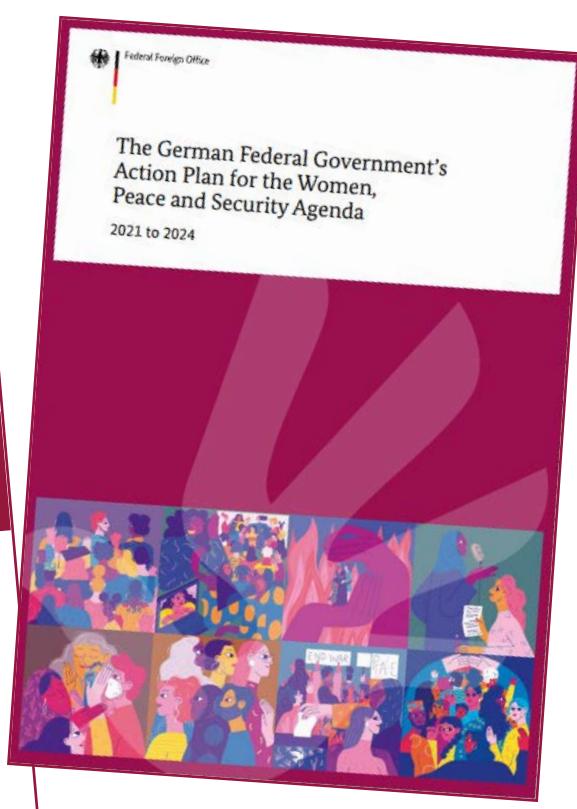
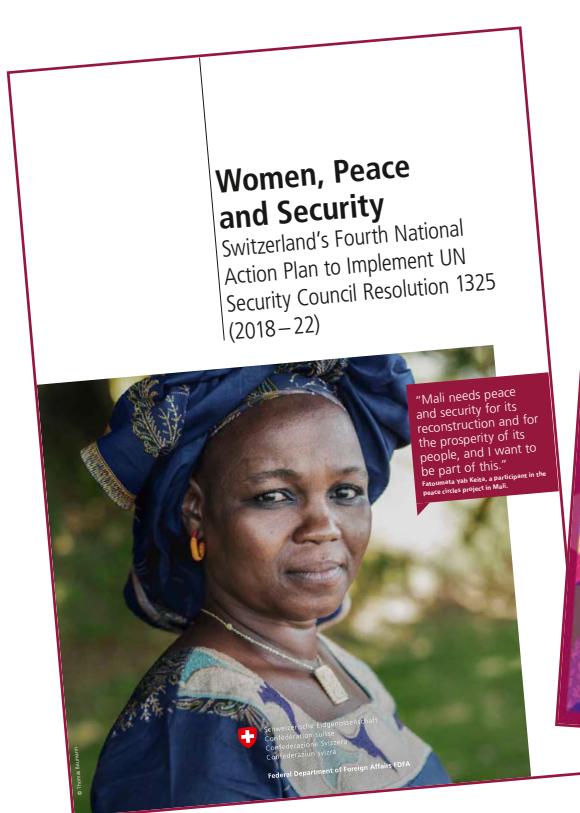




Women, Peace and Security

Report on the Peer Review of Switzerland's fourth National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security (NAP 1325)



Executive summary

Germany and Switzerland are currently implementing their third and fourth national action plans (NAPs) on the Women, Peace and Security (WPS) agenda based on UN Security Council Resolution 1325 and its nine subsequent resolutions. Identifying best practices by sharing experiences in developing, applying and evaluating each country's NAP can advance know-how on both sides.

The German and Swiss approaches, at the operational level in particular, are different. Exchanges are carried out at different intervals and, in Germany, using a variety of formats. Monitoring has also proven challenging for both countries: although project implementation can be assessed directly, impact measurement at the strategic policy level is more complex. In Germany, one solution has been to categorise measures by estimated duration (short, medium and long-term) so that the level at which the measures should be taken and the process to monitor them can be defined more clearly. The role of civil society in developing and applying the NAP 1325 is different in the two countries, and there is also a certain degree of tension because of the dual role civil society groups play as both joint implementing partner and external monitor.

Germany and Switzerland face similar issues and cross-cutting challenges in their implementation of the NAP 1325, in particular:

- ▶ Gender-sensitive conflict analyses, which should be the basis for all activities
- ▶ Integrating the gender dimension and marginalised groups as well as all stakeholders in all the phases of a peace process, from conflict analysis to negotiations to implementation and beyond (these two major aspects also encompass the core principles of conflict sensitivity and 'do no harm')
- ▶ Linking the different levels of action and collaborative efforts inclusive of all genders, which is key to implementing the WPS agenda effectively
- ▶ Effective participation: the inclusion of women cannot be measured by numbers only, but must be based on the substance of that inclusion.

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List of abbreviations

AA	Federal Foreign Office (Germany)
PHRD	Peace and Human Rights Division, FDFA (Switzerland)
BMFSFJ	Federal Ministry for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth (Germany)
BMI	Federal Ministry of the Interior and Community (Germany)
BMJ	Federal Ministry of Justice (Germany)
BMVg	Federal Ministry of Defence (Germany)
BMZ	Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (Germany)
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women
SDC	Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (Switzerland)
FDFA	Federal Department of Foreign Affairs (Switzerland)
FDHA	Federal Department of Home Affairs (Switzerland)
FDJP	Federal Department of Justice and Police (Switzerland)
IO	International organisation
KOFF	Swiss Platform for Peacebuilding
LGBTIQ+	Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex, queer and all other gender identities
NAP 1325	National Action Plan for the Implementation of UN Security Resolution 1325 and the nine subsequent resolutions
SGBV	Sexual and gender-based violence
SWISSINT	International peace support (Swiss Armed Forces International Command)
DDPS	Federal Department of Defence, Civil Protection and Sport (Switzerland)
WPS	Women, Peace and Security

