



Audit of the federal subsidy given to the Geneva Centre for the Democratic Control of Armed Forces

Directorate of Political Affairs and Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation of the FDFA

Key facts

The Geneva Centre for the Democratic Control of Armed Forces (DCAF) is one of the three Geneva centres funded by the Confederation active in the areas of politics, peace and security. This foundation was created in October 2000 on Switzerland's initiative and is a private-law foundation with its headquarters at the Maison de la Paix. In 2015, the federal contribution of almost CHF 15 million given to the DCAF was based on the Federal Act on International Development Co-operation and Humanitarian Aid.

The Swiss Federal Audit Office (SFAO) audited the legal framework, the strategy, the control environment, the processes and project management to evaluate the management and the lawful appropriation of the subsidy given to the DCAF.

Exponential development and international recognition

Since it was established, the DCAF has seen a marked increase in its financing sources and in its human resources. Its budget has increased from CHF 2 million to CHF 35 million and its workforce has increased from 10 to 160 people. It has 63 member states, compared to 23 at the outset, and 6 countries with permanent observer status. On the donor side, 30 countries are now involved, versus one country at the outset. There has also been strong growth in the DCAF's deployment activities abroad. The Centre has been able to carve out a position for itself and exploit its "niche market" to ultimately achieve world renown as one of the main centres of excellence in the areas of security sector governance and security sector reform.

The audit took place when the Director and founder of the DCAF was retiring to make way for his successor. The SFAO noted that the Centre's divisions developed their own strategies. This development was at the expense of a strategic, centralised vision.

Fractional monitoring and a need for improved project management

Swiss financing of the DCAF is provided through multi-year framework credits. Monitoring is carried out by a steering committee made up of members from the Federal Department of Foreign Affairs (FDFA) and the Federal Department of Defence, Civil Protection and Sport (DDPS). In the SFAO's opinion, this monitoring still needs to be improved. It recommends defining the information and the existing tools more specifically, in particular in terms of rules regarding creating and using reserves, transparency of funding sources and their use, and deviations from the budget.

The DCAF must improve not only its administrative project management but also contract management. At the time of the audit, a service level agreement did not exist with the DCAF office in Ljubljana.

Original text in French