

**Grand Bargain in 2020:
Annual Self Report – Narrative Summary**

Name of Institution:

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

**Point of Contact (please provide a name, title and email to
enable the consultants to contact you for an interview):**

**Regina Gujan, Deputy Head, Multilateral Affairs Division,
Humanitarian Aid and SHA, regina.gujan@eda.admin.ch**

Date of Submission: 16 February 2021

(NB. Please limit your answer to no more than **5 pages in total** – anything over this word limit will not be considered by ODI in their analysis. Please respond to all of the questions below.)

Grand Bargain in 2020

Question 1: Reflecting on the information you have provided in the Excel spreadsheet, please highlight the 2 or 3 key outcomes or results relating to the Grand Bargain that your institution achieved in 2020?

Simplified reporting

SDC conducted a broad internal dialogue amongst both the humanitarian aid department and the development cooperation department to present the 8+3 reporting template and discuss the introduction of this format across the whole of SDC. This was initiated with the support of the Swiss Cooperation Office in Amman, who was involved in the pilot project of the 8+3 template. The response was largely positive both amongst colleagues from the humanitarian and development departments, although it became clear that further discussions and possibly an amendment of the template is required for application in development cooperation, since the template is designed for humanitarian projects. In November 2020, a recommendation for the use of the 8+3 as standard template was sent by SDC Senior Management to all humanitarian staff in HQ and field offices. As a follow-up, staff trainings in the field started on the use of the template. SDC is keeping a flexible reporting requirement, since this offers the greatest possibility to accommodate different projects from a range of different actors. However, whenever feasible, the 8+3 reporting template is recommended to be used for humanitarian projects.

Localisation

Although the overall direct funding percentage has not dramatically increased and there remains work to be done in this regard, localization as an overall topic has seen an uptick in both internal and external discussions and messaging, including through advocacy and inclusion of localization as a topic in different fora outside of the Grand Bargain. On the financing side, the contribution to pooled funds has increased to 7% of overall funding. Internally, localization was one topic at the Swiss Humanitarian Aid annual retreat with staff from both HQ and the field attending virtually in August 2020. Trainings and inputs on localization were held with geographical divisions and - for the first time - with the rapid deployment team, to discuss the growing importance of local actors and partnership development with local actors before, during and after an emergency.

Question 2: How has your institution contributed to the advancement of gender equality and women's empowerment¹ in humanitarian settings through its implementation of the Grand Bargain? What results/outcomes have been achieved in this regard? (please outline specific initiatives or changes in practice and their outcomes/results). Please refer to the Guidelines for definitions of Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment, which are included in this self-report template package.

¹ Refer to the IASC definitions of gender equality and women empowerment, available [here](#).

Gender equality is a cross-cutting objective and priority under Switzerland's new international cooperation strategy 2021 – 2024. Furthermore, women's participation is a priority in the new Strategy of the FDFA on gender equality and women's rights and measured in development and humanitarian programs through specific indicators.

On specific topics, Switzerland is supporting the integration of gender as a cross-cutting topic. For example: through the Geneva-based Cash-Working Group, Switzerland supported efforts to ensure better synergy, development and cross-fertilization of gender within the Cash Modality.

Other examples include the increased funding support to GenCap and the support of internal gender focal point trainings at OCHA. Switzerland is a signatory of and active advocate for the call to Action on Protection from GBV in emergencies, which calls for, among others, GBV prevention and response services that are implemented in each phase of an emergency, including needs assessments.

Question 3: How has the humanitarian-development nexus been strategically mainstreamed in your institutional implementation of the Grand Bargain commitments? Please explain how your institution has linked commitments 10.1 - 10.5 with other commitments from other workstreams.

Switzerland's new international cooperation strategy 2021 – 2024 is providing one single framework for all international cooperation actors, including humanitarian aid. As a consequence, country offices include all Swiss cooperation actors under one roof in order to implement this nexus strategy at the field level. At headquarters, an action plan and structural review is used to implement this strategy. It is following objectives that embrace the nexus along the lines of 1) contributing to sustainable economic growth 2) addressing climate change and its effects 3) saving lives, ensuring quality basic services and reducing forced displacement and irregular migration and 4) promoting peace, the rule of law and gender equality. The strategy aims at making use of the different tools available for achieving a sustainable humanitarian – development – peace nexus.

Switzerland works with four years Regional Strategic Guidance and Country Programmes, which follow a "Whole-of-Government" approach. Where applicable, common goals for country and regional programmes are formulated. Always taking into account the specificities of each context, humanitarian, development and peace building staff work hand in hand in country/field offices where presence of all divisions exists. At HQ, common committees of humanitarian and development staff jointly decide over the approval of projects ("operational committees").