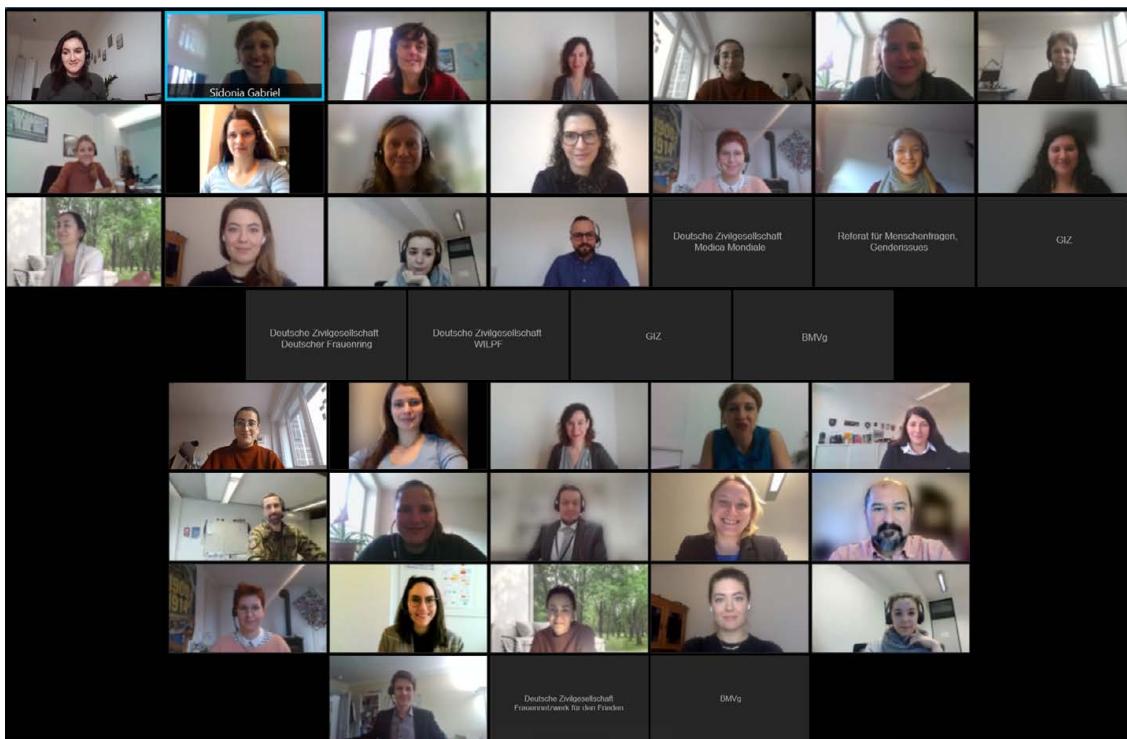
Introduction

Switzerland is currently carrying out its fourth national action plan for the implementation of UN Security Council Resolution 1325 and its nine subsequent resolutions (NAP 1325¹). Goal 5 of Switzerland's NAP 1325 on multilateral and bilateral commitment provides for exchanges with partner countries in order to share best practices with a view to improving implementation of the WPS agenda. Under this goal, the **evaluation** of the current NAP 1325 is therefore being carried out as a **peer review**.

The report summarises the key findings of the peer review carried out by Germany and Switzerland in autumn 2021. The peer review aims to evaluate the effectiveness and impact of the measures taken under the German and Swiss NAPs so as to improve implementation strategies for the WPS agenda. The first part of the report deals with procedural issues. The NAP's **effectiveness** is assessed based on monitoring, coordination between the agencies involved, and the inclusion of civil society. The second part of the report addresses substantive issues, including the **impact** of the NAPs. The three main topics are: the participation of women in peace processes, protection from sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV), and security policy. Key findings and recommendations are listed at the end of each section.

Methodology

Two days of virtual talks were held on 2 November and 9 December 2021. Several German ministries (AA, BMZ, BMVg) and Swiss departments (FDFA, DDPS) responsible for the NAP 1325 took part in the exchange; the second day also included representatives of German and Swiss civil society. The findings and recommendations on effectiveness resulting from these exchanges are addressed to the FDFA and Swiss interdepartmental working group (IDWG 1325).



Participants of the online meeting for the peer review of the NAP 1325

1 In the present report, 'NAP 1325' refers to the national action plan for the implementation of UN Security Council Resolution 1325 and its nine subsequent resolutions.

National Actionplans 1325

UN Security Council Resolution 1325 (UNSCR 1325) was adopted in 2000. Primary responsibility for incorporating the obligations arising from UNSCR 1325 and its nine subsequent resolutions into national policies and legislation lies with individual governments, which is where NAPs to implement the WPS agenda come into play. Germany is currently carrying out its third NAP (2021–24) and Switzerland its fourth (2018–22).

Both work together with domestic civil society and are committed to mainstreaming the WPS agenda in their administrations. At the same time, the NAPs in Germany and Switzerland, neither of which is itself in a conflict, include mainly foreign policy measures. The 2015 Global Study on WPS² highlighted the importance of strengthening synergies between the WPS agenda and national human rights protection systems, which are based on international conventions (especially in view of the amendments introduced to the CEDAW by general recommendation no. 30³). Germany and Switzerland are therefore using the NAP 1325 to strengthen the links between the WPS agenda and [CEDAW](#).

NAP 1325 structure

The German and Swiss NAPs have a similar structure: the main topics are formulated as objectives, which are then divided into targets. Each target includes a list of concrete measures and the name of the organisational unit bearing the main responsibility for implementing the target.

	Germany	Switzerland
Current NAP 1325	The German Federal Government's Action Plan for the Women, Peace and Security Agenda (2021–24): link	Switzerland's Fourth National Action Plan to Implement UN Security Council Resolution 1325 (2018–22): link

