools rather not satisfactory or not satisfactory noted, that the Shareweb and the EG websites were not updated, difficult to access and not user friendly, making it difficult to find the right information. This is linked to the comment of other members, that they did not even know Shareweb existed or never got an introduction to Shareweb and that there is no guidance on how, why and when the Shareweb is used. Few noted that as secondees they did not get access to the Shareweb. Various people stated that they do not login often, because access from the field with low internet is difficult. Several people called for a platform, where an exchange between experts could take place. Others said, they would wish to be able to apply online for open posts and to get push messages when there is an update on the page. Also, the webpages are not mobile adapted. Individual voices said, it would be important to have links to a reporting mechanism in case of PSEAH, discrimination or other issues to be reported as well as links to counselling services (psychologists, medics) if needed. Another individual voice said that important HQ information such as deployment criteria and opportunities, principles of SHA's work and theoretical frameworks of SHA's activities should be shared and be easily accessible.

Various people stated, that not all EGs have websites, and if they do, they are not systematically promoted and are usually outdated. Some people said, it is difficult to find data and reports on similar missions in the same countries or regions. Individual voices specified, that there is a problem, since information of completed projects is often only saved as links to project websites, which may be deleted after some time. Two proposals by different people suggested an import of data from Acta Nova on a shared platform accessible for SHA members and a project Management Tool linked to SAP.

**Newsletter:** The Newsletter got a good rating, only individual voices noted it could be shorter, contain more usable information and be more critical.

**Debriefing notes/ End of mission reports:** Most people commenting on debriefing notes and end of mission reports stated, that the main issues are, a) that the forms are too long, redundant and not suited to report adequately, e.g. on secondments as well as HQ deployments, and b) that they are barely read by HQ, which is why follow-ups are also missing.

Several people noted that there is no real knowledge management system, as no use is made of the lessons learnt and experiences made by SHA members in the field. They noted that an exchange on topic-specific lessons learnt would be essential for SDC to learn and develop. Several people regretted, that a lot of information gets lost, that their recommendations were not valued and that there was no feedback or follow-up. Therefore, people stated, they felt, that their reports did not have any influence on the future work in the field. One person called for a more profound capitalisation of experience.

Again, some people noted, that they did not receive any previous reports from the field/from their predecessors, before being deployed.

Additionally, individual voices stated, that since debriefing notes are not confidential, people do not mention internal challenges, in order to get future deployments.

**Question 25b: You stated that the SHA Unit is not well positioned to tackle future humanitarian needs. Please explain why. (n=82)**

**Lack of vision / Deployment modes:** The context of humanitarian aid is rapidly evolving, leading – amongst other things – to longer, protracted crises and to a localization of aid. Most of the respondents stated that the SHA Unit is not ready to adapt to these changes, due to the lack of a clear vision on what the future of aid and the skills necessary to remain a leading agency will be, as well as because of the complexity and bureaucracy of its structure. Various people stated that as a consequence, the SHA Unit is mainly reacting instead of pro-actively forecasting and deploying experts and strategically choosing partner organisations. A couple of people suggested a more pro-active agenda-setting, leading to a focalization on certain topics, geographical regions and a selection of partners, including collaboration and capacity sharing with local partners. Individual voices mentioned a conflict between SHA Unit's desire for visibility through RRTs and DAs and the needs of the field. Various people regretted that the SHA Unit is still marked by traditional thinking and procedures as well as silos of humanitarian and development work instead of living the nexus and showing openness for innovative approaches. Several people stated that the procedures at SHA are too bureaucratic, decision-making is slow and there is a lack of transparency. A few people mentioned that the rotation system hampers the accumulation of experience and knowledge, further weakened by the lack of adequate knowledge management tools as discussed earlier. A couple of people stated that flexibility and decision-making at SDC HA is being reduced in favour of centralisation within FDFA and individual voices said that priorities and prospects of HA in integrated embassies are often unclear. Others mentioned a lack of leadership and structure between the Directorate and SHA Unit. Individual voices shared the impression, that FDFA and SDC would like to replace the SHA Unit using regular resources for diplomatic and development cooperation. Because of this setting and pressure by "Direction of Resources", some people expressed the feeling, that the Unit's special needs e.g. in contracts and HR management are undermined. A couple of people said, humanitarian needs should be tackled without having political or economic goals and that therefore the SHA Unit should be organisationally independent. Other individual voices said that the dual role as a donor and implementing agency is not ideal.

The following comments were made regarding the different deployment modes. Regarding RRTs, individual voices noted that usually the first responders are local communities and authorities and that deployments are rare and very costly. It was suggested that support to local organisations such as the National Red Cross and Red Crescent societies would be more timely and cost efficient. Individual voices regretted the decrease of DAs as a link between emergencies and development work and the loss of field presence and direct contact with people in need. It was meanwhile acknowledged, that the administrative procedures are complex and not suitable for the implementation of projects in fast changing contexts. The opinions on the effectiveness of secondments varied. Some individuals stated that the strategic potential of secondments is often left unexploited. A couple of voices criticized the fact that SDC hired SHA members at HQ to fill gaps.

**Pool management:** While the previous answers addressed the SHA Unit as a whole, the following ones regard the set-up of the pool and the EGs as well as HR strategies and working conditions. Several people stated that the SHA Unit is a hybrid: Neither a fully professional organisation with attractive career perspectives, nor a real standby pool of experienced Swiss professionals with careers in the private sector. Various respondents noted that times have changed since the Unit's creation in 1973. While the standby model remains valuable for certain EGs like "WASH", "Logistics", "Construction", "DRR", "Security" etc., it is a myth for e.g. "Protection", cash specialists or coordination roles who are bound to the sector. Several respondents noted that the trend is moving from short missions to longer term engagements in both secondments and support to SCOs. WASH and construction experts can still have a

job in the private sector in Switzerland and go on missions on the side. This is not possible for Protection or cash experts who do not have other job opportunities in Switzerland. A few people stated that the SHA Unit is not flexible enough for people with jobs in Switzerland. Another handful of people stated that if the pool wants to continue to engage on i.e. Protection, it will be important to keep long-time experts who know the SHA Unit as well as the context in the field, and can thus be placed in strategic positions. Many people mentioned that the lack and unpredictability of deployment opportunities and the 10-year-rule are making the SHA Unit unattractive. Several people stated that due to this rule, SHA is losing experienced and well-trained experts, weakening the relevance of the SHA Unit in the long term, especially regarding direct actions and high-level secondments. According to individual voices, this requires a different contractual setup or other solutions such as partnerships with other organisations that would allow SHA members to interrupt their SHA deployments and be directly employed by them.

Several people missed a real pool management: They stated that deployments do not match the availability of experts, that after deployments, members get forgotten and that despite lacking deployment opportunities, and the SHA Unit keeps recruiting people. They noted that it could be much more efficient to actually manage a slim but effective pool, where people would remain. Some people noted that the profiles in the pool no longer match with the complexity of the humanitarian and FDFA setting and do not cover the topics and approaches required, leading to positions being vacant over a long time. Therefore, individual voices said, there was a need to hire people for hardship missions and young people, who could be accompanied by a coaching system, especially if they are seconded. Overall, several people noted there should be a consistent HR strategy aligned with the strategy and vision of the SHA Unit, in order to recruit the needed profiles, offer them attractive working conditions and keep them in the pool after having invested in their training. As stated earlier, various members were missing an acknowledgment of their work, a follow-up on reports and debriefings and therefore an involvement in discussions about the future strategic orientation of the Unit or single interventions (e.g. DRR expertise). Some statements reflected comments already made by other members in previous questions, such as the fact, that often the same people get deployed and that internal challenges are not raised and discussed.

Regarding the different EGs, individual voices called for a restructuration of EGs, as some of them do not correspond anymore with the current needs, while others lack a strategy and corresponding trainings (“Medical”, “Construction”) and feel badly prepared to face upcoming challenges. Topics, such as information management and GIS, digitization and data protection, machine learning, satellite/drone imagery, blockchain, crowdsourcing and information verification, building ongoing beneficiary feedback loops, etc. are seen as important and worth investment. Accordingly, some people said soft skills such as coordination, management and harnessing of diversity, political economy analysis, conflict-sensitive implementation, negotiation and mediation, etc. should have more weight, as now there is a focus on technical expertise. Someone said, that in some areas only 1-3 experts exist, making it difficult to provide assistance of a certain scale like other international rosters. This call to focus on fewer topics has also been raised earlier. According to individual voices, geographical and thematic priorities are not based on knowledge or corps member’s capacities assessment or vice versa. A couple of people regretted that cooperation between the different EGs is not encouraged and that EG Heads do not participate at strategic level.

## Annex 5 SHA statistics and figures

**Table 9: Number of SHA Unit deployments 2010-2019**

	Rescue	Rapid Response Teams	Direct Actions	Support HQ	Secondments	Total
2010	0	147	248	87	70	552
2011	23	83	326	179	76	687
2012	0	25	419	274	85	803
2013	0	43	361	210	78	692
2014	0	29	274	253	80	636
2015	0	67	287	162	95	611
2016	0	30	223	143	102	498
2017	0	21	191	208	106	526
2018	0	21	174	150	115	460
2019	0	49	179	125	113	466

*Note: 2010 saw a big increase of RRTs compared to previous years due to the earthquake in Haiti.*

Source: Personalstatistik 2019 and communication with the “Field Resources” Section

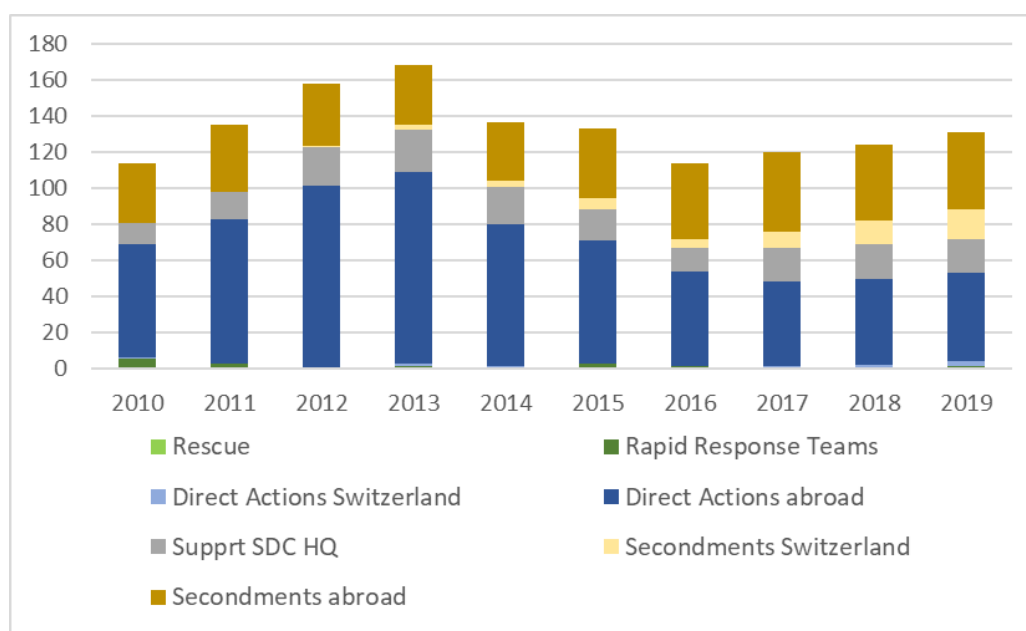
**Table 10: SHA Unit deployments 2010-2019, in FTEs**

Year	Rapid Response		Direct Actions		Support HQ and Swiss representations		Secondments		Total
	Swiss Rescue Chain	Rapid Response Teams	Direct Actions Switzerland **	Direct Actions abroad	Support SDC HQ	Support Field *	Secondments Switzerland	Secondments abroad	
2010	0	6.0	0.5	62.6	11.4	Included under	0.0	33.6	114.1
2011	0.5	2.5	0.2	79.8	15.0	DA abroad	0.2	37.2	135.4
2012	0	0.6	0.4	100.2	21.6		0.9	34.5	158.3
2013	0	1.8	0.9	106.1	23.7		2.8	33.0	168.3
2014	0	0.8	0.8	78.3	20.7		3.8	32.0	136.4
2015	0	2.7	0.1	68.6	17.2		5.8	38.6	133.0
2016	0	1.3	0.5	51.9	13.1		5.0	42.0	113.8
2017	0	0.5	1.1	46.7	18.6		8.9	44.4	120.2
2018	0	0.8	1.4	47.6	19.2		13.0	42.3	124.3
2019	0	1.4	3.2	48.4	18.9		16.4	43.0	131.3
<b>Total</b>	<b>0.5</b>	<b>18.4</b>	<b>9.3</b>	<b>690.1</b>	<b>179.4</b>		<b>56.8</b>	<b>380.6</b>	<b>1335.1</b>
<b>%</b>	<b>0.1</b>	<b>1.4</b>	<b>2.5</b>	<b>36.8</b>	<b>14.4</b>	<b>0.0</b>	<b>12.5</b>	<b>32.7</b>	<b>100.0</b>

\* These are contracts/mandates to support SDC HA or the SHA Unit -> refer to support SDC HQ

\*\* This is not separated from the Direct Actions and therefore included there

Source: Own compilation with data from the “Field Resources” Section

**Figure 13: Deployment trends of the four modes, in FTEs**

Source: Own compilation with data from the “Field Resources” Section

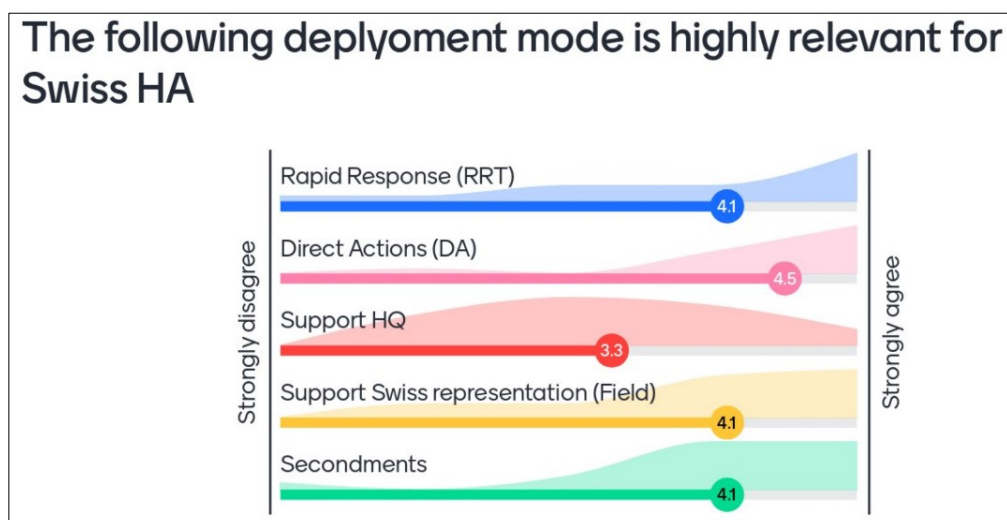
**Table 11: Planned workload for the Head and Deputy Head of EGs**

Estimated time for the Steering of the EGs 2021				
EG	Work load		Comments	
	Head EG	Dy Head EG		
1 DRR	internal: 20-25% FTE	external 11.5 working days		
2 MEDI	external: special agreement	external 15 working days	The Head FG MEDI has a special agreement with SDC HA	
3 CONS	external: 13 working days	internal 13 working days		
4 COOR/ADM	internal: 20-25%	external: 27.5 working days	The external mandate includes capitalisation of experience and updating of knowledge management	
5 WASH	internal: 25%	external: 38 working days	This EG has currently two Dy. and one has additional functions	
6 INFO	external: 12.5 working days	internal: ca. 15 %		
7 SEC	internal: 20-25%	external: 3.75 working days		
8 RESC	internal: 20-25%	internal: 20-25%		
9 PROT	internal: 25%	internal 20- 25%		
10 LOG/SUP	internal: 25%	external 12 working days		
11 TECH/COM	external: 18 working days	internal: 20-25%		

Source: SDC HA

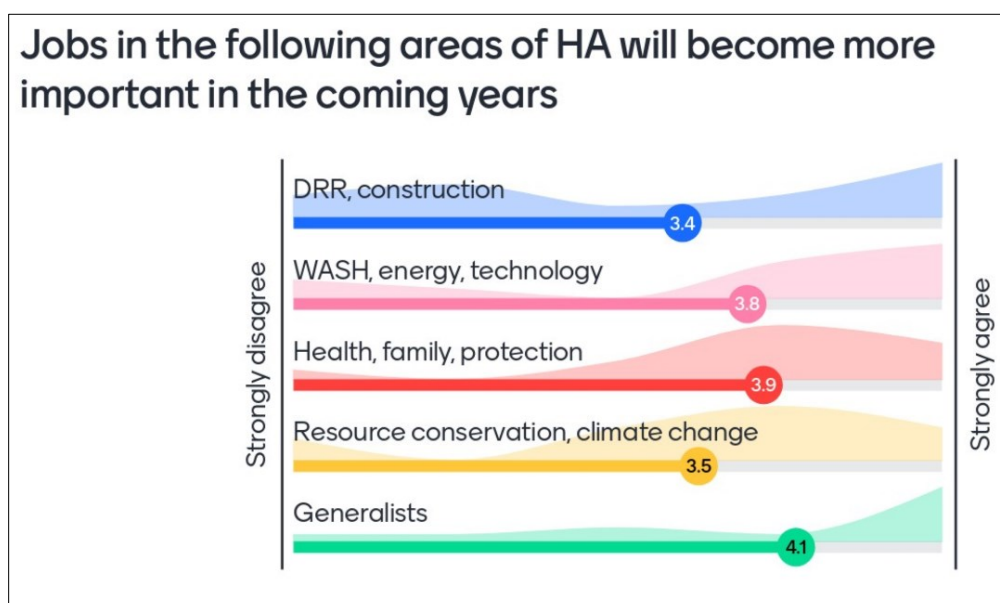


Figure 14: Relevance of deployment modes (N=17)



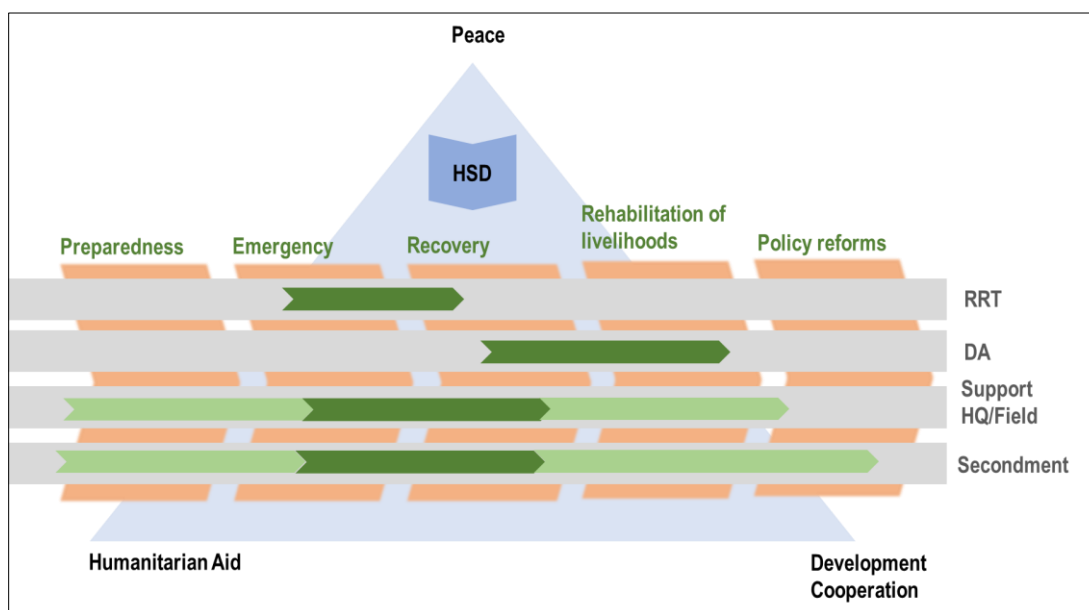
Source: Mentimeter survey during the H-webinar on 21.8.2020