Grand Bargain 2016-2020: Overall achievements and remaining gaps

Question 4: What are the 2-3 key achievements/areas of most progress by your institution since 2016? Please report on your institutional progress for the

period 2016-2020, **even** if your institution did not become a signatory until after 2016.

Quality funding

Since 2016, SDC has increased multi-year funding from 19% to 29% of its overall humanitarian funding. Furthermore, the share of non-earmarked and softly earmarked contributions rose from 34% to 38%, highlighting the importance that quality funding is given within SDC.

Harmonized reporting

SDC has always had a flexible approach to reporting, without a fixed required template to be used. With the introduction of the 8+3 template in 2019, SDC has kept that flexibility, while recommending the use of the 8+3 template as a standard whenever possible and desirable. This allows for a maximum flexibility for partners including local actors and reducing the administrative burden for these actors significantly. Since SDC mostly provides contributions to co-founded projects, this flexibility has an amplified effect on reducing the burden for actors that have to report to several donors on the same project.

Localisation

SDC has co-convened the localisation workstream 2 of the Grand Bargain over the last years together with IFRC. Jointly, the investment of resources and time in this workstream has resulted in the beginning of significant shifts within the humanitarian system on the topic of localisation. While direct funding to local actors remains the main goal of the localisation process, progress has also been made in regards to intermediaries such as the country-based pooled funds that have increased their funding to local actors significantly. Although SDC's direct funding has not reached the commitment made in 2016 yet, internal institutional processes have been kick-started to strengthen the capacity strengthening of local actors and increasingly working directly with local actors. Furthermore, local actors are also increasingly supported in SDC's rapid response efforts.

Question 5: What, in your institutional view, have been the main achievements of the Grand Bargain signatories, as a collective, since 2016?

Please indicate specific commitments, thematic or cross-cutting issues or workstreams where you think most progress has been made collectively by signatories.

The Grand Bargain is a unique structure that brings together all stakeholders of the humanitarian ecosystem, including civil society, UN agencies, the red-cross / red-crescent movement and donors. This unique structure allows the Grand Bargain to find opportunities and entry points for systematic change that – once agreed – have a broad buy-in across the system. The notion of working jointly towards a common goal while taking into account each other's strengths and constraints gives the Grand Bargain a special importance amongst other coordination and multilateral bodies.

Question 6: What has the Grand Bargain not been able to achieve in its five year tenure? What outstanding obstacles, gaps, areas of weakness still

remain after five years, in terms of improving the efficiency and effectiveness of humanitarian action? Please indicate specific commitments, thematic or cross-cutting issues or workstreams where you think there remain key gaps or obstacles.

One key obstacle has been to secure the political buy-in for systemic change, not only by donors and governments, but also in leadership of other organisations. The often cross-cutting priorities that the Grand Bargain aims to address have also been worked on in other multilateral processes, leading to some duplication of efforts in some cases. Furthermore, some of the commitments made in 2016 were very technical and focused only on efficiency gains, thus neglecting some systemic cultural shifts necessary to create an environment, where efficiency gains and the achievement of the commitments are made possible.

Risk and the Grand Bargain

Question 7a: How has risk (financial, operational, reputational, etc) affected your institution's implementation of the core commitments since you became a signatory to the Grand Bargain?

The sharing of risks and the institutional appetite for taking and accepting risks is key to the implementation of many commitments of the Grand Bargain. Global political trends and tendencies to increased, extremely detailed accountability on the flow of funding for example have led to risk averse behaviour of many actors within the system. Furthermore, criminalization of humanitarian action for example by unintended effects of counter-terrorism measures have hampered the implementation of principled humanitarian action in some contexts and have contributed to de-risking strategies by financial institutions and other actors, which is constraining the operational response in some contexts and is creating a non-conducive environment when it comes to risk taking overall.

Question 7b: How has your institution sought to mitigate or address these risks to enable implementation of the core commitments?

SDC has a field presence in many contexts, which allows for a personal and close follow-up related to risks in partnerships and funding agreements. This also allows for the engagement in real partnerships beyond financial contributions and the inclusion of feedback from partners and affected populations in advocacy, partnership agreements and other relevant documents. Mitigation of risks also includes supporting partners, for example through the deployment of experts to partners – including local actors – to share capacity, learn from each other's strengths and strengthen partner's capacity in managing projects, including risks associated with them.