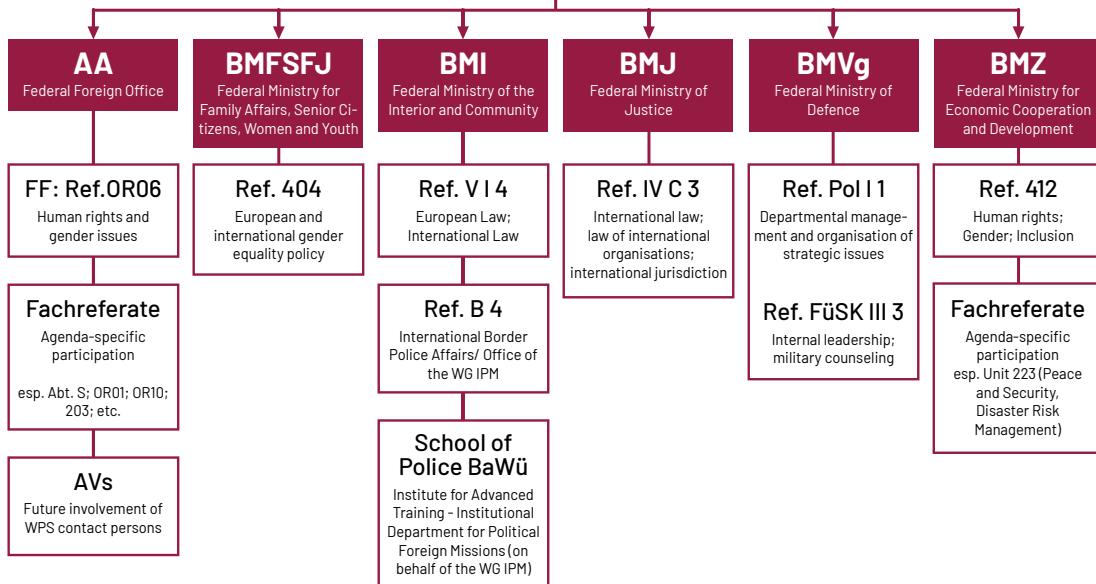
Stakeholders

Both Germany and Switzerland use a whole-of-government approach to developing the NAP 1325. This means that different ministries and departments make up the respective 1325 working groups, which bear the main responsibility for developing and implementing the NAPs.

² UN Women. Preventing Conflict, Transforming Justice, Securing the Peace. A Global Study on the Implementation of UNSCR 1325. UN Women. New York: 2015. [Link](#).

³ United Nations. General recommendation no. 30 on women in conflict prevention, conflict and post-conflict situations. CEDAW. 2013. [Link](#).

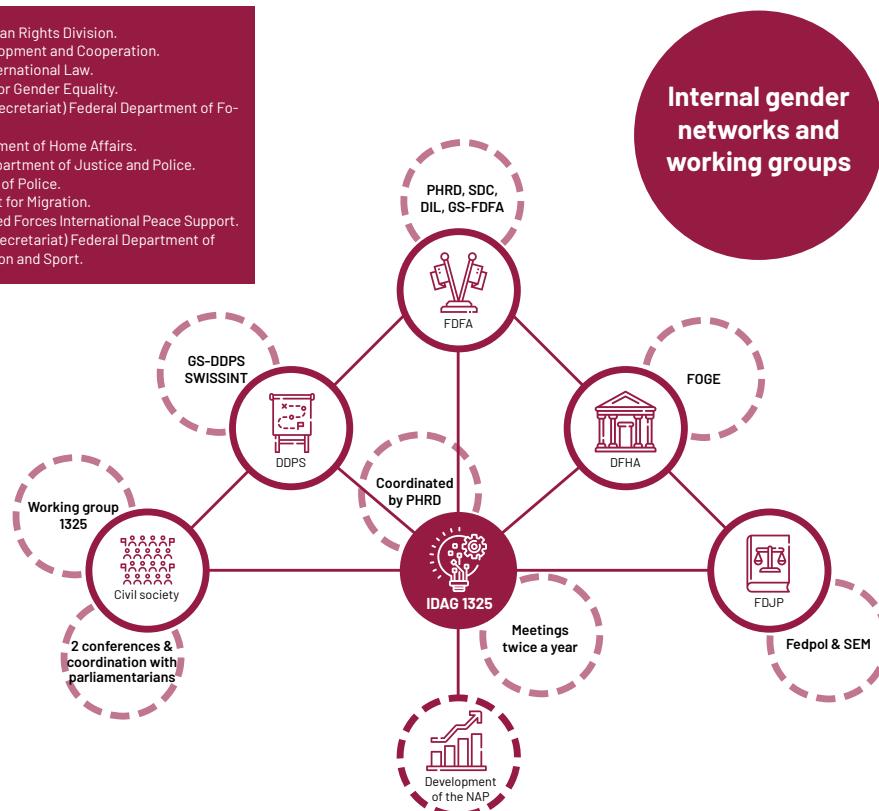
IMAG 1325



The German Interministerial Working Group (IMAG 1325) consists of six ministries (AA, BMFSFJ, BMI, BMJ, BMVg, BMZ).