Figure 15: Shift of competencies (N=14)



Source: Mentimeter survey during the H-webinar on 21.8.2020

Figure 16: Current SHA deployment modes in the nexus



Source: Own compilation

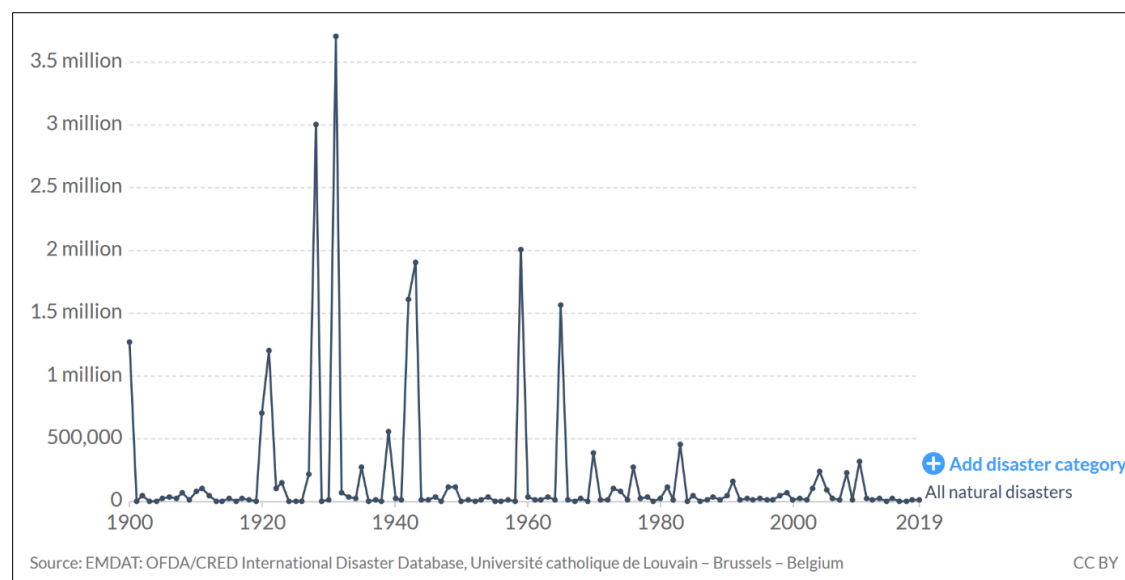
## Annex 6 Relevant context data and information

**Table 12: Trend of number of refugees and IDPs (in million) and deaths from natural catastrophes (in thousands) 2001-2019**

	Annual natural disasters	Refugees & IDPs (millions)	Deaths from nat. disasters (thousands)	
2001	316	41	30.978	
2002	368	39.6	12.580	
2003	340	38.3	110.036	
2004	334	39.1	241.527	
2005	403	36.7	89.657	
2006	391	38.7	23.491	
2007	389	42	16.938	
2008	248	41.2	235.332	
2009	379	42.3	11.142	
2010	420	41.1	317.757	
2011	352	38.5	30.969	
2012	355	42.7	9.732	
2013	362	51.2	21.696	
2014	373	59.2	7.959	
2015	373	65.1	22.861	
2016	375	65.5	8.681	
2017	399	68.5	7.341	
2018	415	70.8	10.809	
2019	409	79.5	11.000	See note
	1)	2)	3)	

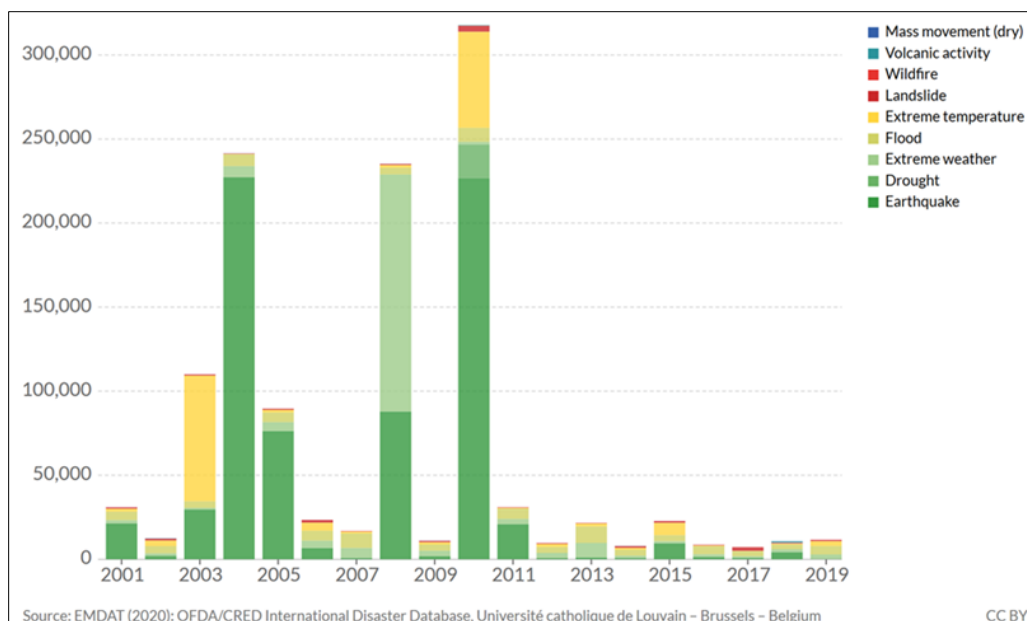
Sources: 1) <https://www.statista.com/statistics/510959/number-of-natural-disasters-events-globally/>  
 2) UNHCR 2020  
 3) estimate from <https://www.statista.com/statistics/510952/number-of-deaths-from-natural-disasters-globally/>

**Figure 17: Long-term global trend of deaths from natural catastrophes**



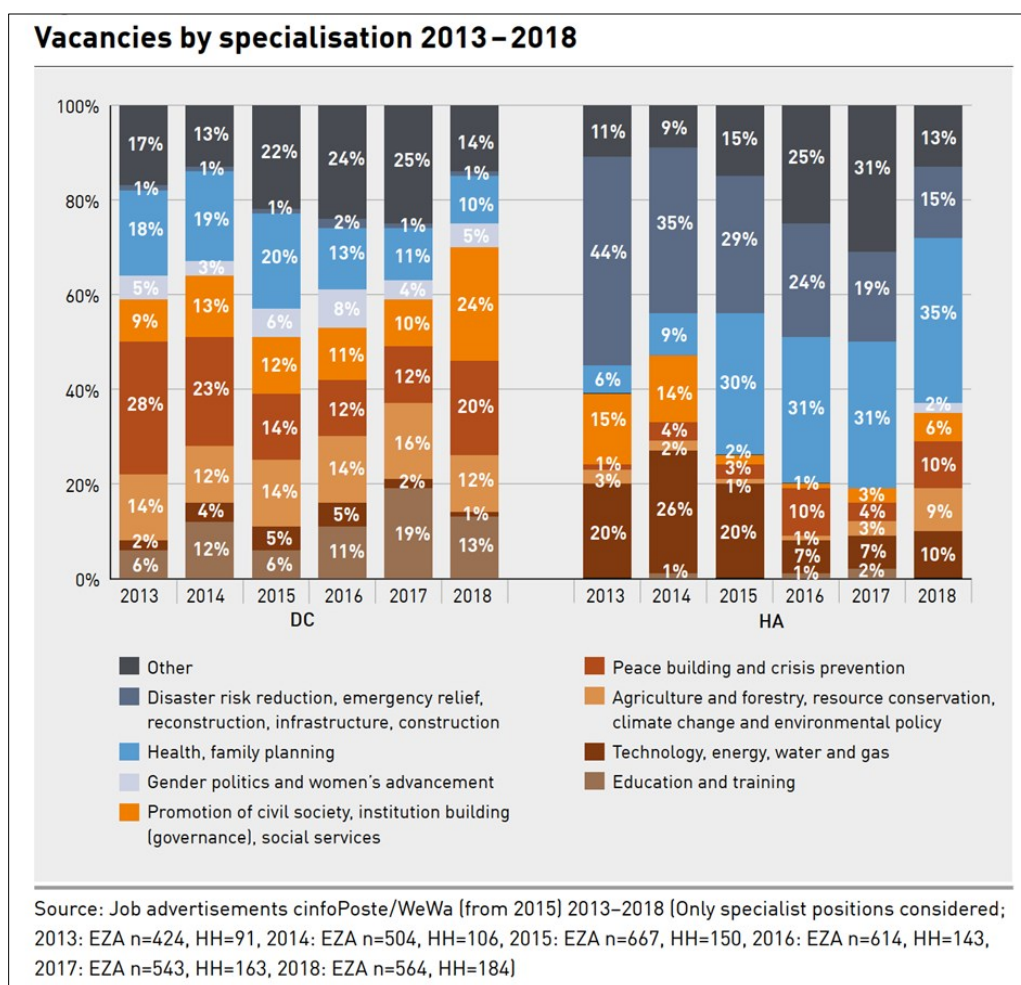
Source: <https://ourworldindata.org/natural-disasters#number-of-deaths-from-natural-disasters>

**Figure 18: Number of deaths in natural disasters**



Source: <https://www.emdat.be/>

**Figure 19: Trend in HA advertisements in the Swiss labour market**



Source: cinfo 2019, p. 28

Table 13: Thematic structure of other expert pools

Macro themes and thematical structure of other expert pools		
<b>Macro trends (PHAP):</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Climate Change</li> <li>- Urbanisation</li> <li>- Technological change (digitalisation)</li> <li>- Economic and geopolitical shifts</li> <li>- Regulatory environment</li> <li>- Migration</li> </ul>		
NORCAP	Irish Aid (Rapid Response Corps)	ICRC (Rapid Response standing team)
<b>Crisis response:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Protection</li> <li>- Shelter</li> <li>- Coordination</li> <li>- Education</li> <li>- Health &amp; nutrition</li> <li>- Communication with affected population</li> <li>- Camp management and resilience</li> </ul> <b>Gender</b> <b>Cash Programming</b> <b>Protection</b> <b>Needs analysis</b> <b>Clean energy and climate services</b> <b>Peacebuilding, stabilisation and conflict prevention</b> <b>Human rights, democracy and election support</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Coordination</li> <li>- Education</li> <li>- Engineering</li> <li>- Health (incl. nutrition)</li> <li>- Humanitarian Protection</li> <li>- Information and Communication</li> <li>- Logistics</li> <li>- WASH</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Management</li> <li>- Protection</li> <li>- Health</li> <li>- WatHab</li> <li>- EcoSec</li> <li>- Finance and Administration</li> <li>- Logistics</li> <li>- Information Communication Technologies</li> <li>- Human Resources</li> </ul>

Note: There are many other humanitarian actors which started with a standing team, like the Norwegian Red Cross. They started 2019 with the standing roster and hosts a global surge team (Teamlead / Med / Wash / Shelter and Log).

Source: <https://www.nrc.no/resources/annual-reports/norcap-annual-report-2019/>

<https://www.irishaid.ie/get-involved/rapid-response-corps/>

ICRC 2019

## Annex 7 Findings from Case Studies

### Methodology

For the selection of case studies, the following criteria were considered:

- Involving several deployment modes (e.g. RRTs, DAs and secondments) between 2015 and 2019;
- Reflecting both long-term protracted crisis contexts and emergency situations;
- Representing cooperation contexts with other SDC/FDFA interventions having Swiss Cooperation or Regional Programmes;
- Reflecting geographical diversity (incl. Middle East and/or sub-Saharan Africa);
- Including ongoing or recently completed interventions.

Due to COVID-19 travel restrictions all five case studies were implemented in form of desk studies and intensive use was made of remote evaluation approaches using online tools (e.g. Zoom). The case studies were designed with different scopes:

- Myanmar and Jordan were selected to apply an in-depth approach with remote interviews of partners at HQ and in the field;
- Haiti, Mozambique and Ukraine were designed as a light approach basically reviewing documents complemented with selected interviews.

The interviews were conducted face-to-face or online. The selected stakeholders and partners are listed in Annex 2. The document review included internal documents (SDC documents, MDPN, evaluations, and external secondary documents as well as websites (see list of documents in Annex 9).

The figures, depicting the days of deployment per (i) Type of deployment, (ii) Gender, and (iii) Status in the corps, were analysed for each of the case studies based on the statistical data 2015-2019 about the different deployments. As in the original data set no difference is made between DAs and Support, a differentiation was made by the evaluation team to the best of its knowledge, based on interviews, document review and “Einsatzfunktion” of those deployed.

## In-depth case study: Myanmar

### Background/HA needs and landscape

Myanmar, a country of around 60 million people, is undergoing three major changes: (i) The transition from an authoritarian military regime to democratic governance, (ii) The shift from a centrally planned economy to a market economy, and (iii) The transition from 60 years of armed conflict to peace consolidation. However, progress is hampered by the continuing mistrust between ethnic, religious and political groups, the continued monopolisation of resources by an economic elite and weak social services and institutions.

The ongoing peace process aims to find a durable solution to decades of armed conflict, in which more than 20 Ethnic Armed Organisations (EAOs) have been fighting at times the central government and/ or each other. While parts of the territory affected by conflict are under full control of EAOs, most areas are subject to mixed systems of administration where EAOs compete with the government for resources, taxation and service provision. Myanmar's ongoing peace process is characterised by fragmentation and insecurity. Currently, only 10 out of 21 EAOs have signed the 2015 nationwide ceasefire agreement. Large armed groups operating along the north-eastern border are not among them. Since their landslide victory in 2015, President Aung San Suu Kyi and her party have been struggling to meet the extremely high expectations of national and international actors for democratic change. The crisis in Rakhine State has added another layer of complexity. International criticism for the government's inaction in the Rohingya crisis and the dwindling scope for action by civil society have further aggravated the situation in Myanmar.

Low purchasing power and very widespread corruption are further aggravating factors. Despite substantial progress during the past decade, about 14% of the population is undernourished, 29% of children are stunted and the maternal mortality rate is the second highest in the region.

Its geostrategic location also means that it must deal with fundamental challenges such as the rising influence of powerful neighbouring countries and the management of its natural resources.

Myanmar ranks first in the 'most at risk' countries in Asia-Pacific: It is vulnerable to natural hazards including cyclones, earthquakes, floods and fire. In 2008 Cyclone "Nargis" hit the country affecting 2.4 million people and in 2015 Cyclone "Komen" temporarily displaced an estimated 1.7 million people.

## Overview of SHA Unit's interventions since 2015

### Extensive Direct Actions (DAs)

Although the focus of the evaluation is on the period after 2015, for a better understanding the activities of the HA since its beginning are presented. Since 1994, SDC HA has been active in Myanmar indirectly through UNHCR, monitored from the HA office in Thailand. After Cyclone "Nargis" in May 2008, an RRT with 11 members was sent to the affected area, organising an extensive emergency relief operation, which was mainly implemented by numerous national and international partners.

As a further result of the presence of SHA experts in 2008, following the emergency phase, a major school reconstruction programme was launched in the Ayeyarwady Delta as a DA, and a project office was established. The outcomes and lessons learnt of this initial two-year programme of building schools was decisive in planning a next reconstruction phase. From 2010, a further social infrastructure programme was started in the southeast of Myanmar, which was named SE Programme and later extended several times until the end of 2018. Finally, SDC HA worked in 90 remote and conflict-affected villages and constructed over 160 social infrastructures, including primary schools, kindergartens, rural health centres, and houses for teachers, supplemented with water systems.

In a first phase of the SE Programme, the schools were constructed through contractors under direct supervision from SHA experts. As the programme evolved over the years, stronger emphasis was given to enhance sustainable development through community ownership and local governance. The programme gradually transformed into a more integrated programme with a strong community focus and an emphasis on soft components and trainings. The last two years of the SE Programme SDC HA subsequently focused only on small scale construction projects, which were feasible for local organisations to be implemented.

The SE Programme relied on extensive field presence and the SDC HA field office in Mawlamyine at its height employed 45 local staff, of which 43 were local employees. 2 SHA experts were always based in Mawlamyine, joined by up to 3 SHA experts in the Yangon office. (1 of the experts in Mawlamyine was member of programme vert, rotating with a 2nd programme vert expert based in Yangon).

SDC HA was also able to leverage its investment with raising additional funding from other donors like the EU or UNICEF. The multiple funding sources, however, also entailed additional administrative workload, for which, in turn, more administrative staff had to be hired.

Towards the end in 2017/2018, the SE Programme was strongly curtailed in the number of direct implementations of social buildings and staff. SDC HA gained a new role in the school construction programme: under the lead of the Ministry of Education and with SDC's expertise and knowhow, the "Safe and Child-Friendly School Construction Guidelines" were commonly elaborated and are providing a safe and inclusive learning environment for children, staff and communities. Today the government is building thousands of schools, based on these guidelines for construction.

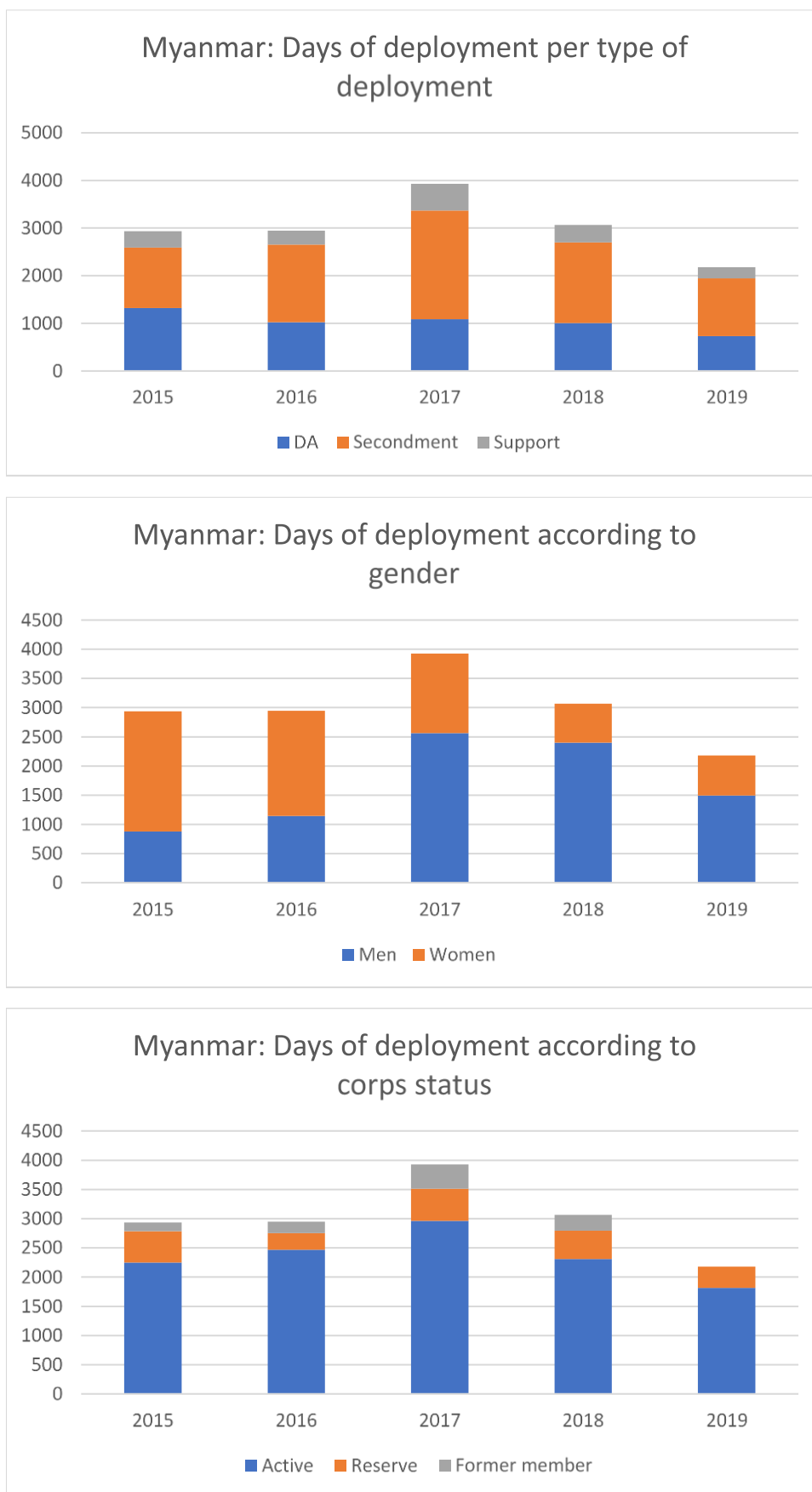
### **Peak of secondments in 2017**

Additional to the SHA experts for DA's mentioned above, three secondments to UNICEF and UNHCR in the protection sector have taken place after 2014. These were continuously renewed with new personnel until 2017 and complemented with WFP and UNDP as another two agencies, and with Cash-Based Programming as another theme. Overall, up to 6 secondments took place in parallel (see Figure 20). From 2018 until 2020 the number of secondments was steadily reduced to a total of 3 per year. Most of the contracts with the UN agencies were at level P4 and P5 in the UN system, and in two cases juniors (programme vert) were seconded at level P3.