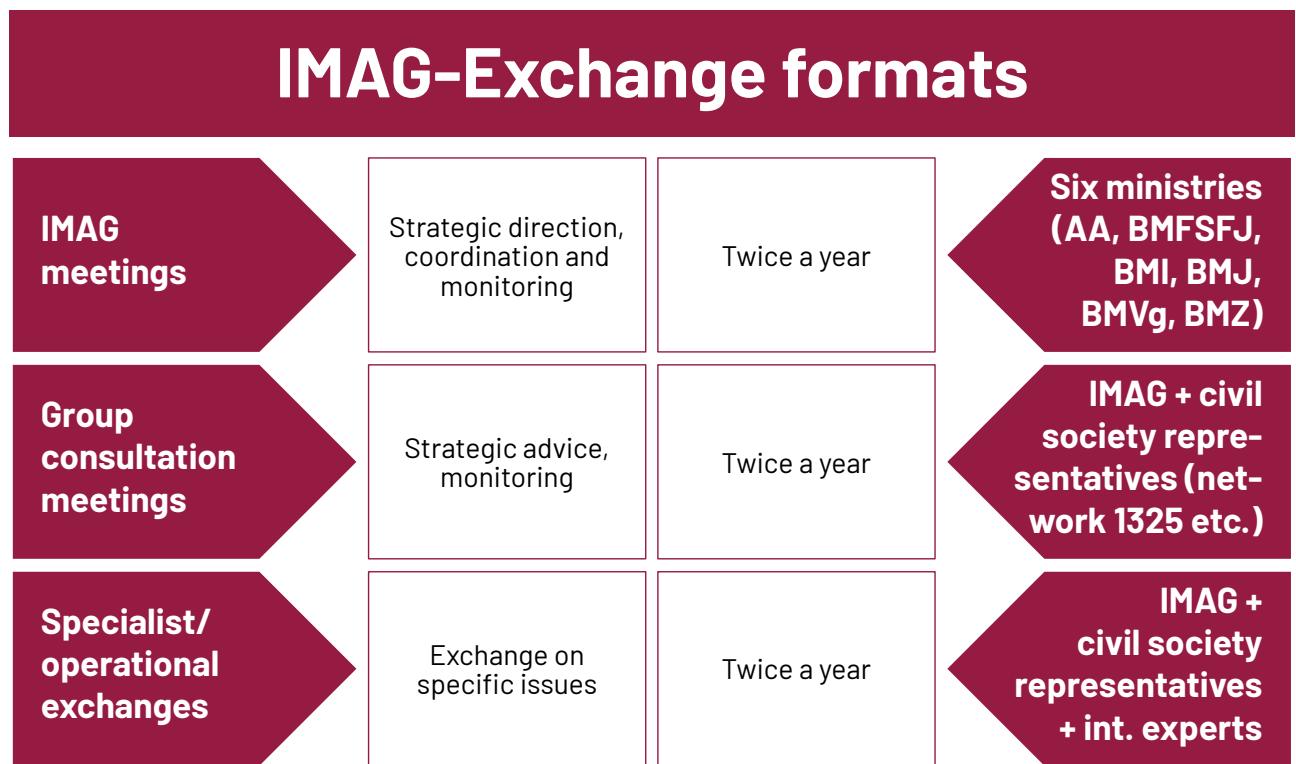
IDAG 1325

PHRD: Peace and Human Rights Division.
SDC: Agency for Development and Cooperation.
DIL: Directorate of International Law.
FOGE: Federal Office for Gender Equality.
(GS-)FDFA: (General Secretariat) Federal Department of Foreign Affairs.
FDHA: Federal Department of Home Affairs.
FDJP: The Federal Department of Justice and Police.
Fedpol: Federal Office of Police.
SEM: State Secretariat for Migration.
SWISSINT: Swiss Armed Forces International Peace Support.
(GS-)DDPS: (General Secretariat) Federal Department of Defence, Civil Protection and Sport.



The Swiss Interdepartmental Working Group (IDAG 1325) consists of four departments (FDFA, FDHA, FDJP, DDPS) and civil society representatives.

Meetings between the two working groups take place at least twice a year in both countries. Various other exchange formats are occasionally also used in Germany (see below):



- ▶ Group consultation meetings: at least twice a year, the IMAG 1325 holds consultation meetings on the strategic direction of the NAP 1325 or other issues such as monitoring, with civil society representatives, who may also raise topics for discussion.
- ▶ Specialist/operational exchanges: the IMAG 1325 and civil society representatives hold thematic meetings with internal and external experts. These exchanges are an opportunity to take up new issues that have not as yet been incorporated into the NAP or, for example, if the civil society representatives request further discussion on an acute crisis.

Recommendations:

- ▶ Consider introducing different forms of exchange in addition to the IDAG 1325 e.g. specialist/operational meetings in order to shed light on new issues.

Effectiveness

The first part of the peer review addresses the effectiveness of the NAP 1325 as well as questions on monitoring, coordination of the German and Swiss working groups, and the inclusion of civil society.

1.1 NAP monitoring and evaluation

Monitoring the NAPs enables the 1325 working groups, which are responsible for the implementation, to check whether the measures that have been developed are suitable and whether the objectives are being met. It also enables the NAP 1325 to be accompanied outside of the administration, by Parliament or civil society for example.

Format and frequency of evaluations

Both the German and Swiss NAP 1325 are evaluated systematically. In Germany, measures are monitored in accordance with deadlines (cf. section on ownership of ministries/departments and implementation deadlines), while indicators are evaluated twice: halfway during a mid-term review and again as an end-of-term review. In Switzerland, the NAP is reviewed at mid-term and at the end of the term. These evaluations of the key achievements and challenges are also incorporated into the UN Secretary-General's annual report. Switzerland's fourth NAP is the first time the IDAG 1325 has stipulated that the overall evaluation be conducted as a peer review with another state.

	Germany	Switzerland
Last NAP 1325 implementation report	Report on the Action Plan of the Government of Germany on the Implementation of United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security (implementation phase 2017-2020): link	Interim report on the implementation of Switzerland's fourth NAP 1325 (implementation phase 2018–2019): link

Ongoing monitoring

The call for concrete results in international cooperation has been growing steadily in recent years. Both Parliament and the public are demanding that taxpayers' money is used efficiently and effectively. These requirements are factored in at project level by setting measurable targets in advance. It is much harder to verify impact at the country level: first, because the impact of one actor cannot be isolated from other influences and second, because the sum of individual project results does not directly correlate with the overall result. In this light, it is almost impossible to quantitatively or qualitatively measure the overall impact of an activity undertaken under the NAP 1325.

In response to these challenges, and to ensure that funds continue to be deployed effectively, both Germany and Switzerland monitor changes at project level (micro-level) and at strategic policy level (macro-level), with the proviso that the macro-level cannot automatically be inferred from the micro-level. These two levels of monitoring present both opportunities and limitations:

Project level (micro-level)

- ✓ Measurability of indicators: quantifiable data can be drawn from concrete parameters such as the number of projects, how much money has been invested, etc.
- ✓ Markers can be defined to identify projects aimed at fulfilling the NAP 1325 (see example below).
- ✗ The units responsible do not take a uniform approach to data collection or how they assess the markers, making it harder to monitor activities in a consistent manner.
- ✗ It is difficult to picture the overall impact of the NAP 1325 from the separate evaluations of individual projects.

Example: Marker at project level

In Germany, BMZ projects have two markers – GG identifiers (gender equality) and FS identifiers⁴ (peace and security). Projects where GG2/FS2 and GG2/FS1 identifiers intersect in particular are considered relevant to the WPS agenda.

In Switzerland, projects are categorised in terms of gender sensitivity: „gender principal“ (the project addresses gender issues directly), „gender significant“ (gender issues are addressed indirectly) or „not related to gender issues“ (gender is not addressed in the project). Because the current indicators measure this general gender dimension and not the concrete relevance to the WPS agenda however, it would be useful to refine them.

Strategic policy level (macro-level)

- ✓ Global picture: NAP 1325 impact is viewed as a whole.
- ✗ The macro-level is large in scale and scope, which makes it very difficult to determine suitable indicators that will yield concrete evidence.
- ✗ Complex overall situation: at country level, developments can be affected by any number of factors outside of the NAP’s sphere of influence. This makes it impossible to measure one’s own contribution conclusively.

The contrast between these two levels reveals a tension between measurability (evaluation at project level) and impact assessment (evaluation at strategic policy level). In practice therefore, a balance between the two approaches, both of which have their pros and cons, needs to be found.

Individual projects can still be evaluated in order to provide concrete illustrations, consolidate positive examples as narratives, and address and learn from initiatives that have not been successful, which was also highlighted as important during the discussion. At the same time, by building in steering mechanisms at the strategic level, an optimal direction can be achieved in the given circumstances. As highlighted by one of the participants in the discussion: „We try to do the best we can in a given context.“ This requires a new way of thinking, away from quantitative impact measurement to strategic impact orientation. The goal is for monitoring to be accurate and faithful, and to prioritise institutional learning.

⁴ The principal objective of projects with the GG2 indicator is to strengthen gender equality. In GG1 projects, gender equality is an important secondary objective that is firmly established in the impact framework. GG0 projects do not contribute to strengthening gender equality specifically but do ensure that a ‘do no harm’ approach is taken. FS indicators work similarly – programmes primarily targeting peace and security as their objective are FS2. FS1 projects approach peace and security as a key but subordinate goal; FS0 projects do not contain any elements relating to peace and security.

Capacity development

The discussion also underscored the fact that capacity development is key to mainstreaming the WPS agenda. Coupled with this is the crucial notion of ownership, whereby people only change their behaviour if they themselves believe it will be beneficial.

The following approaches are currently being used in order to raise awareness of the WPS agenda:

- ▶ Training: Staff at head office and in the external network receive regular training sessions on the WPS agenda.
- ▶ Pre-secondment briefings: WPS-related issues specific to the context the person is being seconded to are addressed prior to their mission.
- ▶ Institutional mainstreaming: Each ministry/department appoints a focal point who is responsible for WPS. As most NAP 1325 measures are implemented in other countries, Germany has also set up focal points in its external network.
- ▶ Local WPS action plans: German embassies responsible for implementing certain NAP measures in their host countries are required to report to head office. They also draw up their own local action plans based on the German NAP 1325 as part of the annual human rights report, which helps promote and systematise related activities.

Findings:

- ▶ Measuring impact at macro-level is very complex. A good middle ground between measurability (micro-level) and impact (macro-level) is required.
- ▶ The narrative is important: consolidate positive examples, learn from unsuccessful ones.
- ▶ Capacity development: as most NAP 1325 measures are implemented in other countries, focal points can also be systematically established in the external network.

1.2 Coordination between ministries/departments

The 1325 working group set-up helps the different ministries/departments to coordinate (cf. introduction). This is important if they are to function effectively together.

Lead

The German and Swiss foreign ministries are responsible for coordinating the NAP 1325 within their respective working groups. Both the AA and the FDFA usually arrange for exchanges between the different ministries/departments involved.

Ownership of ministries/departments

Implementing the NAP 1325 holistically requires all organisational units that are involved to participate actively and systematically. For multi-annual action plans, the challenge is in identifying which measures fall under the responsibility of all the units involved and need to be implemented over the entire duration of the NAP 1325. Both the German and Swiss NAP set out which units are responsible for which objectives, including the measures required to meet the targets. Germany also uses the following entry points to boost the involvement of its ministries:

Implementation deadlines: Each measure under the NAP 1325 has a short, medium or long-term timescale for implementation. This means the level at which measures should be taken and the monitoring process can be defined more clearly. Tasking each of the involved ministries with at least one long-term measure ensures that they all participate actively throughout the whole NAP implementation period.

Short-term	Medium-term	Long-term
Implementation deadline: 1 year; if useful, extension into medium-term measures possible.	Implementation deadline: 2 years (halfway through).	Implementation deadline: by end of NAP period or later. Long-term measures are often of structural nature.
Examples ⁵ ► Systematic gender analysis in project proposals ► Expanding efforts for the advancement of women experts for leadership positions	Examples ⁶ ► Firmly establishing WPS objectives in outcome documents ► Risk assessment of arms exports with regard to SGBV	Examples ⁷ ► Fostering equality in the portrayal of gender roles ► Promoting networks of women mediators and peace activists

5 Examples of short-term measures:

Systematically requesting a gender analysis for project proposals on the climate crisis and climate change mitigation as well as supporting gender-responsive mitigation and adaptation projects in the context of conflicts caused by climate change.

The Center for International Peace Operations (ZIF) is expanding its efforts for the advancement of women experts for leadership positions.

6 Examples of medium-term measures:

Firmly establishing WPS objectives in arms control and arms export control outcome documents at international forums as well as gender disaggregated data collection on the use of certain weapons in specific countries and regions.

In terms of arms export controls, the risk of the requested weapon being used to commit or facilitate serious acts of gender-based violence or serious acts of violence against women and children is also assessed (Arms Trade Treaty, Art. 7(4)).

7 Examples of long-term measures:

Fostering equality in the portrayal of gender roles, positive images of masculinity and the dismantling of asymmetrical power relations between the sexes, including people with diverse sexual orientations and non-binary gender identities. Consideration in particular of intersectionality and multiple discrimination.

Gender-equitable approaches in climate protection and ensuring the equal participation of women in national and international climate protection processes.

Supporting women's participation in negotiation and mediation processes as mediators, negotiators, delegation members or in other roles, as well as the participation of women peace activists in formal and informal negotiations. Promoting networks of women mediators and peace activists

Rotating meetings: Germany has established three forms of exchange for the NAP 1325, each of which is conducted differently (cf. stakeholders). Depending on the format, only the ministries involved (IMAG), civil society (consultation group meetings) or external experts (specialist/operational exchange) take part. It would also be possible to rotate the organisation of the exchanges between the ministries, depending on the subject. Furthermore, in a next step, civil society representatives could initiate their own specialist/operational exchange, which would greatly facilitate discussions on emerging WPS issues.

Recommendations:

- ▶ In addition to setting out responsibilities clearly, dividing the implementation period into short, medium and long-term phases would ensure that all the units involved participate actively throughout the duration of the next Swiss NAP 1325.
- ▶ Rotating the organisation of the meetings within the IDAG 1325 could also be introduced in Switzerland as a pilot measure.

1.3 Involving civil society

Involving civil society

Civil society has been instrumental in developing and advancing the WPS agenda worldwide. For the ministries/departments therefore, working together with domestic civil society is key to promoting the WPS agenda at national level.