### **Multilateral support and mandates**

SHA experts were also deployed in the Yangon office on short term to provide support for other HA activities. Since 2008, UN agencies, ICRC and international and local NGOs have been supported with financial contributions on the ground. These commitments always made up a significant part of the budget for HA. In 2016, for example, from the total budget of CHF 12m 6.8m were spent on multilateral organisations, in addition to the support provided by the secondments. Other SHA experts were supporting the Yangon office as backstopper (e.g. architects, WASH experts).



**Figure 20: Deployment characteristics in Myanmar 2015-2019**

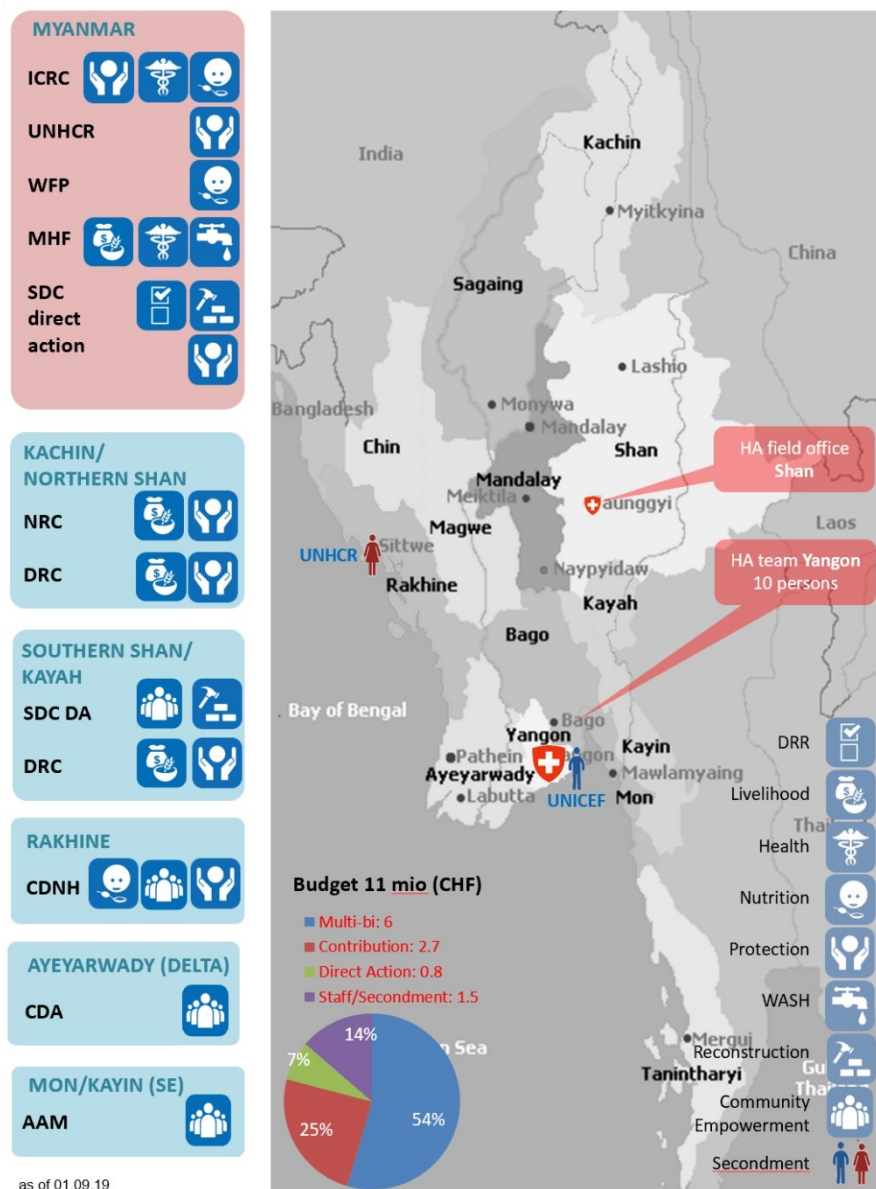
Source: Own graph from deployment data provided by the Section "Field Resources"

## Current situation

Starting in 2012, Switzerland became more involved in Myanmar, opened an Embassy in Yangon and brought SDC's South Cooperation (SC) and Human Security Division (HSD) on board. The first Myanmar cooperation strategy started in 2013, was extended for one year and expired at the end of 2018. In this first strategy phase, the budget was gradually increased and from the beginning great importance to the so-called triple nexus was attached, fostering interlinkages between humanitarian, development and peace actors.

The current Swiss Cooperation Programme (2019-2023) was elaborated jointly, also including HSD, and all entities have a new geographical focus in their programmes in a joint area, in southern Shan state. Previously, a large-scale joint needs assessment was conducted in Shan in spring 2018. The budget for the current programme was again increased substantially to almost CHF 182m are planned for the period 2019 to 2023, of which almost 54m are budgeted for SDC HA for 5 years, or CHF 11m per year. While SDC SC has roughly a bit more than double that amount, SECO with 1.8m and HSD with 1m per year have smaller allocations.

**Figure 21: Myanmar – Swiss Humanitarian Aid 2019**



Source: Factsheet Myanmar, SDC 2019

The graph above shows that only a small part (0.8m) of the CHF 11m for SDC HA is allocated to ongoing DAs, while the largest part (6m) will be implemented as multi-bi contributions by ICRC (3m) and UN agencies on the ground (UNHCR, WFP and UN-OCHA). Allocations to local and international NGOs (e.g. Action aid, DRC, and NRC) as contributions represent CHF 2.7m, while for local staff and secondments CHF 1.5 are reserved. Two of the three secondments at UNHCR and UNRCO focus on Sittwe, Rakhine state (where SDC is not physically present) and the third takes place in Yangon with UNICEF.

The SDC HA team in Myanmar comprises of a total of 16 staff:

- In Yangon, there are 10 people, 7 national project officers and three SHA experts, of which one is part of the 'programme vert'.
- There are three national project officers in the field office in Shan.
- Three secondees deployed from the SHA Unit to 3 different agencies.

Concerning the DAs, the School Construction Guidelines programme with the government is planned to phase out by 2023, while in Southern Shan State, built on the experience gained in the SE programme, a new social infrastructure programme has started. The objective in this new DA programme is to provide social infrastructure for conflict-affected communities living in ceasefire areas, thereby creating peace dividends and fostering cooperation among state and non-state actors. Ultimately, the intervention aims at contributing to peace building.

## **Main observations and findings about the SHA Unit deployments**

### **Strategic orientation** (appropriateness of deployments and competencies)

#### **DAs and “support to field”**

Since 2015, with one exception, all HA posts and also all management posts were equipped with SHA Unit experts. Accordingly, they have made crucial support for the embassy in Yangon during the whole period until 2019 and beyond. The number of SHA experts working in DA was also very pronounced and their number was always in the range between 3 and 5 members.

SDC HA in Myanmar is thus heavily relying on the SHA Unit. Without this pool the whole HA programme, and especially the DAs could not have been implemented. “SHA is a gift without which we could not work in Myanmar”, was a statement.

Today out of the 16 employees, 9 national project officers and one SHA expert are employed for the DAs (status 1.8.2020). Not included in these figures are the staff from the embassy's administrative unit, where part of the time is also spent on SDC/HA and their DA's. This means that the DAs require a large number of staff compared to the budget, but which is now highly nationalised.

That was different until 2017, and from an outside perspective, it was noted that SDC HA had attracted attention in Myanmar through the large presence of international SHA Unit experts.

A total of 16 SHA experts were deployed in the five years covered by the statistics:

- Three are or have been deployed for more than 4 years (4, 5.5 and 9 years).
- Three were deployed for around 2 years.
- 10 (62.5%) were in employment between 5 and 16 months.

Even though a part of the last category were employed within the framework of the programme vert, the figures indicate a high turnover, especially considering that Myanmar is not one of the least attractive countries for operations. It has been mentioned on several occasions that the familiarisation period for an expat in Myanmar takes at least 1 year (contextual understanding,

relationships), which is why an assignment period even of 2 years is too short. In such complex environments an assignment of at least 3 years would be desirable and appropriate.

The frequent change of the SHA experts is also an issue for local employees, who often work for SDC for many years. One has to adapt in negotiating with the new boss, as everyone is very different, and if the changes are untimely (e.g. before the end of a programme phase), one has to take on too much responsibility, for example for project reports or new applications, it was stated.

The continuity of the project team has always been an issue throughout the whole programme period. Individual solutions were identified to mitigate the difficulty in recent years:

- One employee was suspended from his structural contract for 3 years and worked with an SHA contract in Myanmar for this period from 2017-2020 in a leading position for SDC HA.
- One SHA expert started to work in Myanmar in 2012 for 6 months in the programme vert and has remained there. Originally from the construction sector, he was responsible for technical support in the school building programme, but over the years he has increasingly become involved in other topics like WASH, Gender and DRR and is responsible for the DA's today. Without him and his experience the new DA in Shan state might not have been launched.

## Secondments

As mentioned above, the number of secondments decreased steadily after 2017. From SDC side it was stated that secondments with individual agencies had almost become routine and that they should be used more strategically in the future. The secondment with UNICEF is unquestioned because of its important relation to the army. There is also an important link with UNRCO (the UN Resident Coordinator is responsible for the coordination of UN activities in Myanmar), where Switzerland is interested to continue and increase its secondment presence.

While SDC seeks to benefit from the secondments strategically, the host organisations generally see them more critically. The UN organisations have a limited core budget and rely on bilateral member state contributions for their activities, which donors are also pleased to contribute to in kind (e.g. as secondments) and not only in cash. While higher management posts therefore are difficult to finance and often remain vacant for a longer period, the secondees can only be used to a limited extent, be it in the supervision of staff or in the authority to issue instructions in administrative processes. In addition, they are in general only on location for one to two years, which is too short for this difficult context. In some cases, the secondees did not have any experience or previous knowledge of the UN system, which made the familiarisation period more difficult.

The host organisations therefore feel that they are providing a service for the donors, as a kind of a talent development programme, enabling the secondees to gain experience. Secondments are mainly of great advantage for them if a large number of employees have to be deployed quickly due to a sudden change in circumstances. At such a peak time, abbreviated recruiting procedures with sending organisations can save a lot of time in staffing.

Overall, the host organisations were satisfied with the professional level of the SHA secondees, even if sometimes there were some misunderstandings in the recruitment process and the Swiss roster was not always visible and comprehensible to them.

From SDC side it has been reported that it was not always easy to find the right people for the different jobs advertised by the UN agencies. Even for a country like Myanmar, which is relatively attractive for deployments, there were not enough interested persons from the SHA pool, or interested persons were not sufficiently qualified for the mission.

## **Main results achieved (effectiveness, efficiency and sustainability)**

For this chapter, it is particularly worthwhile to take a closer look at the outcomes of the DAs. The analysis of the DAs in terms of efficiency, effectiveness and sustainability over the programme period is based mainly on the documents received and seeks to address the points of interest for the present evaluation without pretending to be complete.

From the start, the DAs were on a very high level in terms of the quality of the buildings. Campbell and Schüle (2017) mention the “positive image and strong ties of SDC HA with state government and international community in the region thanks to high quality of infrastructure” and also “school infrastructure, built by SDC HA is more expensive than school infrastructure built by the government, mainly due to high-quality approach (...) Government schools cost 30-40% less than schools built by the SE programme, while the cost of UNICEF schools corresponds to the government standards.” This was due to clear quality differences, e.g. earthquake resistance and due to the additional ancillary facilities (water, playground, and lightning protection) and quality equipment that government schools did not provide.

As mentioned, the programme has developed over the years and, with the greater involvement and more ownership of the communities, the sustainability of the programmes was improved. “As the Community Based Organisations (CBO’s) took on responsibility in project and financial management, the approach offered an effective form of localized aid (...) by creating ownership and emphasizing coaching and trainings, the approach enhanced the sustainability” (Insights and Lessons Learned from the Social Infrastructure Program in the Southeast of Myanmar, SDC 2018).

Another positive effect of the new approach - adapting the design and construction methods for remote villages - was the reduction of the construction costs, according to the calculations of Campbell and Schüle (2017) 30% less compared to the SDC constructor-based cost.

In terms of project cost, in contrary to the high number of employees, the SE programme 2016 was “accounting for only 10% of the total yearly SDC/HA budget in Myanmar” (Campbell and Schüle, 2017).

There are remaining questions on the important issue about the maintenance of the (school) buildings. An internal review is mentioning that the construction design was not sufficiently adapted to the remote areas, hampering the maintenance efforts of the communities: “Choosing mainly high-quality and long-life materials makes maintenance more daunting and does not allow for regular ‘practice’ (...). To make repairs easier, the infrastructure designs should enhance local availability of material used in the construction into account” (SDC 2018). There were maintenance trainings and a maintenance fund to promote good maintenance, but in the realisation not everything was running as intended (e.g. community membership turn-over as a result of high labour migration; maintenance funds were mainly used for offering small loans rather than for maintenance expenses).

Another main shift concerning the DAs came in 2018 when the focus was no longer on hardware construction of buildings but on enabling the government to build their school buildings in a safe and child-friendly way with common guidelines. The many years of activity in school building have led to a relationship of trust between SDC HA and with government authorities, particularly with the Ministry of Education.

## **Perceived value added and/or obstacles**

Work across frontlines and with both government and EAO counterparts gave opportunities to work on trust building and create linkages between the actors. Access to the conflict-affected areas was in the beginning largely restricted and the construction of the school buildings was reported as a trust builder and door-opener for SDC to engage in cooperation activities and dialogue in new regions, also on political issues. “In this context, the rationale of the Program was to seize windows of opportunities to gradually expand humanitarian space in previously inaccessible conflict-affected areas” (SDC 2018).

It was stated on various occasions, that the proximity to the communities was allowing SHA experts to develop a sensitivity which was incorporated into a policy dialogue. Also the fact that something concrete was done, helped a lot for other matters; Switzerland would not have the same position if they did not have the DAs from HA. “Together with Switzerland’s neutrality, this ability to work directly in the EAO areas were strong assets allowing Switzerland to enter into the area (...). Although not primarily mandated for protection activities, this presence of a trusted outsider alone was a strong protection factor in the communities” (SDC 2018).

On the other hand, the impact on the longer-term peace process remains unclear: “What can be seen as creating linkages and enabling cooperation between parties to conflict, can also be seen as spearheading the entry of Government Ministries reach into core EAO territory. E.g. it is unclear if the claim for ethnic mother tongue education is strengthened or weakened if the State Education Department gets more active in ethnic regions” (SDC 2018).

Concerning the cooperation between SC and HA interviews with staff from both entities stated in the same way that for a long time the nexus was not very much practised. During the time of the SE Programme HA and SC activities tended to be done in parallel. Cooperation became better coordinated from 2017 onwards, but was not strategically planned, rather pragmatic and synergies were reached by chance and personal relations. It was commented that too many schools had been built for too long. An earlier intensified cooperation between SC and HA would have encouraged the shift of HA towards a more promoting, enabling and empowering agency at an earlier stage.

With the new Head of cooperation (2018) and the new Ambassador (beginning 2019), and by merging SC and HA in the same building, the cooperation was intensified. For the planning of the new ongoing programme phase 2019-2023, the nexus was really addressed and the programme strategy for Shan state was developed jointly, which is also confirmed by an external evaluation. “Within the new strategy, the activities appear more coherent and the strategy makes repeated references to working across the nexus and with a whole-of-government approach to collective development and humanitarian challenges” (Nordic Consulting Group 2019).

Today the respective comparative advantages of the two sectors are known and undisputed which is also important for a good and close cooperation. SC works in larger time phases, has different time horizons (8-12 years), a larger budget and covers more geographical areas. All mandates must be tendered, and this requires a longer planning and preparation phase of 1 to 1.5 years. HA has adapted to many administrative processes, but remains more flexible, can become active in new areas more quickly and play out its strength as a door opener and trust builder.

It was also commented from SC and HA staff that the nexus expectations are very high, considering how different the processes are. Regarding the triple nexus, WOGA cooperation is even more complicated. The Human Security Division (HSD) and HA have different interests in Myanmar, which absorbed the Ambassador very much. HSD thinks more politically, weights risks more profoundly, while HA aspires to move quickly to address humanitarian needs. Concretely, they had different speeds of thinking and decision-making about when one should start in Shan state, where the government with military and two armed groups have regional sovereignty. And even if the tensions on the ground seem to have ceased in the meantime, the HQs can still complicate the situation. HSD has its own pool of peace experts and its own budget.

## **Management of deployments/administration**

**Working within the framework of the integrated embassy:** The integrated embassy has required HA to adapt to many new administrative processes. A good example is the elaboration of an entry proposal, which is recently also done by SDC HA, before a credit proposal is written.

The budget cuts in the SE Programme from 2017 onwards are certainly also a result of the increased influence of the embassy. Due to its DA and the high number of SHA experts involved, Myanmar became one of the largest Swiss embassies in the world, which, at diplomatic level, was not viewed positively by all. And the shift of the DAs from a building constructor towards a more enabling and empowering actor, was certainly also influenced under the umbrella of the integrated embassy.

On the other hand, the fact that even long-serving SHA experts in integrated embassies have different working conditions, even if they work in management positions, was perceived as disturbing from all sides. Different holidays, different arrangements for home leave, different flight conditions, even local staff cannot understand the differences. Employees with an SHA contract often felt like 2nd class staff, which may not even be true in objective terms.

**Cooperation with the “Field Resources” Section:** The cooperation between the SHA experts and the programme managers in Myanmar with the “Field Resources” Section is assessed controversially:

- On the one hand, flexibility is emphasised, and it is highly appreciated that the section is exclusively responsible for the SHA and can react quickly. The personal and extensive support after difficult and traumatic experiences was also positively mentioned.
- On the other hand, it was stated that the recruitment practice is still the same as 10 years ago (written tests). A clear performance agreement on recruitment and further education was suggested, or a renewal of the staff. There is also the fear that the section will be taken over by the FDFA HR section if it does not professionalise in the close future.

**Cooperation among the different EG's:** It was emphasised that cooperation with other EG's, and learning across EG's is often lacking. There are no or only limited budgets for workshop visits of other EGs and no cross-cutting workshops are planned or feasible. It was suggested for example further training in protection issues for construction experts (soft factors), that would be interesting and important.

## Coordination with external partners

The close cooperation with various UN organisations, especially UNICEF, with the INGOs Norwegian and Danish Refugee Councils (NRC and DRC) since the beginning of the SE Programme, and the joint development of guidelines for school education with the Ministry of Education, indicate a good and effective coordination within SDC, local and international stakeholders at all levels.

The good cooperation at different levels is also visible in the success of SDC HA to receive additional funding from other donors like the EU or UNICEF for their SE programme at that time.