Phase	German civil society	Swiss civil society
NAP development	► is involved in developing the NAP.	► is involved in developing the NAP.
NAP implementation	► works separately from the IMAG on implementing the NAP.	► works together with the IDAG on implementing the NAP; addresses two issues in the current NAP: care work and preventing and dealing with violent extremism. ► is working together with the '1325 Ambassadors' in Parliament for the current NAP ⁸ .
NAP evaluation	► monitors the work undertaken by the German federal government	► monitors the work undertaken by the Swiss federal administration; draws up alternative reports

Civil society: partially conflicting dual role as both implementing partner and external monitor

The above illustration highlights civil society's dual role in promoting and strengthening the WPS agenda. On the one hand, it works together with the federal administration on the actual implementation of the NAP 1325 (in the case of Swiss civil society). On the other, it also monitors the implementation of the NAP on the part of the state.

There is also a certain tension concerning the topics that are incorporated in the NAP 1325. Feminist civil society works on broader WPS questions such as demilitarisation, arms exports, etc. While the topics that are included in the NAP 1325 are based on consensus, other WPS-related issues can still be addressed by both civil society and the federal administration outside of the NAP framework.

The discussion conducted with civil society representatives highlighted the following differences between Germany and Switzerland:

Germany: German civil society sees itself primarily as a consultation partner and monitor.

- Area of possible tension: The dual role as implementation partner and monitor was seen as a dilemma. Civil society highlighted the need for a certain distance for the monitoring process to be consistent. Shared ownership of the NAP was perceived as difficult.
- Cooperation: In recent years, there has been a shift on the part of the federal government and civil society in favour of more cooperation. Both sides are interested in an institutional dialogue, which has grown in recent years.

⁸ The '1325 Ambassadors' are parliamentarians who work together with civil society on the WPS agenda and advocate for WPS issues in Parliament.

Switzerland: Swiss civil society is involved in both the implementation of the NAP 1325 and the monitoring process, which means it has a dual role.

- ▶ *Area of possible tension:* Swiss civil society is aware of this dual role and does not see it as particularly contentious. In fact, the participants in the discussion highlighted how both these roles can actually reinforce each other. By playing an active role in the implementation of the NAP 1325, civil society can both advance specific WPS issues while maintaining a critical outside perspective. Furthermore, the active working relationship helps both sides understand each other better in terms of respective opportunities and challenges.
- ▶ *Cooperation:* A critical outside perspective can only be maintained if civil society is independent, which is why it is both invaluable and important that it can carry out the agreed activities with the funds provided independently. The participants in the discussion highlighted their appreciation for the close cooperation with the federal administration, and expressed an interest in an in-depth exchange to learn more about how the administration functions. They would also like to contribute to several of the NAP topics.

Which civil society groups are involved?

In terms of developing the NAP 1325, cooperation is primarily with national NGOs. In Germany, linkages with feminist civil society and civil society organisations involved in peace promotion are generally very good. In Switzerland as well, cooperation exists with both feminist civil society and organisations working in the field of peacebuilding such as KOFF, an association of NGOs active in this area. These are usually professional NGOs that are specialised in their particular fields and act as a bridge to wider civil society.

Given that most NAP 1325 measures are carried out abroad, there is also a significant amount of cooperation with local civil society organisations on the ground – which also raises the question to what extent they could be included in the development of the NAPs. Germany already has some experience in working with peace activists from other countries, an approach that could be used more and may also be of interest to Switzerland.

Productive cooperation

Mutual **understanding** is key to a productive working relationship between civil society and the federal administration. This means that both sides are interested to understand how the other works, and to develop an awareness of their respective opportunities and limitations. To this end, both the administration and civil society can create common ground by discussing their different roles. It is also important to remember that neither of these sizeable groups is homogeneous, and may contain diverging opinions.

A high **level of trust** is needed for productive cooperation, whereby ideally both sides feel heard by the other and are also able to act and take decisions transparently. **Flexibility** is also important, particularly because of the changing roles depending on the NAP phase. In addition, both sides need to be flexible in terms of scheduling. Both civil society and the federal administration need to be focused on a **common goal** – to promote the WPS agenda.

Recommendation:

- ▶ Examine whether civil society abroad can already be included in the NAP drafting stage and how.

Impact

The second part of the discussion focused on the impact of the NAP 1325, highlighting three thematic areas that are contained in both the German and Swiss NAP – promoting women's participation in peace processes, protection from SGBV, and security policy and disarmament.

1.4 Promoting the participation of women in all their diversity in peace processes

Women's full, equal and meaningful participation in political processes and in peace processes must be achieved. However, it has become clear in recent years that women's participation faces a number of barriers. What is needed is an effective interconnection between the different levels of action (global, regional, local) as well as between the different stakeholders and institutions. Both the German and Swiss NAPs include strengthening the inclusion of women in official negotiating delegations as well as strengthening the link between civil society peace initiatives and official negotiations.

In order to focus on these two issues, participants in the discussion were divided into two groups. Potential areas for action to promote the inclusion of women were identified.

Inclusion of women in official peace processes⁹

Pertinent lines of action:

- ▶ Lead by example¹⁰: Consistently role model gender aspects and inclusive participation in one's own delegations and working groups. Displaying diversity in this way shows consistency and provides legitimacy.
- ▶ Recognise and advance existing women actors: Involve women leaders (e.g. local politicians) from other countries in activities, incorporate their expertise and know-how, and further strengthen them.
- ▶ No essentialism: Measuring the inclusion of women in negotiating delegations cannot be quantitative but must assess whether their participation is full, equal and meaningful. Nor can women in peace and political processes be held responsible for representing all women symbolically or for bringing a gender perspective to the process.
- ▶ Collaborative efforts inclusive of all genders: Men also need to be included if cooperation between different genders on equal terms is to be achieved. This applies to the local or national level as well as international organisations and delegations.
- ▶ Triple nexus: Creating the conditions for sustainable political participation of women, means not just thinking in terms of peace processes, but rather the triple nexus approach, in which humanitarian aid, development cooperation and peacbuilding work together. An example of this is unpaid care work. This is mainly carried out by women as an additional workload, and can therefore be an obstacle to political participation. If our objective is to promote women's participation in political processes and peace processes, the burden of care work also needs to be reduced. This issue has been emphasized in particular by civil society.

⁹ One example of this is the presence of women in the United Nations Security Council: Germany has used its seat on the Council to invite more women briefers.