## Conclusions

- In recent years, the SHA Unit's deployments in Myanmar can be seen as a good example of effective cooperation between SDC SC and SDC HA in terms of the nexus. The respective comparative advantages of both entities are known and undisputed. SDC HA has adapted to new administrative processes, but it remains more flexible, can become active in the area more quickly and play out their strength as a door opener and trust builder.
- Today, Myanmar also stands as an example of good DAs in HA contributing to Switzerland's overall strategy, within the framework of the integrated embassy. But the transition from a construction-oriented approach to more involvement of communities

and local actors, and later the shift to a more enabling and promoting approach has taken a very long time and opportunities to empower local partners earlier were missed.

- The findings about DAs are mainly based on the study of received documents. However, these are mainly produced internally and are representing internal views, which reduces the independence of the information. Apart from the two comparative studies, where Myanmar was a case study, no other external evaluation could be identified. Especially with the dual role as a donor and implementer, a deeper and critical independent outside view from time to time would have enhanced learning and programme improvements.
- DAs need a lot of manpower in the field and for administrative issues, and only in recent years the staff has been significantly nationalised. Before, there has been a high turnover of SHA staff during all these years of own implementation. In the period analysed, the majority of SHA experts only stayed in the country between 5 and 16 months, whereas in such complex environments an assignment of at least 3 years would be more appropriate. It seems to be difficult to find the right people in the SHA pool especially for longer-term deployments, which is also the case for the secondments. That is remarkable, especially considering that Myanmar is not one of the least attractive countries for operations. It was suggested to review the profiles in the SHA pool accordingly, and to consider recruiting people outside the SHA pool for HA tasks in countries like Myanmar, possibly also outside Switzerland.
- The continuity of the DAs in recent years could nevertheless be ensured to a certain extent thanks to two staff members. These two SHA experts were staying over long periods, and, since 2018, in addition, the Head of cooperation and the Swiss Ambassador have contributed to the positive outcomes. In other words, the success of the SHA inputs was highly dependent on a few individuals. If the Ambassador or Head of cooperation were more critical about DAs, and if the DA project manager could not have been kept on in the country for more than 9 years, things may look very different.
- The latest shift, from 2018 onwards, is seen by many as a ground-breaking move for the future of HA. Away from the focus on construction-oriented (own) implementation, to more promoting, enabling and empowering of local staff, organisations and ministries. This would require expert profiles with more soft skills (e.g. capacity development tools).
- Concerning the secondments, the host organisations were generally very satisfied with the professional level of the SHA secondees. But due to legal reasons the secondees can only be used from the host organisations to a limited extent, be it in the supervision of staff or in the authority to issue instructions in administrative processes. In addition, they are in general only on location for one to two years, which is too short for this difficult context.
- With one exception, all HA posts in Myanmar in the assessed time period were staffed with SHA contracts. Many opinions, however, mentioned that long-term senior positions in integrated embassies should definitely be structural posts, also because of an equal treatment concerning working conditions.



## In-depth case study: **Jordan**

### Background/HA needs and landscape

The Middle East has been at the centre of global attention for several decades, due to the impacts of armed conflicts, Palestine refugee crisis and the emergence of the Islamic State. Iraq and Syria are characterized by protracted crisis. Syrian refugees are spreading over the region, primarily in Jordan, Lebanon and Turkey. Overall, the number of people affected by the Syria crisis in need of humanitarian aid remain high and need to be interlinked with development and peacebuilding interventions.

Issues of protection, provision of basic services (including education, water and sanitation), poverty and livelihood, social cohesion, and decent work conditions continue to challenge countries across the region.

In Jordan in particular, the regional crises have resulted in refugee flows and have impacted Jordan's population and economy considerably, adding to the existing structural and economic challenges. As part of the Jordan Compact in 2016, the Government of Jordan has committed to education for all including Syrian children, as well as to limited access to the formal labour market for Syrian refugees.

Against this background and the importance of the Syria crisis to Jordan, it was considered important not to strictly limit the scope of this case study to Jordan. It is therefore addressing the SHA Unit's deployments to Jordan but also taking into consideration related deployments to Syria and Iraq.

**Swiss regional programme in the Middle East:** Under its programme 2015-2018, Switzerland successfully contributed to the creation of safe, viable, and peaceful living conditions, to reduce fragility, and to prevent/transform conflicts through three domains of interventions, namely: basic needs and services, protection and water.

In 2017, a peer evaluation highlighted the relevance of the Cooperation Strategy, its selected domains, the involvement of SDC Department, and the WOGA partners (incl. HSD and SEM) in responding to the large-scale humanitarian crises. The identified comparative advantages of Switzerland were the peace building advocacy, the flexibility in responding to changing contexts, the close partnership, the provision of thematic expertise and the involvement in under-served areas. The flexible use of humanitarian and development instruments proved to be effective. The evaluation recommended a sharper thematic focus in accordance with regional and country response plans, an assessment on how to best operationalize the nexus between humanitarian aid and development and more work with and through local partners.

The regional programme for 2019-2022 is focusing on four domains: protection and migration (total budget = 101.2 m CHF, including 69.2% for SDC HA), education and income (total budget=40 m CHF, incl. 41.7% for SDC HA), conflict prevention and peace promotion (total budget 40 m CHF for HSD) and water and sanitation (total budget=113 m CHF, incl. 88.5% for SDC HA). In all those domains, the humanitarian and resilience approach implemented by SDC HA is complemented with medium- to longer-term development cooperation through the engagement of the SDC SC, Jordan being since 2019 in a priority region for SDC (with focus on Jordan and Lebanon). Under this implementation period, the programme plans secondments of Swiss experts and DAs to continue to be strong features of the programme to bring direct technical support and expertise to implementing partners and government institutions where there is a strong comparative advantage.

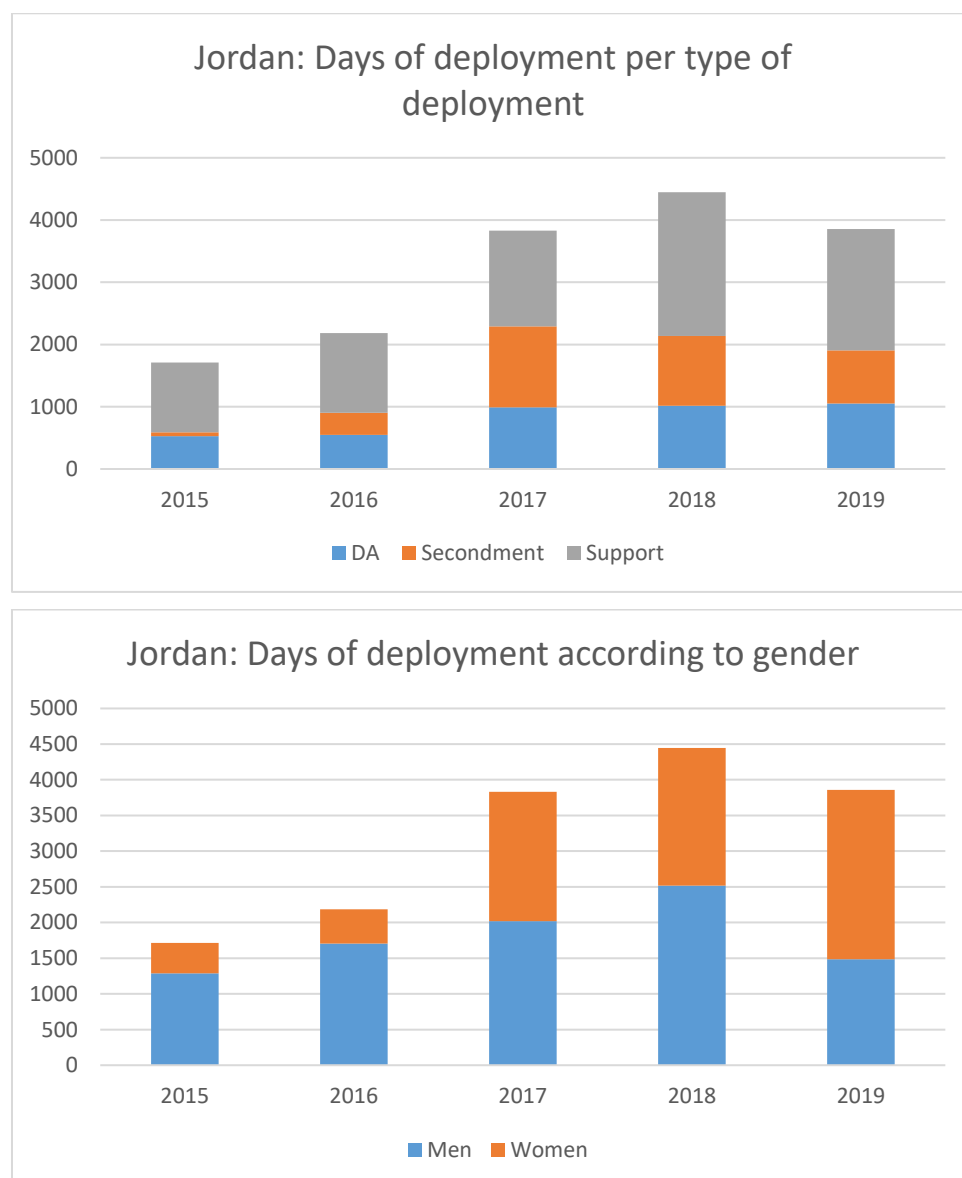
**SCO in Amman (regional and country office):** While each of the Swiss Cooperation Office (SCO) in Lebanon, Jordan and Turkey implements the country programme in each country, the Regional Cooperation Office in the Swiss embassy in Amman provides support and coordination efforts for the region, manages the Iraq portfolio and coordinate the Whole of Syria approach. The Humanitarian Office in Syria reports to the Regional Cooperation Office in Amman. Since 2019 at HQ level in Bern there are two sections responsible for the Middle East, namely MENA-H (Humanitarian Aid) and MENA-D (South Cooperation).

## Overview of SHA Unit's interventions since 2015

With humanitarian assistance remaining a high priority for the region, the Swiss regional programme has been and is still strongly relying on expertise from the SHA Unit. Throughout the years SHA Unit experts have been deployed under various mechanisms, namely: DAs, secondment and support to the SCO.

In Jordan there has been a significant increase in number of days of deployments across deployment modes between 2015/2016 and 2018/2019 in Jordan. The proportion of working days performed by women experts has also seen a significant increase with more working days by women than men in 2019.

**Figure 22: Deployment characteristics in Jordan 2015-2019**

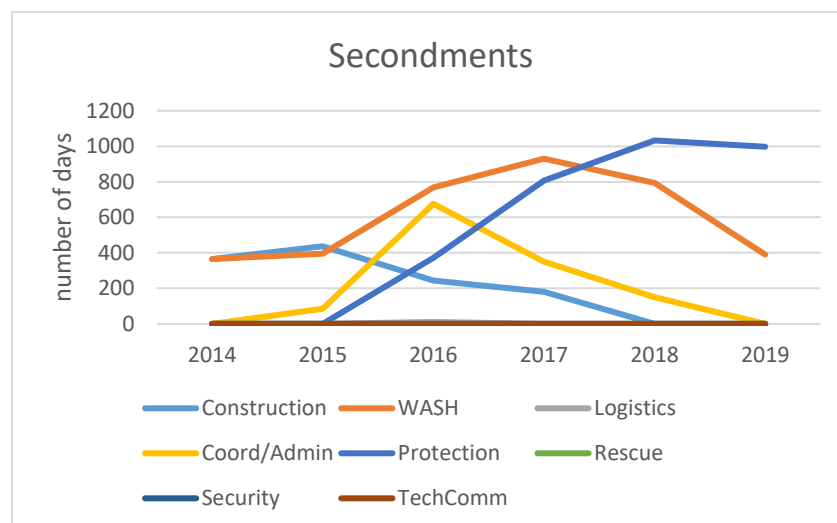


Source: Own graph from deployment data provided by the "Field Resources" Section

Secondments in both Syria and Iraq were at their highest in 2016, while still on the increase in Jordan at that time. Support to the SCO in Amman is by far where most days of deployments are counted in Jordan, support is also on the increase in Syria since Swiss humanitarian presence was strengthened and a humanitarian office opened in 2017. Rapid Response Teams were not deployed to Jordan in the period under study.

In Jordan, Iraq and Syria together, secondments in construction, WASH and coordination/administration have significantly decreased while a rapid intake of secondments in protection could be observed (see Figure 23). Most secondments during the period studied are for a duration of 6 months to about 1 year, some short-term secondments took place in Iraq though. Multi-year secondments seem to be more the exception than the rule and occurred to date only in Syria and Iraq.

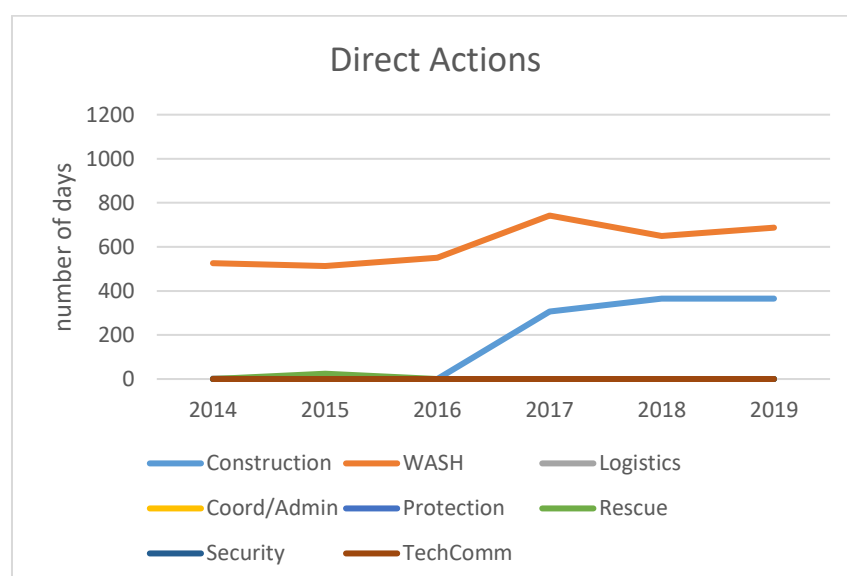
**Figure 23: Secondment characteristics in Jordan, Iraq and Syria 2014-2019**



Source: Own graph from deployment data provided by the “Field Resources” Section

As illustrated by Figure 24, SHA experts on DAs remain high in WASH due to the projects at the Jerash and Azraq camps and in construction on the school rehabilitation project since 2016. There are no DA in Syria and Iraq for the period under study.

**Figure 24: Direct Action characteristics in Jordan 2014-2019**



Source: Own graph from deployment data provided by the “Field Resources” Section

In the period of study, several DAs were implemented, namely: the Jerash camp project, Azraq camp project, School rehabilitation project and the Aqaba flood mitigation and risk mapping project. A short description of each DA is provided hereafter.

The Jerash camp project was launched in 2012 and aims at building an underground wastewater sewer network and installing a new water distribution network. The project was handed over to local government in May 2016. Phase 2 was implemented to consolidate phase 1 and to contribute to its sustainability. In this second phase one component was implemented by the GIZ to enhance household level water management and hygiene practices and one component was a DA implemented by the SCO Amman to upgrade the main wastewater sewer line between camp and wastewater treatment plant as well as the connection of the water network built in Phase 1 to a high-capacity reservoir.

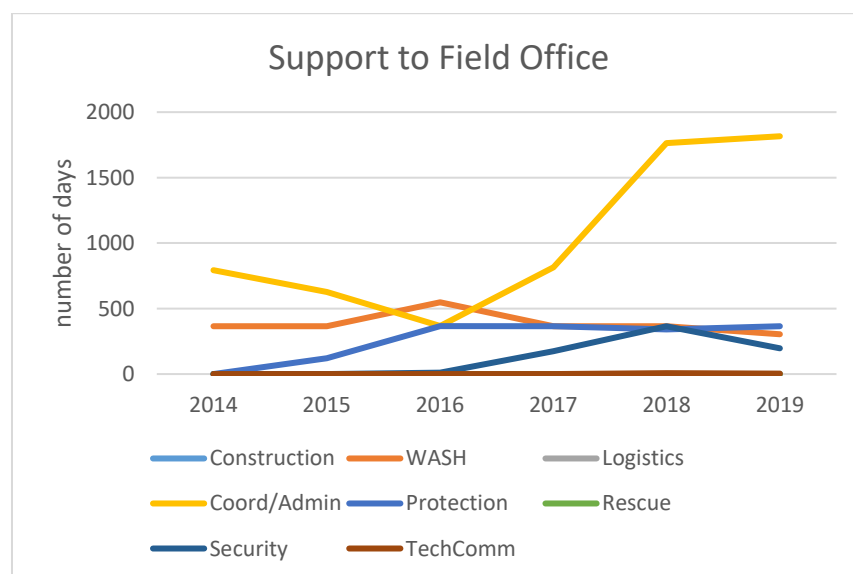
Azraq camp project was initiated in 2016 based on the needs identified by the SCO in Amman and was strongly supported by the Swiss Government. DA was identified as the best solution to quickly bring water to the camp in Azraq. The project aims at building borehole and pipes. The project was clearly defined, had political support and therefore also high pressure to deliver quickly.

School rehabilitation project started in 2012 and is expected to be completed by mid-2021. The project aims at rehabilitating the school to ensure access to education for refugee children in a safe and protective school environment. The project also aims at providing technical assistance to the Ministry of Education and the private sector. These were implemented primarily by SDC and the SHA Unit experts on construction who managed the project on the ground one after another since 2016. A soft component on social cohesion to ensure healthy, clean and well-maintained schools is implemented by the NRC. An evaluation of the project is planned jointly with the GIZ.

Aqaba flood mitigation and risk mapping project started following the assessment of the mitigation system by SDC in 2017. This assessment identified maintenance, operation and early warning as being major weaknesses. It aims at supporting Jordan in the establishment of an operation and maintenance management unit of the Aqaba Development Cooperation and continues with a stronger risk mapping component. This project was managed by WASH SHA Unit expert with DRR expert group as technical advisor.

Support to the SCO/Field Office in most thematic areas (construction, protection, WASH) fluctuates but the number of days of deployments remains quite close in each area. In the Coordination and Administration Expert Group, the number of days of deployments have exploded (more than tripled) in the last 4 years, representing by far the most used profile in the Jordan context.

**Figure 25: Support to SCO/Field Office characteristics in Jordan, Iraq and Syria 2014-2019**



Source: Own graph from deployment data provided by the "Field Resources" Section

## Current situation

The Swiss Cooperation Strategy Middle East 2015-2018 had a strong humanitarian focus. During the period 2019-2022, the Cooperation Strategy will in addition support the development efforts of Switzerland's partner countries, notably in Jordan and Lebanon. This was also reinforced by the Jordan Government who requested HA partners to work towards more sustainable responses and that the supports and projects also benefit Jordanian as beneficiaries.

Most major DAs with strong construction components in Jordan are phasing out and the ongoing and planned DAs have stronger soft components.

The following Table presents the status of the SHA Unit deployments in Jordan and Syria in June 2020: 8 experts in Jordan, 5 in Syria, none in Iraq.

**Table 14: SHA Unit experts deployed in Jordan and Syria, status June 2020**

Function	Deployment mode	Expert Group
Jordan		
Project manager school rehabilitation	Direct Action	Construction
WASH Expert/project manager	Direct Action	WASH
Senior child protection specialist	Secondment UNICEF	Protection
Gender specialist	Secondment UNICEF	Protection
Senior transition advisor	Secondment/UN Resident Coordinator <sup>23</sup>	Coordination/administration
Programme manager Yemen	Support to CH representation	Coordination/administration
Programme manager abroad/quality assurance	Support to CH representation	Coordination/administration
Programme manager Water	Support to CH representation	WASH
Syria		
Areas support officer	Secondment UNRWA	Protection
WASH in emergencies specialist	Secondment UNICEF	WASH
WASH specialist	Secondment UNICEF	WASH
Head of office HA	Support to CH representation	Coordination/administration
Deputy Head of office/ programme officer Syria	Support to CH representation	Coordination/administration

Source: own compilation based on the Monthly Report of SHA deployments (02.06.2020)

## Main observations and findings about the SHA Unit deployments

### Strategic orientation (appropriateness of deployments and competencies)

The SCO in Amman and its regional programme is heavily relying on SHA Unit expertise for its implementation (according to MDPN and interviews, the SCO had up to approx. 70-80% of staff from the SHA Unit deployed to support the office and work on DA again about 20-30%

<sup>23</sup> Officially deployed to UNHCR but in practice working at the UN Resident Coordinator Office in Amman

structure staff). This significant number of deployments in the coordination and administration thematic area have seen since 2016 a major increase as shown in Figure 25.