¹⁰ For an example of this see [Thematic Review on Gender-Responsive Peacebuilding](#)

Including women civil society representatives in peace processes¹¹

Pertinent lines of action:

- ▶ Gender-sensitive analyses: All actions must be based on a gender-sensitive conflict or context analysis: any social constructs, traditional practices or stigmas that limit the role of women must be made clear. The analyses must also be updated on an ongoing basis.
- ▶ Inclusion of women in all issues: Women are not experts on gender by definition, and thus not responsible for gender issues. The inclusion of women is pertinent to all topics of discussion.
- ▶ Building on existing engagement: Existing working relationships with civil society can be used and expanded during peace processes.
- ▶ Integrating local initiatives: Women's participation at grassroots / local level complements actions at other levels.

Both groups identified the same two central points in their discussions: first, the importance of systematic gender-sensitive analyses to ensure the level of quality of own contributions and second, the need to avoid essentialism i.e. the inclusion of women in peace processes should be not only be measured in terms of quantity (numerical presence), rather their meaningful participation is important. To this end, it is essential that women are included in all discussions – not just on stereotypical gender issues. Participants also concluded that the impact measurement process mentioned above (cf. NAP monitoring) remains a challenge in this area.

Gender perspective in outcome documents

During the discussion, it became clear that factoring a gender perspective into the final agreement or peace treaty was central. This means there has to be an inclusive process, which will also result in integrating a gender perspective into outcome documents – not just as a box-ticking exercise, but as an important consideration recognised by all parties.

The following two points advance the integration of a gender perspective in outcome documents:

- ▶ Consideration of the gender perspective in the issues under negotiation: Gender aspects must be included in negotiation processes from the start, not as a separate section at the end of an outcome document. In fact, all issues should be examined on the basis of their gender dimensions.
- ▶ Consideration of the context: What is understood by gender depends on the context. In order to reflect this accurately, discussions should be held locally with women, men and non-binary people. Participants also pointed out the importance of reflecting on one's own views and values so as to avoid transposing one's own social norms onto another context and creating an outcome document that does not match the reality on the ground.

Example: Peace agreement in Colombia

The Colombian peace agreement between the Colombian government and FARC guerrilla group in 2016 was brought up as a case in point. Following pressure from the international community, the text of this agreement consistently included gender dimensions which could not, however, be implemented as intended because of the social realities on the ground.

¹¹ A good example of the inclusion of women civil society representatives in peace processes is the UN's [Syrian Women's Advisory Board](#), which promotes the inclusion of women peace activists from Syria in the peace talks for the Syrian conflict. Another example is the [special initiative](#) for the participation of women in peace processes in the MENA region as well as the BMZ's special initiative: [Action Network on Forced Displacement: Women as Agents of Change](#).

Findings:

- ▶ Country-level engagement should include further strengthening of existing stakeholders (e.g. local women politicians).
- ▶ It is also important to create links between all the different levels, actors and collaborative efforts inclusive of all genders.
- ▶ For the WPS agenda to be implemented in a sustainable way, there must also be a gender-sensitive analysis that looks beyond the conflict context.
- ▶ In peace agreements, gender dimensions must be integrated in the outcome document from the start.
- ▶ Women's participation should not only be measured by numbers but substance.

1.5 Protection from sexual and gender-based violence

Both the German and Swiss NAP 1325 address the protection of women and girls from SGBV. How can this objective be effectively integrated into programmes in practice? Peer review participants raised the following key points via an anonymous Mentimeter survey:

Systemic cooperation and shared definitions

Different actors (governments, civil society, NGOs, etc.) need to be involved in order to protect women, girls and all persons from SGBV. For the cooperation between these actors to be effective, a collaborative, multi-stakeholder approach must be taken – particularly in conflicts. Preventing and dealing with SGBV is a long-term endeavour; it takes time to change gender relations and gender norms. Furthermore, all the actors involved need to be working from a common understanding of what SGBV is if measures are to be implemented consistently. This can also vary depending on the context.

Advocacy

SGBV does not just occur during a conflict or a crisis. Recognising this is key to tackling SGBV in the long term. Despite this, there is a certain tendency at international level to narrow the issue and focus primarily on sexual violence in conflicts. For example, a recent [British initiative](#) was launched to raise awareness in the international community about SGBV as a weapon of war. While this is, in principle, to be welcomed, such definitions may limit people from seeing the larger extent of this problem. In addition to sexual violence, other forms of GBV also increase during conflicts (e.g. domestic/partner violence or early/forced marriage) and must remain on the political agenda post conflict.

Survivor-centred approach

Both Germany and Switzerland take a survivor-centred approach in their efforts to prevent and deal with SGBV. This means that all measures must prioritise the interests of the affected person and can only be taken if that person agrees. It is therefore vital that well-trained staff and professional psychological and legal services are available and that access to them is also facilitated.

Short-term interventions are sometimes used for people who have experienced trauma, but this can also result in retraumatisation because of the short duration of the therapy or a lack of adequately trained personnel. Furthermore, if the focus is solely on the survivor and the resulting harm done to them, this does not help tackle issues such as social exclusion and stigmatisation. That is why it is also important to work with families and communities, and to reflect on the social norms that prevent solidarity with SGBV survivors.

Focus on SGBV against men and LGBTIQ+ people

Men and boys are also victims of SGBV, which is why both the German and Swiss NAP 1325 contain measures addressing male SGBV survivors specifically. Compared to the number of initiatives aimed at protecting women and girls from SGBV however, there are not many projects concerning violence against men. This is mainly because of the stigma for men and boys to be seen as victims. Participants in the discussion exchanged views on various initiatives with a view to stepping up engagement in this particular area.

Much groundwork is still needed on the issue of violence again LGBTIQ+ people, both at global and local level. Providing support to existing LGBTIQ+ organisations in partner countries needs to be low key, as those affected are often at great risk. The German participants mentioned several related projects they are supporting in Bosnia and Herzegovina, South Africa, Guatemala and Uganda, for example.

Taking on gender norms

Actions that specifically target men are also needed to break down discriminatory gender norms. Communities are encouraged to talk about psychosocial aspects such as male vulnerability in order to help break down fixed patterns and role models. This type of work is usually done in all-male groups, such as the [men-to-men peer groups](#) in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Working with perpetrators of violence

In addition to supporting survivors, it is also important to work with the perpetrators – who are predominantly male. This approach has been used successfully for some time. One example is a [hotline](#) introduced in Albania which gives perpetrators the opportunity to reflect on their actions.

Findings:

- ▶ Cross-sectoral cooperation for SGBV prevention (e.g. with security policy) should be advanced.
- ▶ Staff who work with survivors of sexual violence must be properly trained.
- ▶ Trauma therapy for individuals should be accompanied by psychosocial work and reflection on violence and its wider impact on the survivor's environment/family/community.
- ▶ Stepping up engagement on violence against men and LGBTIQ+ people.