Deployment of SHA Unit experts to strengthen the SCO to respond to emerging needs was described as very flexible, bringing thematic expertise required to manage HA country portfolios (e.g. Iraq, Syria, Yemen) and particularly useful in filling posts in fragile contexts. While deploying temporary expertise to support emerging needs is in line with SDC HA, the use of SHA Unit experts to compensate a lack of SDC structure posts (the cooperation office in Amman has only three structure posts) was perceived as more controversial and highlighting potential structural issues at SDC.

The current situation being more in a stabilization phase than emergency response, the need for SHA Unit experts to support the SCO is expected to decrease while structure posts should ensure the resources to implement the regional programme. The rebalancing from HQ to the Field exercise was also mentioned in this context but there is no guarantee that it will lead to more structure post for Jordan and the region. The need for very specialised expertise will be less relevant and the generalist competencies to develop and manage thematic portfolio will be more required. This position was shared by SDC South Cooperation and the SCO in Amman. As example posts which used to be SHA Unit positions are now converted (e.g. security advisor position) or are being requested to be converted into structure post but not confirmed (e.g., advisor on water and sanitation).

Views on DAs, their relevance and impact vary greatly. While some persons interviewed described DAs as the right instrument to act quickly at the time of their respective implementation, others shared the views, that even though DAs enable quick implementation, big infrastructure projects in Jordan were and are still not making much sense. The latter justified their views considering the SDC and Jordanian heavy administrative procedures in implementing DAs and the numerous changes in DA management over the years (SHA Unit experts often work on an annual basis). Acting quickly was of particular importance in the case of the Azraq camp project due to the political support and pressure from Switzerland following an official visit to Jordan.

DAs are perceived to be, and are often, very focussed on construction of infrastructure and provision of equipment (hardware) which from the point of view of SDC SC may lead to missed opportunities in the implementation phase when it comes to dialogue and collaboration with local authorities and the strengthening of their capacities. The school rehabilitation project was quoted as an example where some funding could have gone to local implementation partners from the start, for purposes other than hardware components.

Nevertheless, the school rehabilitation project was also described as a unique setup for a DA taking sustainability very much into consideration. The unique set up was primarily based on the close working relation established with relevant ministries in Jordan which have positioned Switzerland as a reliable partner for longer engagement according to the project. Since 2019, the domain education and income has been broadened to also encompass development in addition to humanitarian response. Scoping of potential entry point for SDC in that area in Jordan is currently being carried out.

Secondments on durable solution (one expert in Iraq) and on the nexus (one expert in Jordan) were presented as contributing to the shift from humanitarian responses to more sustainable development projects and programmes. While the so-called 'strategic' secondments at P4 and P5 in the UN system were considered by SDC and by its partner organisations as adequate and of key importance to tie SDC interventions with multilateral organisations in the region, the duration was mentioned as critical. It was clearly stated during interviews that longer deployments (2-3 years) would benefit SDC, its partner's organisations and the agenda being worked on. For technical secondment (P3 level), the duration is also an important factor of success, but shorter deployments can also be relevant as long as the ToR are clear and realistic objectives are set.

In the fragile context of Iraq and Syria, secondments in remote setup/geographical areas where SDC has no presence was highlighted as particularly interesting for SDC (ex. secondment at UNICEF in North East of Syria).

SDC positively rated the complementarity of deployment modes in connection to the Azraq camp, namely building boreholes and water pipes through a DA and secondment of technical experts with UNICEF in the camp. UNICEF had a more critical view on the DAs (done in isolation, issues with the quality of the water) and the secondments (lack of cultural sensitivity, issues with integration in UNICEF team but technically proficient).

As mentioned by several partners, the strategic orientation of Switzerland as a donor is key as Switzerland overall is a small donor in the Middle East context. Swiss expertise strategically deployed (as secondments but also under DAs) and complementing financial contributions was seen as increasing Swiss visibility and raising Swiss profile as a reliable and important partner. The Swiss strategy and vision were not always easy to understand for the partners interviewed.

### **Main results achieved** (effectiveness, efficiency and sustainability)

Overall, the flexibility of SHA Unit deployments was highlighted throughout SDC as key to respond to changing contexts and environments and this has proven to be essential in the Middle East context in the last years.

Some SHA Unit expert positions are planned to be converted into structure posts thus bringing more stability and continuity in the management of the regional programme and recognition that those posts are required on the long term.

It is difficult to draw a clear picture of the effectiveness and efficiency of the DA in Jordan. DA were described as potentially highly cost-effective implementation modality but heavily dependent on the expert recruited and managing the DA.

In Jordan there are both examples of successful and problematic DAs.

The DA in the Jerash camp was reported as a very complicated project where a succession of errors and a high turnover of SHA Unit's experts combined with poor hand over occurred. The project budget disbursed was significantly higher than forecasted. However, lessons were learnt and the project in the Azraq camp was planned to prevent such errors being replicated in the recruitment of SHA Unit's experts, i.e. recruitment of a specialised expert to handle the contracting aspects.

Even though not reported in the same way by all partners, DAs, such as the Azraq project, contributed to position Switzerland as a reliable partner for the Jordan Government and increased its visibility.

The school rehabilitation and the Aqaba flood risk mapping DAs were both reported as interventions where SDC made a difference in terms of infrastructure and capacities on the ground (reported by SDC and GIZ staff in Jordan).

Under the school rehabilitation project, a total of 88 schools were rehabilitated. The high quality of the work performed by Swiss experts was recognized by the project team as well as other SDC staff and external partners. Further developments beyond the implementation phase of the project were initiated by pupils' parents and lead to improvement of the school premises<sup>24</sup>. The Swiss model has also inspired others.

The project worked with the existing national system and with the same processes as the ministries would follow without SDC. This project was presented as an example where Swiss expertise were used to contribute to building capacities of local institutions. While Swiss

<sup>24</sup>

<https://www.eine-welt.ch/fr/2020/edition-3/sur-le-terrain-avec-jill-schmidheiny>

funding and expertise were essential to achieve so many rehabilitations, the ministry took full responsibility for the work and the achievements.

The flood risk mapping project was also presented as an innovative and meaningful DA. This project had no hardware component, only software and highly technical expertise. This was described as an inspiring way forward for DA.

Maintenance of built infrastructure and provided equipment is a recurring theme in connection with various DA both in WASH and construction. Even if the work was of high quality, there is often a lack of funding and mechanisms in place to maintain the infrastructure.

The limited financial responsibility of the SHA Unit expert to obligate and disburse funds in implementing DA was also reported as impacting the efficiency of the project.

Secondments were presented by the SCO in Amman as mixed experiences, ranging from very successful to very problematic. Results achieved are typically highly technical contributions and critical support to the UN office and relevant feedback to SDC. Many interviewees shared the views that secondments are more successful when secondees already have previous experiences with the UN system and when SDC/SCO is engaged throughout the secondment.

Some contributions made by secondees in the regions are (according to the Annual report Middle East 2019): in Iraq a Swiss secondee worked with UNHCR to facilitate the principled return movement of IDPs in line with international standards and in Jordan, a secondment supported UNHCR's Durable Solution Unit with the analysis of return related data to inform the advocacy interventions of partners.

Strategic secondments (such as the one on durable solution above-mentioned), at P4 and P5 in the UN system, were highly rated by SDC staff and management and are clearly seen by SDC and partners as a niche for Swiss HA. When strategic secondments are successful and combined with other contributions in a relevant way, they significantly contribute to raising the profile of Swiss HA toward multilateral partners (e.g. this was expressed by the Resident Coordinator in Jordan based on its experience with a SHA Unit's expert deployed). It was also reinforced that the domain and objectives of such strategic secondments require careful decision-making by SDC and the UN to ensure that the planned agenda can realistically be moved forward, otherwise there are risks of secondments not achieving the set targets (e.g. an example was the latest secondment to UNICEF on sensitive aspects related to protection).

## **Perceived value added and/or obstacles**

The perceived value added at the SHA Unit's experts' level are:

- Technically qualified experts (reported by SDC, SHA Unit and UN organisations)
- Experts are hands on and pragmatic in project implementation.
- Experts are on site (specially in DA): good understanding of the reality and visibility of Swiss involvement.
- Experts bring diversity of profiles, expertise and experiences to the SCO (in addition to structure posts) and to the embassy. Required adequate balance between technical staff (at project level) and generalists at programme level.

The perceived value added at the SHA Unit, SCO, SDC levels are:

- High flexibility in using SHA Unit experts: an absolute necessity enabling adequate and prompt responses to needs on the ground, no other existing mechanisms could replace such type of experts' deployments.
- Direct Actions create a positive environment for networking opportunities and establishing partnership between Switzerland and Jordan.



- SHA Unit expertise deployed in combination with other SDC HA instruments (direct funding contributions) enhance the quality of the funding and raise Switzerland profile – as a small donor country – with strong values and expertise.

The challenges at the SHA Unit experts' level are:

- Lack of understanding of the context and language: Arabic, especially to interact with partners, beneficiaries, colleagues and others. The SHA Unit, if expected to work with government agencies, requires significant support from NPO and this required support needs to be foreseen and planned.
- Lack of field and/or SDC and/or HA experience: it is a significant challenge as it can take long time until the experts fully understand the logic of SDC interventions, its mandate and the role of WOGA partners.
- Lack of the full-fledged SDC introduction programmes: processes and procedures remain unclear for many for a long time. In implementing DA the understanding of the SDC system was also stressed as key in order to be able to constructively collaborate with the administration of the embassy.

The challenges at the SHA Unit, SCO, SDC levels are:

- Lack of continuity in project/DA implementation and in relation to national authorities/stakeholders due to high turnover of SHA Unit experts.
- Difficulty to find senior experts (e.g. for secondments at P5 level).
- Limitations to retainment of experienced experts at managerial/advisor position due to 10-year rule. For deployments of one year or longer (i.e., which happened often for DA, secondments and support to the SCO) the 10-year rule remains a main challenge.
- When support to the SCO is required on the longer term, it should be changed to a structure post. However, the ceiling for structure post limits the creation of new posts and therefore pursue the use of SHA Unit experts to do the job. Rebalancing at SDC (i.e., bringing more posts to the field) may support this but is not guaranteed for Jordan and the region.

### **Management of deployments (i.e., relations with embassy/field offices)**

In the SCO in Amman, the collaboration between structure posts and SHA Unit experts was described as successful and without major tensions as it could be observed in other offices due to different employment conditions.

Understanding the reality of the SHA Unit experts by structure staff and SCO management was mentioned as a key factor to successful collaboration as well as to value SHA Unit experts' contributions. In addition, it supports adequate follow up on implementation of DA and to advise on the type of technical profiles required for the various posts (i.e., different profiles are required for implementing DA and for supporting the SCO in managing portfolios).

Many interviewees shared the view that the work under an integrated embassy does not ease the work of the SHA Unit experts as there are more processes in place to get used to and to be followed. However, on the positive side, working under the same roof brings the advantage of improving the understanding of the reality on both sides.

The management of experts working on DA in the field was often quoted as a weakness. Limited time available at SCO to monitor the work, achievements and performances lead to a lack of traceability and transparency of the whole DA implementation processes.

The management of secondments was mentioned, both at the HQ and at field levels, as a major challenge. The secondees depend to a certain degree on the embassy but primarily to the UN agency they are seconded to. This creates a grey zone where nobody takes full responsibility for the management of the secondees.

Administrative and financial burden at the embassy with deployments of SHA Unit experts and DA was stressed. Deployments of SHA Unit experts are less structured, and the information received at the embassy level less complete as for structure posts. RRT deployments are entirely organized at HQ, for all other SHA Unit experts' deployments the roles and responsibilities between Swiss representations and HQ are less clear. Once deployed, the SHA Unit experts supporting the SCO or working on DA have a clear status. The secondees to UN agencies remain often unclear in the Jordanian context. Another burden is linked to the lack of knowledge of the SHA Unit experts on SDC's internal processes and procedures, this would require support from the embassy SCO upon arrival at duty station. From the experts' perspective the budgeting and release of payments are sometimes also problematic during the implementation of DA leading to unsatisfactory situations and frustrations.

Regarding the deployments and their management, the biggest remaining challenge mentioned is to get the right person at the right place at the right time.

The flexibility and openness of "Field Resources" Section was recognized. Nevertheless, challenges were also highlighted primarily due to the fact that the Section never sees the experts in action at work. The selection process of experts was described by some interviewees as lacking transparency and not always based on competencies and records of performance. The Section was criticized for not being proactive and creative and for lacking understanding of the level and type of technical expertise required for the various deployments.

### **Coordination with external partners (local government, Swiss or multilateral organisations)**

Based on feedback from the interviews with both SDC and other partners (UN and GIZ), the SCO in Amman and its programme has good relations with other donors (e.g. GIZ and school rehabilitation project) and actors in Jordan, and is participating in relevant working groups.

The presence of Swiss experts on construction sites was well appreciated by local actors and ensured close collaboration with local government leading to some technical working groups, e.g. on maintenance in schools, hosted by the Ministry of Education.

While some partners were critical about Swiss DA, e.g., UNICEF in connection with borehole drilling for Azraq camp, others were extremely positive, stressing the high technical expertise of Swiss experts and the decentralized decision-making processes occurring at the Embassy level (GIZ in School rehab project).

### **Conclusions**

- Overall deployments of SHA Unit experts have been an essential part of the implementation of the regional programme in the region. Three deployment modes, namely support to the SCO, DA and secondments to UN organisations, have in different ways contributed to it.
- Support to SCO have substantially enabled the management of HA portfolio in Iraq, Syria and Yemen as well as thematic portfolio (e.g., on protection). As an example, the SDC HA office in Syria is entirely managed by SHA Unit deployed experts. The right balance between temporary needs and prolonged needs, between SHA Unit experts' deployments and the requirements for establishing structure posts, remains a challenge for SDC.
- DA and secondments have both shown the potential to be successful if the expert(s) with the adequate level of technical expertise, soft skills and field experience is/are deployed. This reinforces the importance of the selection of the experts based on an adequate understanding of the technical and managerial requirements as well as previous performances in the field, and the role of "Field Resources" Section.

- Secondments have demonstrated to be of particular added value to SDC when posted in remote duty station where SDC do not have a representation. Strategic secondments (e.g., on durable solution, nexus) have contributed to increase Switzerland profile and visibility as an important partner in Jordan and the region (even though a relatively small donor country). Secondments can also lead to unsuccessful situation, which may be mitigated by well-defined and realistic ToR of the post, thus managing expectations on all sides.
- Some Direct Actions (school rehabilitation project and the Aqaba flood risk mapping project) have shown to be good examples of well implemented DA. These provide interesting and positive prospects to pursue with well selected and designed DA and for linking HA response to the development agenda of south cooperation.
- Losing expertise and knowledge due to turn over of SHA Unit experts (for various reasons, including the 10-year-rule) is occurring in all types of deployments in Jordan. Most deployments in the Jordan context are longer-term deployments on support to the SCO, DA and secondments. For those experts, the 10-year rule creates a problem because they reach the 10 years of deployments much faster than in the cases of RRTs. In addition, for many of those positions (especially strategic secondments, management of portfolio, working with WOGA partners) many years of field experience and work with various partners and stakeholders are highly sought and often difficult to find.

## Case study: **Haiti**

### Background/HA needs and landscape

Haiti is the most vulnerable country in the Latin American and Caribbean region and suffered several natural disasters in past decades and almost the entire population is exposed to risks such as earthquakes, hurricanes and flooding. Due to the current economic crises, the vulnerability of its people has further increased. The most recent major shock came with Hurricane “Matthew”, which swept over Haiti at wind speeds of up to 230 km/h in early October 2016. Over 100'000 homes were destroyed.

While numerous Swiss aid agencies and charitable organisations have been active in Haiti since the 1950s, the Swiss Government began to provide humanitarian assistance to the country in the late 1990s. Following the devastating earthquake in 2010 and Hurricane “Matthew” in 2016, Switzerland stepped up its humanitarian efforts. Since then, it has supported reconstruction efforts and the strengthening of disaster risk reduction. In 2011, a Swiss embassy opened in Port au Prince and since 2013 SDC SC has the lead in Haiti to improve living conditions, reduce poverty and strengthen local government structures.

To long-term observers the socio-economic situation in Haiti has not improved in the past 10 years despite substantial international support. Migration pressure also remains high.

### Overview of SHA Unit's interventions since 2015

The SHA Unit has been involved in Haiti with several EGs in several DAs, an RRT for Hurricane Matthew and secondments to WFP.

On 4 October 2016, Hurricane “Matthew” hit the southern part of Haiti and caused widespread damage. More than 1'000 people died and around 2.1m people were affected. While preparations started before landfall of the hurricane, the crisis cell of SDC HA decided to deploy an RRT of six SHA experts plus one expert from the SRC on 5 October. The RRT phase lasted until November 4<sup>th</sup> and included altogether 24 SHA experts. The support focused on WASH activities (like providing tanks and bladders), emergency shelter (distribution of 7'750 basic shelter kits, mainly tarpaulin, and 3'360 hard shelter kits, mainly corrugated iron sheets), and cash intervention (with a conditional cash-approach<sup>25</sup>). The RRT was then downscaled and the responsibility handed over to the Swiss embassy that took over the lead, supported by a transition specialist from the HA HQ. Several secondments of SHA experts in CTP and DRR complemented the RRT.

An operational report was prepared in December 2016, analysing the RRT operation and drawing lessons learned. The operation took place under difficult conditions and the procurement of non-food items (in the Dominican Republic) was more complex than anticipated and as a result, the distribution of goods got delayed. Communication between SDC Bern, embassy and the RRT was challenging, partly because the team's responsibilities were not very clear at the beginning and diverging strategic consideration for the shelter part between Bern and the SHA experts required some days to achieve consensus. It was concluded that a solid briefing with the embassy at the beginning of the RRT would have been beneficial for the operation.

In February 2017, a team of SHA experts made a follow-up assessment (Jörmann et al. 2017). It concluded that the RRT fits well into the nexus concept and that it was a good follow-up of the emergency and can be considered a “textbook illustration” thanks to an effective cooperation between the embassy, SDC SC and SDC HA, despite some frictions.

Switzerland currently supports two DAs in the southern part of Haiti: (i) A reconstruction programme (PARHAFS) in Port Salut aims at rebuilding houses with a conditional cash transfer

<sup>25</sup> 2'100 beneficiaries received CHF 4 per day for 7-12 days. Thus, the rationale of the cash intervention was to support remote communities in re-establishing access whilst allowing them to purchase commodities.

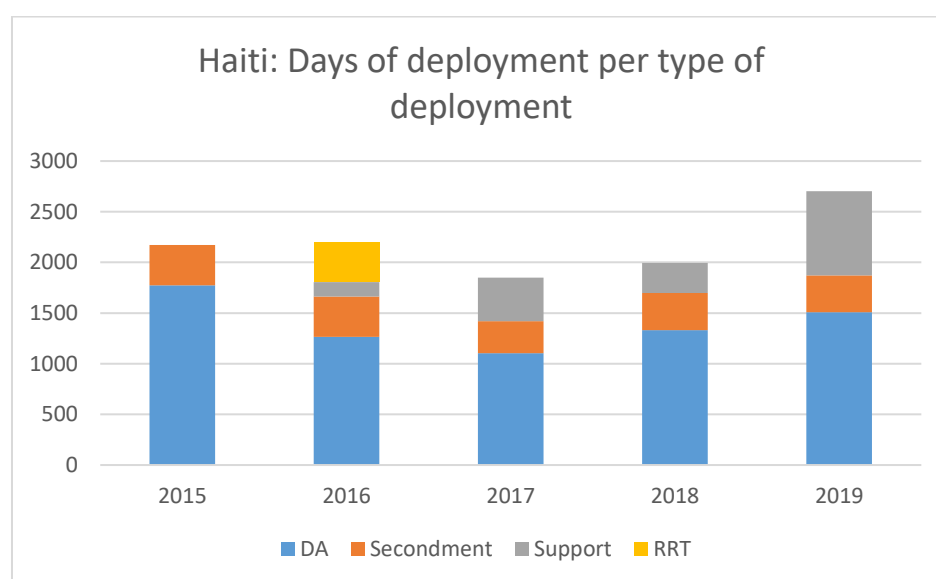
approach, training people in building more stable houses and the construction of storm-proof shelters, and (ii) A long-term DRR project started in January 2016 and is currently in its second phase. A third phase is planned to last until 2027.

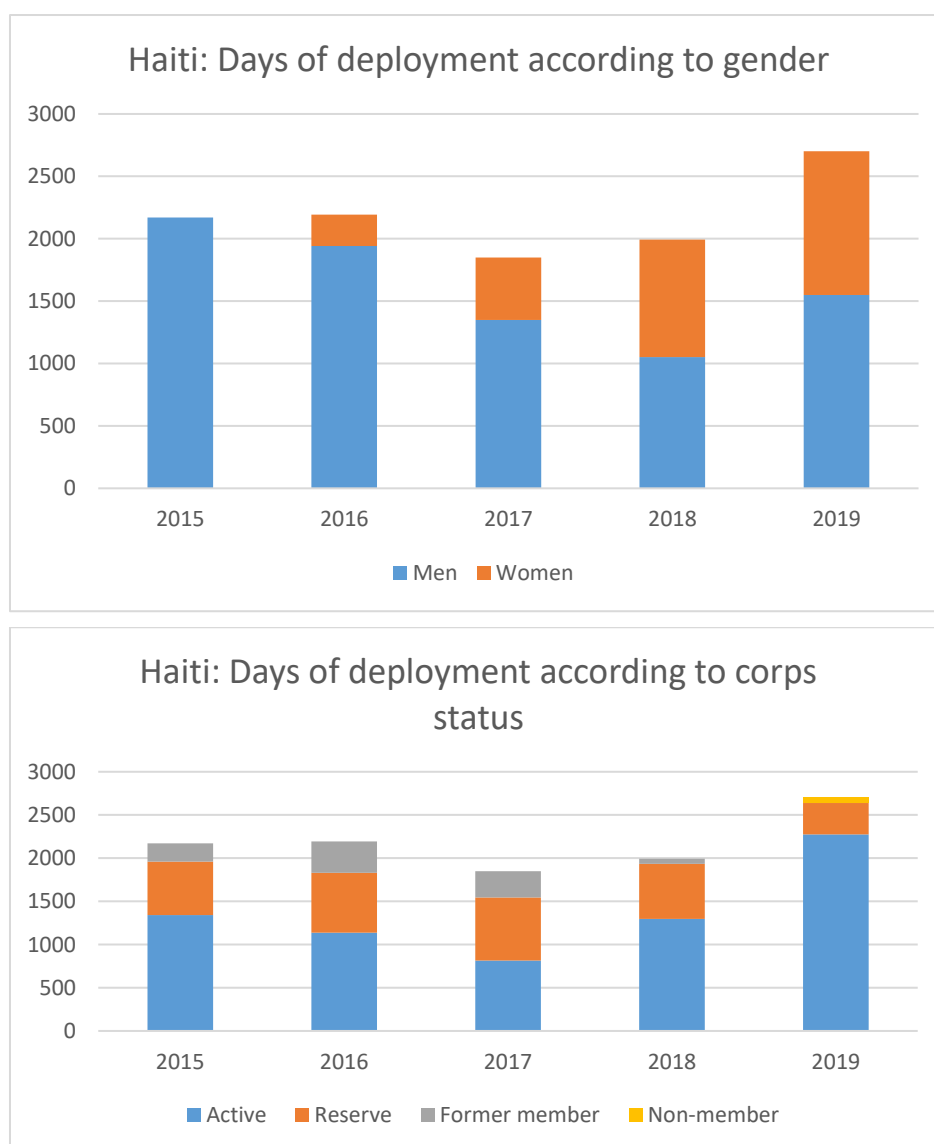
The reconstruction programme (PARHAFS) with a project office in Port-Salut provides support and training in locally adapted storm-proof shelter techniques. A team of SHA experts (incl. architects) has developed construction standards (based on local brick and wood techniques) to obtain more stable timber-frame constructions using local materials. Until 2022, it is planned that 500 beneficiary families receive conditional cash grants (CHF 3'000) to rebuild their house. Furthermore, four storm shelters are designed to protect up to 200 people.

The DRR programme in Jacmel has 3 outcomes: (i) The inhabitants of the project region are aware of natural risks and actively mitigate them by taking preventive measures, (ii) Local capacities are strengthened for an integrated risk and disaster management, and (iii) The national capacities to apply analytical tools and management of local natural risks is enhanced. The overall budget for the 4 phases is almost CHF 13m.

Since 2016, the numerous experts of several SHA EGs were deployed in the 2 DAs and Secondments (on average 2 per year): Construction, Logistics, WASH, DRR, and Security. During the RRT for Hurricane Matthew up to 15 experts were in Haiti (and the Dominican Republic for logistics).

**Figure 26: Deployment characteristics in Haiti 2015-2019**





Source: Own graph from deployment data provided by the Section "Field Resources"

## Current situation

The overall Swiss cooperation programme has a focus on developmental projects. The two DAs under implementation are part of the Governance domain. Each project has 3 SHA experts in the staffing plan. However, at the time of writing this case study, two positions are open as recruitment of SHA experts is challenging and time consuming. Haiti is not at the top of the preference list and longer-term commitments are especially difficult to fill, not least because the required competency profiles demand a mix of expertise (e.g. DRR, construction and governance themes are important).

An illustration of the difficult relation between the embassy and the SHA Unit's approach is the approval process of the DRR programme in Jacmel. The operations committee of the embassy accepted the proposal under conditions (Ambassade Suisse à Haiti 2018): (i) reflect whether a DA is the appropriate modality for this second and especially the following phase, (ii) better harmonisation of activities with local governance and local development plans, (iii) to reduce the number of expat positions and to use more local professional staff while using expats mainly as backstoppers. Based on the interviews it can be concluded that these issues were relevant to be considered for this long-term project.

## Main observations and findings about the SHA deployments

### Strategic orientation (appropriateness of deployments and competencies)

The DAs emerged from humanitarian emergencies and developed into longer-term interventions with the characteristics of development projects and having several phases. They address relevant needs of the people and country and are appreciated by local partners. Whether they add value and represent Swiss interests is contested within SDC SC. The SDC HA and SHA experts' perception is more favourable.

Campbell and Schülein (2017) conducted a comparative study about the effectiveness of DAs and Haiti was selected as a case study. The school construction programme (PARIS – Programme d'Appui à la Réhabilitation des Infrastructures Scolaires), which had its origin in the disastrous earthquake of 2010, was selected as a case study. Whereas the government partners praised the "Swiss model", the SDC's internal perception was quite differing. The Embassy reported the model to be too expensive for replication, not relevant anymore 7 years after the earthquake, and too dependent on expats. SDC HA saw the DA rather as an opportunity contributing to the nexus (then the LLRD) debate providing tangible results in a difficult context as all planned schools were constructed, maintenance emphasized from the beginning and the norms and guidelines became institutionalized. In terms of costs, the study concluded that the Swiss schools are not more expensive than comparable schools constructed by other donors although comparisons are difficult due to many deviations from the norms.

### Main results achieved (effectiveness, efficiency and sustainability)

Taking the study by Campbell /Schülein (2017) as a proxy, the following results (effectiveness, efficiency and sustainability) for the school rehabilitation programme (PARIS) were provided:

- The Government praises the effective work style of SDC by providing good quality and safe buildings. Projects faced delays and the scope had to be reduced. Instead of rehabilitating 30 schools as planned the project went for constructing 13 new schools. Whereas SDC worked through Government structures other donors would have preferred to implement projects directly, e.g. the IDB).
- The embassy was concerned about the risk of failure and would have preferred mandates. In this case a non-performing implementor can easily be exchanged.
- SDC HA saw two success factors: (i) The continuity of the project team (some SHA experts stayed continuously for several years), and (ii) The formation of local experts was positively seen by SDC HA, also regarding sustainability.

The field mission report of the Hurricane Matthew found good traces ("leftovers") of the RRT support provided a few months before (Jörimann et al. 2017). Local initiatives and networks around drinking water projects compensated for the absence of Government. The achievements in the shelter intervention were more difficult to assess as only a limited number of beneficiaries could be covered during the RRT phase. The lack of beneficiary data made it difficult to re-assess the exclusion error (persons who needed aid but were not assisted) and the inclusion error (persons who did not need assistance but got it). This would require more profound impact assessments. For the cash intervention, the report concluded that more cash expertise in the RRT would be an asset as this could be a complementary element for providing non-food items not only during the RRTs but also in longer-term projects.

### Perceived value added and/or obstacles

- The overall input by Switzerland is very small in the HA sector of Haiti, thus innovative approaches and long-term commitment are highly valued;

- With its history as democratic country and as neutral state with a decentralized governance model, Switzerland has assets in the governance theme and could really add value especially also in future by addressing Governance issues more prominently;
- The deployed SHA experts were able to learn and blend new techniques with local construction styles, but this requires less specific Swiss experience than considerable soft skills and a willingness not to deploy ready-made Swiss solutions;
- Secondments in this difficult context need a lot of institutional experience and context-sensitivity in order to add value.
- As it is difficult to find longer-term SHA experts rather short deployments hamper continuity and the knowledge transfer. For local staff it is rather difficult to adjust to the constant change of SHA experts. Locals named it “un défilé d'expats” (Campbell and Schüle 2017). That raises concerns about real effectiveness, impact and sustainability of such project designs in fragile contexts;
- There are a lot of other actors active in the same region of Haiti and the DA (e.g. DRR) is not the only project with the local partners. Therefore, the SHA expertise has to fit well into an overall setup requiring good coordination and exchange with partners;
- The absence of experts due to security restrictions for travelling to the field, holidays, training, etc. can result in a rather low actual presence of SHA experts in the field in fragile contexts;
- There are also voices that point to RRT and DAs as a kind of “show” which is not sufficiently anchored in the local context. Such type of support would rather weaken local structures than strengthen them. According to this view, both deployment modes could be implemented with local partners (incl. Swiss or international NGOs);
- The Federal Dispatch 2021-24 declared that Switzerland will step out of Latin America with its South Cooperation (incl. Haiti). A potential scenario is that SDC HA will remain in one or the other form in Haiti. This could mean that the nexus idea would have to be pursued with bilateral work or partnering with multilateral organisations. Thus, the nexus idea seems more of an excellent theoretical concept than an operational guideline if one pillar is not present anymore.

### **Management of deployments (i.e. relations with embassy/field offices)**

There are quite differing opinions about the relevance of the DAs. The perception of the previous Ambassadors is rather sceptical about the value added of Swiss HA in Haiti in general and the DAs in particular (though not by the SHA members). The modality of a DA seems to be not well understood by SDC SC as they operate like an independent organisation (own cars, offices and staff) and yet requiring office support for administrative issues (e.g. financial management). On the other side, DAs were considered as asset for knowledge management among SHA experts and the HQ. The following factors were mentioned in the interviews:

- Difficulty to recruit SHA experts for Haiti (and in fragile contexts in general), they have to make public recruitments of non-SHA members. But this applies also for structure personnel of the FDFA. Even for the post of an Ambassador, no candidate has yet been found;
- The required profiles have become more complex and deployments require a lot of other thematic background (DRR, governance, gender etc.) and soft skills. Thus, the EGs create a silo which in practice becomes rather an irritant;
- Reduced flexibility in an integrated embassy: The provision of direct payments to local service providers contrasts with embassy rules, according to which for each payment a partner assessment is required;



- As a secondee one is pretty far away from the Swiss orbit and the embassy;
- The 10-year limitation for SHA experts was mentioned as a bottleneck regularly;
- The longer the SHA contracts last, the more problems emerge with structural posts and people start to compare contractual conditions and fringe benefits;
- The embassy should well understand the complementarity of HA and SC instruments. SHA deployments (incl. DAs) offer potential for visibility and direct contacts with local partners (and better effectiveness than with central Ministry structures);
- Flexibility is an important virtue to remain relevant and constant critical reflection is needed (as now experienced with shifting needs as a result of COVID-19). A humble approach by SHA experts would be still be needed to avoid too Swiss-based solutions.

### **Coordination with external partners** (local government, Swiss or multilateral organisations)

The DAs and secondments are coordinated with relevant local partners. However, the governance structures appear less clear organised compared to other countries. Due to the secondments, there are good contacts with multilateral organisations (e.g. WFP).

### **Conclusions**

- The interviews pinpointed to the changed vision of the SHA Unit over time, from emergency support as core business to longer-term secondments as a career perspective. This blurs the image of what the SHA Unit represents.
- RRTs offer great opportunities for visibility and for SHA experts to gain first-hand experiences. The transition to developmental projects was good in Haiti and should be better promoted (“nexus concrete”).
- RRTs offer good opportunities to develop into longer-term developmental interventions in the early recovery phase. However, the optimal localization (SHA experts vs. local ownership) and the short duration of expat deployments pose real operational challenges. Therefore, the long-term concept in such fragile contexts like Haiti is questioned also by some SHA experts.
- The nexus concept is theoretically convincing but operationally challenging due to changing political priorities (e.g. shifting geographic priorities) and intra-organisational divides. HA was in Haiti before SC and it will be there when SDC SC exits.
- There seems to be potential for better cooperation of SHA experts in developmental activities (e.g. as thematic backstoppers in DRR) or to support SDC partners.
- Special professional competencies are important but there is less need of highly specialized experts (e.g. in GIS and DRR) than competencies to adapt Swiss style knowledge to local solutions so that local partners can absorb the skills.

## Case study: Mozambique

### Background/HA needs and landscape

Mozambique counts as one of the poorest countries worldwide, with over half of its population living below the poverty line and a public budget highly dependent on foreign aid. Susceptible to climate shocks, Mozambique has been facing cyclical droughts and flooding over the last years. More than 80% of the population are smallholder farmers, especially vulnerable to climate change and natural disasters, such as the two cyclones in 2019. Although Mozambique was seeing a strong economic boom in the commodities sector, it abruptly came to an end through the debt crisis in 2016. Mozambique is further challenged by political fragilities as tensions arose again between FRELIMO and RENAMO from 2012 onwards. Swiss-led negotiations achieved a ceasefire in 2016 and led to a peace deal in 2019. Nevertheless, political insecurity and violence continued, as fighting between government troops and an Islamist militia escalated in the northernmost province of Cabo Delgado in late 2017, leaving over 1'000 people dead and about 400'000 displaced.

The development partnership between Switzerland and Mozambique started shortly after its independence in the 1970s. The Federal Council's Dispatch on Switzerland's International Cooperation 2017-2020 reconfirmed Mozambique as a priority country, which is aligned to Mozambique's five-year plan and focuses on three domains: (i) Governance, (ii) Income and economic development, and (iii) Health. The overall goal of the Swiss Cooperation Strategy is to contribute to poverty reduction by building a more equitable society and facilitating inclusive growth. Activities focus on the three northern provinces of Niassa, Nampula and Cabo Delgado. Multilateral cooperation includes working with UNICEF in the water and sanitation sector, with the World Bank, the WHO, UNFPA and UNICEF in the health sector and with UNDP on decentralization.

### Overview of SHA Unit's interventions since 2015

As there have not been any SHA interventions in Mozambique between 2015 and 2018, the case study focusses on the activities following the two cyclones that hit Mozambique in 2019. Since March that year, Malawi, Zimbabwe, and Mozambique experienced heavy rainfalls, leading to widespread flooding, affecting several hundred thousand people in the region, and leaving dozens of deaths. Additionally, on 14.03.2019, tropical cyclone "Idai" hit the second biggest city of Mozambique, Beira, with winds above 200km/h, leaving 600 dead and 1.9m people dependent on foreign aid. The next day, SHA sent emergency shelter material to IOM, to which it also seconded a first SHA expert. Further, a team of two corps members was sent to Maputo as support of the SCO. Within a week, the intervention transformed into an RRT with rotating staff, reaching a total of 11 experts and 3 secondments. The intervention focused on WASH, Shelter and Logistics and led to a project by Solidar Suisse exceeding the emergency phase.

Shortly after cyclone "Idai" hit, the UN declared a system-wide emergency for Mozambique. It was the first time, the new up-scaling protocol was put in place and the emergency in Mozambique became a showcase to test this new protocol.

Only several weeks later, on 25.04.2019, tropical cyclone "Kenneth" made landfall in the Cabo Delgado Province, accompanied by heavy rains, affecting nearly 400'000 people and leading to several cholera cases in the following days. A logistic secondment was provided to IOM.

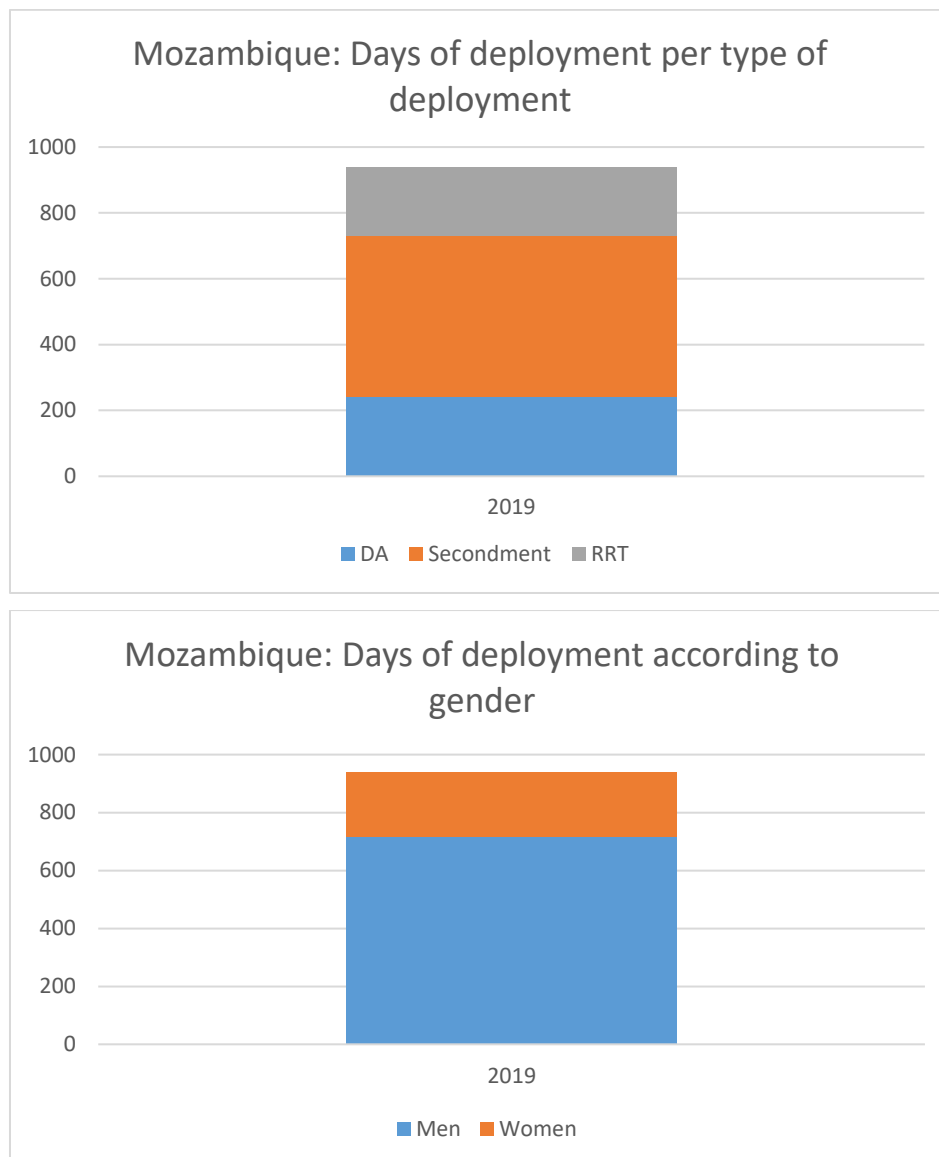
Both cyclones hit the two areas of conflict in Mozambique. Security was therefore high on the agenda during the relief operations. Humanitarian access in the north was challenging, as sending experts to the areas hit by the storm always included a security risk for them.