1.6 Security policy

Security policy and the WPS agenda are closely linked. One issue is that there are relatively few women working in military peace missions. Another is that it is usually women and girls who are disproportionately affected by conflict and violence, but rarely given the opportunity to be part of the solution. In order to counteract these factors, Germany and Switzerland have integrated measures for military peacebuilding, disarmament and small arms control into the NAP 1325.

Women in military peacebuilding

The German and Swiss participants discussed what measures are being taken by their respective countries to bolster the number of women in military peace missions, including both national and international troops. One key incentive for raising the number of women personnel in international missions is the UN's requirement for its peace missions to have, by 2028, a 15% share of female soldiers and a 25% share of female staff officers and military observers. Although neither Germany nor Switzerland have reached this target yet, both have set out objectives to increase the number of women in UN missions using two different strategies:

- ▶ **Germany:** To find out what the barriers to women's participation in peace missions are, in 2020 Germany carried out an external study ([Barrier Study](#)). The study identified 12 main obstacles that Germany is now planning countermeasures for. In addition to objective factors such as the lack of adequately trained female soldiers or a lack of information, more typical gender issues such as being away from home for long periods at a time (link to care work) or stereotypical special tasks for female soldiers on deployment were identified. Negative deployment experiences due to discrimination, unfair treatment, jokes or sexual harassment were also raised.
- ▶ **Switzerland:** The Swiss system of national service, in conjunction with what is known as the conscript military forces (compulsory for men only), results in a low proportion of women in the armed forces in Switzerland in general (2021: 1%; target by 2030: 10%). At present, 9 out of 10 female soldiers in basic training are given a recommendation for further military cadre training. Nevertheless, the total number of female officers only just meets the UN's targets for staff officer and military observer functions (2021: 13%). In the Balkans however¹², the proportion of women in Swiss contingents has been 15% (KFOR) and 25% (EUFOR) for the last two years. This is achieved by conducting a separate women-only basic training for contingent missions. To harness this positive effect of attractive foreign deployments for the armed forces in general, in 2020 the [international militia career](#) was launched. This is intended to make it possible for women without previous military training to be integrated into the Swiss armed forces after having served abroad. The initiative is advertised at regional orientation days and through social media.

Gender aspects in disarmament and small arms control

To increase protection for women and girls, the gender dimensions of disarmament and small arms control are also important. Germany and Switzerland have therefore taken initiatives to help ensure that gender issues are more systematically included in these processes. The current German and Swiss NAP 1325 contain specific lines of action taking a two-fold approach: first, for women's participation in arms control and disarmament in general and second, for better protection of women and girls through the control of small arms.

¹² At present, Switzerland does not deploy any contingents for UN peace missions, but does deploy personnel of all ranks to support the NATO Kosovo Force (KFOR) and EU Force in BiH (EUFOR Operation Althea).

The German and Swiss approaches mainly operate on the following three levels:

- ▶ **Political level:** Both German and Swiss efforts in this field are aimed at strengthening the link between the WPS agenda and international agreements on disarmament and arms control. Many policymakers are not aware of this link however, and the debate is often politically charged. Although some progress has been made at this level in recent years – integrating gender and the role of women in the political debate on such areas as small arms control, for example – advancing beyond this is proving to be increasingly difficult. One notable success in this respect was the 7th Biennial Meeting of States of the UN Programme of Action on Small Arms and Light Weapons, which for the first time specifically addressed the link between small arms action plans and the NAP 1325.
- ▶ **Operational level:** Both countries are particularly committed to ensuring that gender-relevant normative work on disarmament and small arms control are also applied at operational level in the field. One mechanism for this is supporting initiatives and organisations that advocate for a more systematic consideration of gender aspects and the inclusion of women in small arms processes. For example, Germany and Switzerland jointly support research in this area such as through the [Small Arms Survey](#) organisation. Regional initiatives like regional roadmaps as well as national and international training measures in small arms control are also particularly pertinent to operational implementation.

In addition, there are certain blind spots at operational level that need to be explored: gender issues in munitions management, for example, which Germany and Switzerland are working on together. The first step was to analyse the interconnection between these two areas, developing a credible and evidence-based foundation in order to apply this on the ground. Standards are pivotal to operational implementation and the basis for fieldwork. For example, both countries have initiated gender mainstreaming in the International Ammunition Technical Guidelines.

- ▶ **Training level and networks:** Germany and Switzerland are also taking initiatives to train and raise awareness in their target audience – professionals in disarmament and small arms/arms control – who are ultimately responsible for applying the normative work in this area. One such example is the [OSCE-UNODA Scholarship for Peace and Security](#), which focuses on empowering and supporting young women experts in disarmament issues. Germany is also increasingly highlighting the link between the WPS agenda and small arms control in its higher level training courses including those run by the Center for Verification Tasks of the Bundeswehr (ZVBw).

Building bridges between the stakeholders is also key in order to bolster coordination and synergies between organisations working on the same topic, to enable experts to network, and to promote the exchange of best practices between regions. To this end Germany is supporting networks such as [GENSAC](#) and [WoX](#).

In order to be able to apply the progressive norms that are being developed in this area, building a solid bridge between policy and fieldwork is essential. This is necessary to ensure that the political commitments being made actually improve the reality of people's lives, and to bring the needs of the affected people on the ground to the political agenda. Despite the importance of this, the peer review revealed the challenges in establishing this connection. Political resolutions on paper must be better translated into practical application in the field.

Recommendations:

- ▶ Closer coordination in the run-up to international conferences with the aim of developing common messages and forging international alliances.
- ▶ Close exchange with like-minded states on potential joint projects to strengthen the links between the WPS agenda and small arms control. Ongoing support for background research on the gender and small arms control nexus.
- ▶ Women's participation in disarmament and small arms control should be promoted not only quantitatively, but in a targeted and qualitative way, at local, national, regional and global levels, including through the promotion of networks such as GENSAC, scholarships and the introduction of relevant indicators in the development of regional and national action plans. Understanding of this paradigm shift needs to be further enhanced both at policy and implementation level.

Imprint

Editor:

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Design:

Team Audiovisual FDFA, Communication

This publication is also available in German. It can be downloaded from the website
www.fdfa.admin.ch/publications.

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