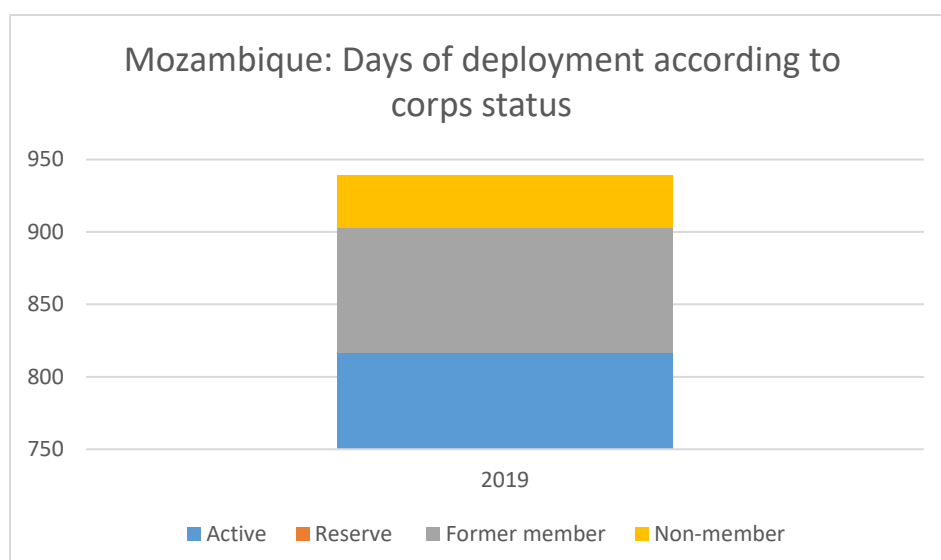
An RRT consisting of three SHA experts was sent to Pemba, providing equipment and know-how for preparing and providing drinking water. Linking the humanitarian response to the long-term rehabilitation phase, WASH-related knowledge-transfer to local partners, authorities and

staff of Helvetas and SolidarMed was realized, leading to the implementation of a specific project.

Both projects continued in 2019. The Helvetas/SolidarMed project ended in March 2020, leading to follow-up projects financed by other donors. The Solidar Suisse project continues until June 2021.

**Figure 27: Deployment characteristics in Mozambique 2019**





Source: Own graph from deployment data provided by the “Field Resources” Section

## Current situation

Mozambique is still recovering from the two cyclones. As they destroyed vast areas of fertile land, malnutrition is widespread. Hundreds of thousands of people still depend on food aid, while agriculture in the north has come to a standstill due to the insecurity of increasing clashes between government troops and islamist militias. The Cabo Delgado Province turned into a zone of violence as the conflict increased and many areas are no longer accessible for humanitarians. The region is also the epicentre of the COVID-19 outbreak in the country. Growing insecurity, poor infrastructure and health safety make it increasingly difficult to reach those in need.

Additionally, cholera and acute watery diarrhoea outbreaks are exacerbating the crisis in Cabo Delgado, where 25 health facilities are closed and over 500 health workers fled due to insecurity.

In addition to ruby and gold mining in Cabo Delgado, in 2010, large gas deposits were discovered off the coast of Cabo Delgado. They could contribute significantly to the economic development of the country, but so far, little of the wealth has reached the population and chances are high that international companies will be the ones profiting. Experts do not expect state revenue from natural gas production until 2028 at the earliest.

As Cabo Delgado is an increasingly fragile context, SDC HA hired a Programme Officer for Humanitarian Affairs. His tasks include support of the embassy, accompanying the end of the Solidar Suisse project and contributing to the strategic development of SDCs humanitarian engagement in Mozambique. The new person should participate in the different UN-cluster meetings, discussing amongst others the situation in Cabo Delgado, as the embassy does not have the necessary capacities. This could be an opportunity to show continuity of the Swiss political engagement in the peace finding process. For such contexts, profiles of access negotiation and mediation are becoming all the more important. OCHA sent an access expert to Mozambique mid-2020.

## Main observations and findings about the SHA deployments

### Strategic orientation (appropriateness of deployments and competencies)

- There had not been any activities of SDC HA in Mozambique prior to 2019. As Mozambique is a priority country of SDC with a SCO, the usual procedure was adapted.

In response to the “Idai” cyclone, SHA decided in close coordination with the then HoC to send a deployment labelled as “support to the embassy”. Their tasks included the assessment of most urgent humanitarian needs and options for engaging in the fields of WASH, Shelter and logistics. After a few days, the deployment turned into an RRT, carrying out a DA on WASH while setting up a recovery project with Solidar Suisse. Retrospectively, one could have sent an RRT right away.

- The situation after “Idai” was initially underestimated by SHA as well as other humanitarian actors including UN agencies, as confirmed information was scarce at the beginning, due to a total shut down of telephone and internet. Only in the second week after the landfall, it became clear, that international aid was welcome and that the needs of those affected far exceeded the government's capacities, leading to a slightly delayed, but after all very intense humanitarian response.
- The changed setup and the fact that the “Idai”-team was divided between three locations made coordination and communication sometimes difficult.
- Both RRTs/DAs were untypical, as they were involving Swiss NGOs as implementation partners. This was new and sometimes challenging but is overall seen as very successful.
- The focus on WASH, including emergency and recovery activities, was appropriate. The fast identification of long-term implementing partners led to higher sustainability of the SHA-initiated activities.
- The selection of geographical areas to work in was appropriate and showed, that it is possible to achieve a lot in the periphery (Chimoio) and also gain visibility. There were already many other donors in Beira, center of the landfall, leading to an oversupply of humanitarian actors. Through the secondments, one was still present at the center.
- The deployments led to a high degree of “Swissness” and visibility of the RRT in both Mozambique and Switzerland due to the collaboration with local Swiss partners.
- The experience and technical knowledge of SHA experts was valued and appreciated.
- The expertise of secondees was highly appreciated.
- There was a close strategic integration of the RRT “Kenneth” into the local development cooperation strategy with long-term partner Helvetas together with SolidarMed.
- Regarding cyclone “Kenneth”, the communication processes between RRT members, embassy and headquarters were well-established.

### **Main results achieved** (effectiveness, efficiency and sustainability)

The SHA response to cyclone “Idai” included four action lines: (i) An early delivery of shelter material to IOM including the provision of secondments, (ii) a Direct Action in the WASH sector over 4 weeks, (iii) a partnership including a project linking the emergency phase with early recovery, and (iv) financial contributions to strategic partners. Regarding shelter, SHA organized the sending and distribution of 1'000 tarpaulins and 500 shelter repair kits to 500 families in the Beira region by IOM. (ii) Additionally, five 42m<sup>2</sup> tents were passed to IOM, which installed them. These activities by IOM were supported by seconded SHA members (logistics, site planner). It was a key added value, that the site planner brought their own drone, which allowed them to do risk mapping (flooding) and prepare for the next raining season. As strategic engagement, WFP, having the log cluster lead, and MAF were supported with CHF 1 Mio and CHF 40'000. As the WASH-material was delayed, activities (framed as DA) started only in the end of March. Regarding WASH, 10'500 people in the Chimio region were provided clean drinking water.

The experiences from the “Idai” response were very useful for the rapid, effective and efficient setup of the response to the cyclone “Kenneth”, hitting Mozambique just weeks after “Idai”.

Various synergies could be used, such as contacts and networks established with the embassy, national and international actors. Thanks to the fact that WASH material was already in Mozambique, this could be handed over to partner organisations Helvetas, MSF and the local water authority. This second deployment was framed as RRT, including three SHA members deployed to the North of Mozambique, a region, where Helvetas was already working.

The activities included capacity-building measures with staff of implementation partners and local authorities on well-cleaning and rehabilitation, bacteriological and chemical water analysis for the water lab as well as on water disinfection and distribution. They further included assessments of IDP camps, of Ibo island, of the implementation of possible recovery projects in Mecufi as well as regarding a well-cleaning programme in Ancuabe and Chiure. Additionally, DAs included the distribution of material for water chlorination at household level on Ibo island via the local Ministry of Health for 1'150 people for one month. Further, water distribution was installed in the IDP camp Estadio Municipal through the RRT and Helvetas (run by Medair) reaching 1'000 people. Water distribution was also installed in the Cholera Treatment Centre in Pemba for 50 patients, run by the local government with support of MSF. Regarding the recovery project, staff of Helvetas and SolidarMed was trained in well-cleaning and rehabilitation. Furthermore, the logistic secondment to IOM managed the warehouse and the incoming goods, as well as the shelter material.

The post-Idai and post-Kenneth projects continued with the technical backstopping of a SHA WASH expert.

### **Perceived value added and/or obstacles**

The SHA activities in Mozambique after the cyclones are an interesting new modality to work with Swiss NGO as implementation partners. The decision to send small teams first in order to assess needs and possibilities for mid-term projects is positively highlighted. It should be mentioned that NGOs of other countries were considered as cooperation partners as well, but finally in both cases Swiss NGOs were chosen. The deployments showed, that in priority countries of SDC, it is possible and appropriate to set up recovery projects already in the acute phase and provide emergency relief at the same time. The humanitarian approach of SHA was successfully coordinated with the work of longstanding development organisations.

Regarding the subjects of nexus and localization, it is therefore key that the RRTs are locally embedded. As these deployments are very short-term, this is of even higher importance, including a swift search for local partners to continue the initiated activities.

Both after “Idai” and “Kenneth”, Swiss implementing partners were identified swiftly. Nevertheless, a clash of mindsets and attitudes between local and SHA experts could be observed: Local employees were themselves affected by the cyclones, whereas SHA experts did not know the local context, but were eager to start working quickly. Therefore, the integration of SHA expertise into locally operating organisations and institutions is key and worked exemplary in the “Kenneth” response together with Helvetas. It showed a successful nexus between the RRT and the recovery project, which was designed in line with SDC SC. To this end, experienced, well-connected local implementation partners are needed. This is further helpful since the setup of such a huge emergency coordination is especially in the beginning often chaotic. Additionally, language issues became a problem, with all government meetings taking place in Portuguese. Staff of local organisations took over the cluster meetings, leaving more time for the RRT experts for their other tasks. Although in this context it worked out, it has to be assessed in every single case whether the local organisations have the capacities to integrate SHA experts into their teams.

The first months were difficult for the Swiss NGOs normally engaged in developmental work. They were facing a sudden increase of workload, they were not ready for the pace and requirements of HA delivery and lacked experts and staff in general. Capacities of local organisations to run humanitarian programmes were overestimated, and an intensive capacity-

building effort was needed. Even though Helvetas was identified as implementation partner at an early point, they also had to involve a sub-contractor with expertise in the WASH sector. In future, the RRT could be complemented with an additional person, if mid-term projects with implementation partners are envisioned and SHA secondments to Swiss NGOs should be taken into consideration to alleviate this situation. Nevertheless, the Swiss NGOs involved increased their preparedness and gained important skills and self-confidence dealing with emergency situations.

Another difficulty was the complex context in the Cabo Delgado region due to political insecurities and security issues, leading to the impossibility to access some of the most affected regions. There was no reliable information about the needs and SHA experts as well as most other actors were unable to realize activities in those areas.

### **Management of deployments (i.e. relations with embassy/field offices)**

There was a good and intense exchange between SDC HA, the SCO and SHA experts even before the landfall of “Idai”, contributing to fast decisions and effective implementation of activities. Nevertheless, the close cooperation with the embassy was unusual to SHA experts and led to some confusion in the beginning. There was a strong exchange with the SCO in Maputo, but it was not always clear who had the lead. Communication and reporting processes had to be clarified. In the beginning, the team leader was in Maputo, so almost 1'000 km away from the team, which was complicating the information and coordination exchange. A classical RRT-setup could have led to a smoother process. The embassy and SCO had underestimated the logistical tasks they were facing after “Idai”. On the other side, their goodwill and knowledge were crucial for the success of the activities, as their competent advice allowed for an early planning of medium-term projects.

In Bern, the handing-over from the Einsatzzentrale to H-Africa was too soon and the latter was overburdened. Therefore, it is foreseen to engage an assistant programme officer in a similar future situation. The first SHA experts on the “Idai” RRT and secondees were a bit parachuted, as also local partners such as IOM were already overburdened. In both cases, the knowledge of the local context and stakeholders by the embassy and implementation partners were of great value.

The high rotation of SHA experts led to a lot of movement and coordination work. As mentioned, it would have been advisable to have the same team leader for the whole RRT. Also, for the future it would be advisable to have one team of SHA specialists for emergency relief and another team to set up the more complex recovery projects.

Regarding the “Kenneth” RRT, processes were smoother, as most of the material was already in the country and connections to other actors were already established.

In an SDC priority country, an early involvement of the embassy regarding the strategic orientation on medium-term impact is important to guarantee the sustainability of interventions. The embassy and SCO supported the SHA teams, the emergency projects and the backstopping missions in terms of security advice, logistics, country specific knowledge and facilitated contacts to the government, UN partners as well as local health centres and the local Red Cross.

Nevertheless, after the rapid response phase ended, the SCO could have taken more ownership and made more use of the new humanitarian-oriented projects to expand their portfolio (both geographically and thematically). The backstopping of projects resulting from RRTs was new and appreciated. Now the window of opportunity for WASH seems to be closing, as Cabo Delgado turned into a fragile context and the focus lies on IDPs and Protection.

## **Coordination with external partners** (local government, Swiss or multilateral organisations)

The coordination with external partners was very well rated. There was a fast decision after “Idai” to collaborate with IOM and Solidar Suisse. Close contacts with IOM, which had the co-lead of the shelter cluster and the lead of the camp management cluster, were already established. The collaboration of SHA experts with Swiss NGOs working in Mozambique over decades provided the important knowledge of local context (link to local communities and authorities, knowledge of the language, etc.). It also facilitated coordination with the WASH and Health Clusters, which was taken over by staff of Helvetas and SolidarMed, leaving the RRT members more time for other activities.

After the cyclones, local authorities were generally overburdened. Additionally, it was after the first cyclone hit and the first humanitarian aid was provided, at a moment, when local and humanitarian actors were tired, that the second cyclone hit. Nevertheless, there was a good cooperation with local water and health authorities after “Kenneth”. A water labor was handed over from SHA experts to local water authorities in Pemba. They were trained in its use, which led to increased capacities regarding water analysis.

## **Conclusions**

Regarding the support of SHA experts after the two cyclones in 2019 and the two projects that emerged, the following conclusions can be drawn:

- Having two teams of SHA experts: one for capacity building (recovery), one realizing own activities (emergency relief/direct action) is advisable.
- Overall, it is ideal to work with local (Swiss) NGOs, familiar with the local context, providing material and a short input/support by SHA and a long-term support, e.g. backstopping.
- Prolonging the RRT intervention to ensure a timely and continuous humanitarian assistance, giving the development partners time to adapt and recruit additional staff.
- Secondments to Swiss NGOs in the field can add value and is appreciated or wished for (especially for the transfer of emergency expertise).
- In an emergency situation, sufficient staff resources at HQ are key, i.e. an additional (assistant) programme officer.
- Any emergency operation should not be handed over from the Einsatzzentrale to the responsible geographic division at a too early stage, as this can overburden the division’s management and geographic desk.

In order to improve communication and increase preparedness, an exchange of experiences and knowledge by people working in humanitarian aid and development work would be helpful.



## Case study: Ukraine

### Background/HA needs and landscape

The armed conflict in Ukraine started in spring 2014 and is now in its seventh year. Several efforts were made by the OSCE to end the conflict but despite 29 ceasefires and an agreed roadmap by all conflict partners to end the conflict, progress has been marginal. The lack of a political solution means that insecurity as well as humanitarian and protection needs will continue to exist. At the end of 2019, more than 13'000 people had been killed. Approximately 0.2 million people still live in harsh conditions within 5 km or less from the “line of contact”, where, even though less frequently, shelling is still ongoing. The conditions for another 1.7 million people living in the Non-Government-Controlled Areas (NGCA) are similarly difficult.

As per the current Swiss Cooperation Programme 2020-2023 the support to Ukraine focuses on four domains: (i) Peace, Protection and Democratic Institutions; (ii) Sustainable Cities; (iii) Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises and Competitiveness; and (iv) Health. All domains are impacted by the humanitarian situation in eastern Ukraine and the programme aims at further expanding its activities into the east of the country. The overall goal of Switzerland's assistance to Ukraine is to promote cohesion, inclusive democratic governance and sustainable socio-economic development in favour of a more peaceful, equitable and prosperous society.

Since 2014, Swiss Humanitarian Aid (SDC HA) has allocated more than CHF 25 m to respond to humanitarian needs in eastern Ukraine. Initially, the Swiss support focused on assisting multilateral organisations. In 2015, it was decided to deliver Swiss HA in three fields of interventions: (i) support to humanitarian response and coordination on the ground through secondments and financial contributions to UN agencies (OCHA, UNICEF, UNHCR) and the ICRC; (ii) direct operations in the fields of health care and drinking water; and (iii) protection activities through contributions to partner organisations.

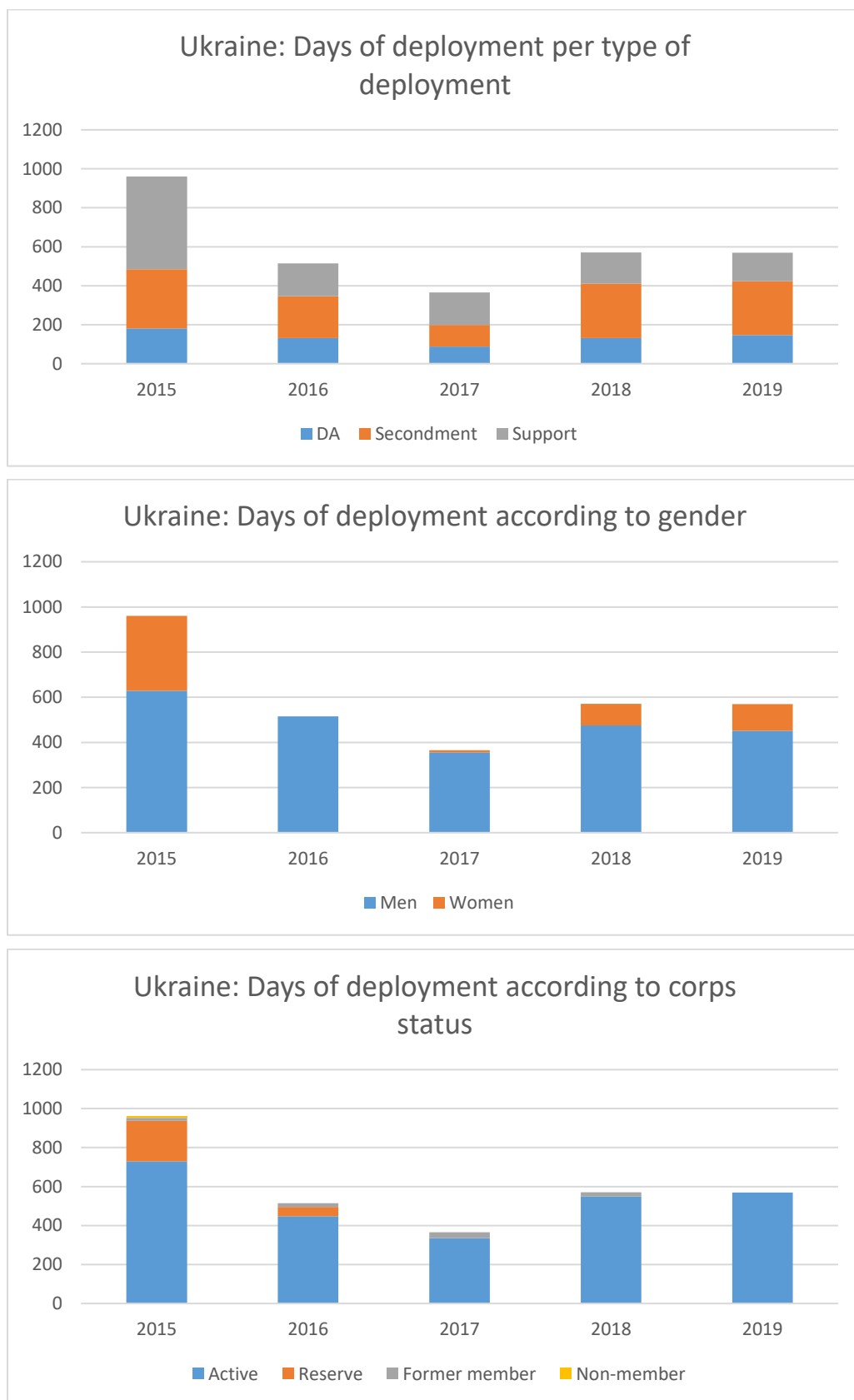
Advocacy for the most vulnerable is at the core of the Swiss engagement: Switzerland continues to promote the recognition of the humanitarian principles of humanity, impartiality, neutrality and independence in Ukraine. In accordance with the needs on the ground as assessed by the UN and Swiss fact-finding missions, Swiss humanitarian funds are allocated to partners in both the government-controlled and non-government-controlled areas.

### Overview of SHA Unit's interventions since 2015

Despite the conflict, the Vodadonbasa water utility in Donetsk – one of the largest of its kind in Europe – has continued to supply drinking water to about 4 million people on both sides of the “line of contact”. Switzerland started its support to Vodadonbasa in spring 2015, when poor water quality in the Donetsk region threatened to increase Hepatitis-A infections. In view of the difficult access for most humanitarian actors to the people in need in NGCA, SDC HA decided to carry out its activities in the fields of drinking water and health care in form of DAs.

As with all Swiss humanitarian interventions, the composition of the relief supplies of the transports was based on a near-term assessment of the existing needs of the affected population by fact-finding missions of teams of SHA experts. The last mission to the Donetsk and Luhansk regions in February/ March 2020 reconfirmed the correct use of the donated items and the need for humanitarian aid in the fields of drinking water (WASH) and health care.

Switzerland considers itself as being very much part of the humanitarian family in Ukraine and that the direct transports (convoys of up to 130 trucks are just one pillar of Swiss humanitarian assistance.

**Figure 28: Deployment characteristics in Ukraine 2015-2019**

Source: Own graph from deployment data provided by the "Field Resources" Section

## Current situation

The access across the “line of contact” to NGCA remains very difficult. The ability of people to access humanitarian goods and services has further deteriorated. The Government of Ukraine has introduced additional controls on crossing the ‘line of contact’, whilst the de facto authorities maintain severe restrictions on operations in the NGCA. The de facto authorities, despite continuous dialogue, also continue to require the mandatory ‘registration’ of humanitarian actors and programmes and Switzerland – as an exception – is not registered. Today, only ICRC and UN are operational in NGCA Donetsk and Luhansk with the consent of the Ukrainian Government.

The fact-finding mission 2020 visited four health institutions in GCA and four in NGCA, all located close to the “line of contact”. In general, the health facilities (hospitals) were assessed as in poor conditions. The access to the hospitals is still very difficult, even sometimes dangerous and the availability of qualified personal and/or spare parts are very limited.

Every day, Vodadonbasa is confronted by the same problem, namely to produce and deliver very large quantities of clean and safe water to millions of people with an obsolete and completely outdated infrastructure on both sides of the “line of contact”. There is also a need for chemicals that are unavailable on the territory of the Donetsk Oblast, such as sand for the filters, aluminium sulfate to clarify water, chlorine to disinfect it, etc. This involves either outside assistance or a modification of the treatment processes, which is a difficult task to carry out in a context of political instability, ongoing conflict, brain drain and lack of funds.

The shipment in September 2020 included the transport of medical and water treatment goods with 17 trucks and railway wagons transported 3’500 tons of quartz sand to filter stations of Vodadonbasa. As a matter of principle, the goods are procured locally, i.e. on the Ukrainian market.

## Main observations and findings about the SHA deployments

### Strategic orientation (appropriateness of deployments and competencies)

The following points were mentioned as main points for the strategic orientation of the SHA Unit deployments:

- The thematic areas selected (water and health) address real needs in Eastern Ukraine and offer good potential for synergies with the Swiss cooperation programme;
- The support has mainly focused on DAs and secondments, which complemented each other;
- The Swiss cooperation strategy for Ukraine 2015-2018/19 mentioned possible secondments to the UN and others but did not contain DAs. HA activities were implemented as so-called non-core programme activities. In the current cooperation programme 2020-2023 the new domain “Peace, protection and democratic institutions” was established in order to emphasize the WOGA approach addressing the nexus. However, DAs are not explicitly mentioned.
- The 5 EGs of the SHA Unit involved in the DA are WASH, Medical, Communication, Security, Logistics & Support thus covering a broad thematic orientation.

### Main results achieved (effectiveness, efficiency and sustainability)

The various chemicals, sand and electrolyze devices supplied for treating drinking water contributed significantly to ensuring that approximately 4 million people in the Donetsk region, on both sides of the contact line, had access to clean drinking water for up to one year. This

helped amongst others to avoid the outbreak of water-borne diseases and allow necessary hygiene measures to fight the current pandemic.

Through the delivery of more than 100 hypochloride devices on both sides of the “line of contact”, the use of liquid chlorine could be reduced as this is a highly toxic substance. The support extended to the water utility Vodadonbasa also helped to avoid a splitting of the utility into two parts (GCA and NGCA) which would have had negative consequences for water consumers. Thus, the support contributed to the sustainable service delivery.

Medical equipment and medicines were delivered to more than twenty hospitals in Donetsk and Luhansk regions on both sides of the “line of contact”, e.g. to continue life-saving treatment for several hundred cancer patients and patients with kidney failure. Thanks to the support, the rapid diagnosis of tuberculosis (TB) became again possible in the TB lab/dispensary in Luhansk, which was partially destroyed by shelling at the beginning of the conflict. This contributed to reduce the spreading of TB in the wider region.

Thanks to the medical equipment and medicines that were delivered since April 2019, among other things, chemotherapy for several hundred cancer patients was maintained, and at least one hundred patients with kidney failure received regular dialysis.

### **Perceived value added and/or obstacles**

Initially, the embassy/SDC was opposing the DA with transports over the “line of contact” because it was considered as too high risk and could represent a de facto recognition of the NGCA. Yet, the advantage considered was that thanks to the DA no intermediaries had to be used, which would have added costs and the risk of corruption.

Switzerland is the only bilateral donor assisting on both sides of the “line of contact”. This is only possible due to its neutral stand between the conflict parties. The peer review of the Swiss cooperation strategy 2015-18 concluded that the humanitarian assistance complements the Swiss portfolio well (SDC and SECO 2020). Yet, it was stated that international humanitarian actors could also effectively manage new or bigger Swiss contributions on both sides of the “line of contact” (e.g. ICRC and UN organisations).

The organisation of the medical/water transports requires a lot of complicated negotiations as no formal contacts are possible with partners in the NGCA. Thus, the administrative workload for the embassy for the procurement of the materials as well as the negotiations of access are substantive. Yet, the recent visit of the Swiss and Ukrainian Presidents, Simonetta Sommaruga and Volodymyr Zelenskyy to Vodadonbasa has gained a lot of visibility not only in CH but also in the [Ukraine](#). As a result, Switzerland could enhance its profile as donor in the water and humanitarian sector in Ukraine.

The SHA experts are well qualified, experienced and know the situation in similar Swiss and other transition contexts. Furthermore, they are familiar with the day-to-day management of water utilities and practice as doctors in hospitals. Thus, people can discuss among peers. Passive Russian was a requirement for the selection as SHA expert for this deployment. This has led to a male bias of the SHA team. The stable composition of the team over the years has contributed to a good spirit and needed confidence with partners, especially in NGCA. On the other hand, it was mentioned that there are many well-trained and experienced people available in Ukraine who could be trained by SHA experts during (short) stays to take over more responsibilities.

A major problem is the fact that only limited monitoring is possible in the NGCA and that the actual utilisation of medical supplies is not always clear because the visits of the SHA experts have to be kept very short.

The original RRT engagement has transformed into a longer support (DA) and represents an example of the efforts to work on the nexus, although the supplies are planned on a rolling basis from year to year.

## **Management of deployments (i.e. relations with embassy/field offices)**

There is now a good exchange and understanding between the SHA experts and the embassy. All secondments and missions for the DA had regular briefings with the Ambassador and SCO staff. The embassy is actively promoting the exchange with SHA experts in order to benefit from synergies.

Communication issues mentioned regarding the SHA deployments are:

- The secondments require a clear expectation management, as short stays of 6 months allow only for limited scope of interaction in a new context. Such a short duration also poses limits to fully exploit the potential of the given position;
- Better cooperation between SCO staff and SHA experts could avoid misunderstandings and enhance the programme's coherence (e.g. supply of medical material can contradict with standards used in the health domain, such as using Western or Russian standards);
- The administration of the DA is cumbersome for the SCO and the workload grossly underestimated;
- The secondments offered valuable insights how the organisation (UN-OCHA) works. An obstacle noted in one MDPN is the hierarchic structure and highly formalized working environment. All deployments could be done without major problems, except one that faced visa issues because of his normal passport and overstay (90 days restriction);
- Seconded staff noted that a lot of resources are needed to clarify misunderstandings and to deal with power plays in the UN organisation. Most ToR were adequate but in one case a clearer ToR and reflecting reality would have helped. They also regretted the lack of field trips (especially NGCA), only in one case was this possible;
- Good support from the SCO/embassy is noted across all secondments, some could use the good standing of the Swiss cooperation programme for new professional contacts.

## **Coordination with external partners (local government, Swiss or multilateral organisations)**

The Swiss humanitarian transports to the conflict region are closely coordinated with the competent national authorities, primarily the Ministry of Reintegration of Temporarily Occupied Territories, but also the Ministry of Social Policy, the Fiscal Services, and the Ministry of Defence with its Joint Forces Operation. The embassy maintains close contacts with those agencies.

The DA of SDC HA is aligned with the cluster objectives/indicators of WHO and UNICEF (WASH). An especially active and fruitful exchange has been taking place with the WASH cluster, where WASH activities with Vodadonbasa are also coordinated. Big efforts are also required in negotiations with local partners on both sides of the "line of contact" in order to make the supply to the NGCA possible. All actions were well-coordinated with UN agencies and OSCE and involved many stakeholders for each transport.

The secondments to UN organisations are considered as very valuable as this allowed to build bridges between the UN agencies and Swiss actors.

## Conclusions

Regarding the support of SHA experts in the frame of the Swiss cooperation programme to Ukraine the following conclusions can be drawn:

- The support by SHA experts in the context of the medical and water supply transports as well as the secondments are need-based and implemented in a politically difficult context. The activities complement the other Swiss domains well.
- The activities have added value, but after 7 years and 12 transports there remains the issue of sustainability of this support. The supplies are much welcomed but might contribute only marginally to a broader systemic change. In terms of nexus approach the options for more systemic change especially for the Vodadonbasa water utility need to be addressed soon, especially regarding the GCA. The issue is protracted as the utility services customers on both sides of the “line of contact” hampering the prospects for better governance because of the conflict and diverging political interests. Furthermore, the financial sustainability is at risk because the impoverished population has limited purchasing power and cannot afford higher tariffs.
- The argument of added visibility has so far been valued stronger than the aim of sustainability. After 7 years, a phasing-out or handing over to other actors could be options. Yet, the convoys with flagged trucks – the visibility was also contributing to enhanced security – provide an excellent promotion of Swiss HA.
- A high-risk factor are plans to split the utility, the last one working on both sides of the “line of contact”. A split into a GCA and a NGCA company would hamper future operations. In winter 2019/20 the de facto authorities wished to develop a roadmap for a nationalization of the company and the continued support by the Swiss has reduced this risk.
- Such deployments require a high level of flexibility to overcome logistical and political obstacles. For example, the COVID-19 required the supply of additional protection material to the hospitals during the latest shipment.
- The nexus idea is there and followed up but a concrete transformation of a DA into a longer-term project remains challenging and is hampered by the current political blockade (with Russia as a main driver of the agenda in the NGCA).

## Annex 8 Comparison of other organisational models

Table 15: Comparison of different organisational models

	Background	Advantage	Disadvantage
GIZ	<p>Although GIZ is owned by the state, as a company (GMBH) it is not a federal enterprise, but a commissioner of ministries. GIZ act as employer in the market, not as a ministry.</p> <p>The main commissioning party is the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ), with more than 85% of the business volume. In 2019, GIZ generated a business volume of around EUR 3.1 billion. 22,199 employees, almost 70 per cent national staff, worked in around 120 countries (while the BMZ has just around 1'500 employees).</p>	<p>The employees are not civil servants and can also be dismissed in the long term if necessary. This allows GIZ to maintain a high degree of flexibility, especially in the light of constantly changing circumstances and needs.</p> <p>If they were a state body, the permanent staff (as civil servants) would be significantly higher, which would not be communicable to the public.</p> <p>Due to their proximity to the BMZ, they are very familiar with the commercial processing, with the demanding administrative requirements.</p> <p>There is a clear division of roles between the contracting authority and the executive body. This can also be seen in the commitment of a large international company, which audits GIZ for three years at a time from a commercial and content perspective.</p>	<p>The evaluation practice is very accountability-oriented, focusing on individual projects rather than on a programming approach, which makes learning difficult.</p>
NORCAP	<p><b>NORCAP</b> was created 1991 by <b>NRC</b> and since then developed as a big international roster, a global provider of expertise to the humanitarian, development and peacebuilding sectors. With over 1000 experts, NORCAP gather expertise from all around the world, from first-time responders to senior experts with years of experience. One of the key strengths is the diversity of nationalities and language skills among the experts. A total of 101 nationalities are represented in the various teams and special</p>	<p>A wide variety of experts representing 101 countries from different sectors are available for many UN and national organisations.</p> <p>Secondment missions are carried out according to the quality and skills of the</p>	

	<p>projects. NORCAP is <b>seconding</b> experts on demand to the UN, regional organisations and national governments.</p> <p>UNHCR, UNICEF and OSCE were the organisations that received the most support in 2018. NORCAP also work with regional partners including the African Union (AU) and the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) and national organisations and stakeholders.</p> <p>NORCAP's activities are financed by contributions from various donors. The main donors are the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, UK Department for International Development and European Commission's Humanitarian Aid and Civilian Protection.</p> <p>NORCAP also receives resources from the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA), UN agencies, the Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation (Norad), the US Department of state – Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration, USAID, <b>SDC</b> and various other donors. Some deployments are cost shared or fully funded by the hosting organisation.</p>	<p>candidates, without any own interests by the sending organisation from Norway.</p>	
Irish Aid	<p>The <b>Irish Rapid Response Corps</b> is one of the two key elements from the Ireland's Rapid Response Initiative and was first established in 2006. It is a <b>roster</b> of highly experienced and specialised personnel, for deployments at short notice to emergency situations, as a <b>secondment to four UN Partner organisations</b> (UNHCR, WFP, OCHA and UNICEF) within the sectors such as: protection; logistics; construction; water and sanitation; civil military coordination; information management and humanitarian coordination.</p> <p>Approximately every 4 years new people are recruited. The last intake took place in 2018 and 55 people were added to the roster. There are currently 120 people registered in the roster, of whom more than 70% are not Irish.</p> <p>Every two years the roster is reviewed and people who have not been on duty are dismissed, if they cannot give any good reasons.</p> <p>In 2019 23 secondments took place, most of them lasting 6-9 months.</p>	<p>The Irish roster places itself entirely at the service of the UN organisations and tries to support them with personnel where there are the most shortages, without any self-interest.</p> <p>Due to the bi-annual review, the roster mainly includes people who are ready and suitable for a secondment.</p>	<p>The link with the Irish state is limited and mainly established through two training weeks (in many cases the experts are also members of other rosters).</p>
ICRC	<p>For the ICRC, the readiness to respond rapidly to new disasters is very important. Until 2019, there was a <b>Rapid Deployment Mechanism (RDM)</b>, an <b>internal roster</b> for this, where individual employees could apply. In the event of an acute situation, one could be withdrawn from the actual job for a maximum of 7 weeks. But that only worked to a limited extent, people were either on holiday or otherwise already overloaded. There were many enrolled, but when it came down to it, only a few were ready for action. The ICRC was unable to extract and to deploy RD staff in less than a week and the majority was deployed from operational delegations and not from HQ. For this reason, a <b>"Rapid Deployment Standing Team"</b> has now been established since last year. "This system is comprised of human and material resources which</p>	<p>The best and most experienced people with many different skills are immediately available for new tasks after a disaster, if necessary, also for a longer period.</p>	<p>A costly investment, especially if no major disasters occur (will be mitigated by other tasks that the team can be done over in the meantime)</p> <p>Limited number of persons when several (major) disasters occur simultaneously</p>



	<p>includes 2 different types of teams and allows either for one big or two smaller simultaneous surge responses, and which combine/modulate the existing RD roster together with a standing team.” The RDS Team consists of only 9 persons, all are experienced (min. 5 years field experience) and all are always available and have no other binding tasks. All members have a different function, e.g. as team leader, as expert in Wash, Protection, Health, Administration etc.</p> <p>If necessary, they are on site in 1-2 days and can immediately relieve the existing team.</p>		
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## Annex 9 Websites and documents

### Important websites on HA issues and trends

ALNAP: <https://www.alnap.org/>

Core Humanitarian Standards: <https://corehumanitarianstandard.org/the-standard/statements-of-support>

Humanitarian Practice Network (HPN): <https://odihpn.org/>

PHAP: <https://phap.org/>

SHA Unit: <https://www.eda.admin.ch/deza/en/home/activities-projects/activities/humanitarian-aid/swiss-humanitarian-aid-unit.html>

SPHERE: <https://spherestandards.org/wp-content/uploads/Sphere-Handbook-2018-EN.pdf>

The Grand Bargain: <https://interagencystandingcommittee.org/grand-bargain>

The New Humanitarian: <https://www.thenewhumanitarian.org/>

UN-OCHA: <https://www.unocha.org/>

### General and context related documents

ALNAP (2016): Evaluation of Humanitarian Action Guide

CINFO (2020): International Cooperation Key Observations on the Swiss Labour Market 2010-2018

Development Initiatives (2019): Key trends in global humanitarian assistance

Donini, Antonio (2018): Die Zukunft der humanitären Hilfe: Gedanken zur Unparteilichkeit', Centre for Humanitarian Action (CHA), Berlin

FAO (2020): Building resilience in protracted crisis

HPG (2020): Report, Grand Bargain annual independent report 2020

HPG (2016): Planning from the future: Is the Humanitarian System Fit for Purpose?

IARAN (2018): Paris: from voices to choices, expanding crisis-affected people's influence over aid decisions

ICRC (2019) Concept Note Rapid Deployment Standing Team

Irish Aid, Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (2016): Ireland's Rapid Response Initiative

McKinsey (2008): Enduring Ideas: The 7-S framework

NORCAP (2020): Annual Report 2020: <https://www.nrc.no/resources/annual-reports/norcap-annual-report-2019/>

OECD (2017): Localising the response, world humanitarian summit putting policy into practice

Swiss Federal Council (2020): Dispatch for the Swiss International Cooperation Strategy 2021-2024  
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