



## ***Terms of Reference for an external evaluation***

### **Culture and Religion in Mediation (CARIM) Program**

**2011-2020**

#### **Contents**

1. Background
2. Objectives of the evaluation
3. Evaluation areas and guiding questions
4. Scope and timeline for the evaluation
5. Methodology
6. Deliverables
7. Qualifications of the evaluator(s)
8. Application and award process
9. Contact at FDFA

## 1. Background

Conflicts with religious dimensions pose a significant challenge to global peace and security. In 2015, armed conflicts with religious dimensions made up nearly two thirds of active conflicts worldwide<sup>1</sup>. This marks a steady increase since 1975 when they only made up a third of armed conflicts. It is particularly conflicts fought over religious issues – issues that are framed in religious terms and viewed through a religious lens – which have increased<sup>2</sup>. These are some of the most difficult conflicts to resolve. While scholars and practitioners alike seem to agree that armed conflicts with religious dimensions are prevalent and likely to increase if current trends continue, recent scholarship remains divided on the question of why wars fought across confessional boundaries or for religious objectives are harder to resolve peacefully<sup>3</sup>.

Religion in conflict can appear as related to group cohesion (religious identity markers) or related to actual issues that arise in the contestation (religious issue conflict, often related to different worldviews). Religious issue conflicts are recognized as particularly contributing to conflict intractability. While the emergence of the term “identity conflicts” or “ethnic conflicts” in the 1990s resulted in some efforts to address the challenges posed by the creation of seemingly rigid identities, less work has been undertaken on the challenges posed by clashing views on religious issues<sup>4</sup>.

The Swiss Federal Department of Foreign Affairs (FDFA), through its Division on Human Security (HSD) has been working on these challenges since 2002. In late 2004, the HSD (then called Political Division IV) formally established a sector of activity called Religion, Politics, Conflict (RPC), the focus of which has since then been to work on the intersections of religion and politics resulting in violent conflict. At the beginning, RPC partnered with various Swiss and foreign NGOs for process support as well as knowledge management with an academic dimension. RPC purposefully supported the development of an unchartered field of work within peacebuilding.

The first academic partner of RPC’s was the think tank CASIN (Center for Applied Studies in International Negotiations) at the Graduate Institute of International Studies (HEI) in Geneva. The cooperation with what had become the Graduate Institute of International and Development Studies (IHEID) ended when the institute underwent a reorganisation resulting in a reorientation of its work focus. Subsequently, the HSD/RPC turned to the Center for Security Studies (CSS) at the Swiss Federal Institute of Technology (ETH Zurich), which was already working in support of the HSD’s mediation desk in the broader field of peace mediation.

CARIM was then developed jointly between the RPC and the CSS Mediation Support Team to support FDFA activities in the field of religion and conflict as well as with a view of developing academically based practical knowledge in this field. Since 2007, FDFA’s collaboration with the CSS had been based on short-term projects. In 2011, the CARIM program was formalized, which allowed for a more structured and substantive way of collaboration between the CSS and RPC.

The CARIM program has been implemented through various phases: A pilot phase (Nov 2011-Dec 2012), a second phase (2013-2015), third phase (2016-2017), and fourth phase (2018-2019). Currently, the program is in its fifth phase (2020-2021). Two self-evaluations have been carried out by the CSS and the RPC team involved in CARIM, one covering the period of 2011-2016, and another one covering 2016 – 2019. Both self-evaluations revealed great strengths

---

<sup>1</sup> Svensson, Isak, and Desirée Nilsson. 2017. “Disputes over the Divine: Introducing the Religion and Armed Conflict (RELAC) Data, 1975 to 2015.” *Journal of Conflict Resolution*. <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/10.1177/0022002717737057> (October 8, 2020).

<sup>2</sup> Baumann, Jonas, Daniel Finnbogason, and Isak Svensson. 2018. “Rethinking Mediation: Resolving Religious Conflicts.”

<sup>3</sup> Svensson, Isak, *Ending Holy Wars: Religion and Conflict Resolution in Civil Wars*, 2012, University of Queensland Press

<sup>4</sup> *Politobis* No. 52, Religion and Conflict Transformation 2/2011

of the program as well as certain shortcomings, based on which the design of subsequent phases was adapted.

As the next CARIM phase will come to an end on 31 Dec. 2021, the CSS and the HSD will have to agree on a way forward by mid-2021, i.e. decide what another phase of CARIM should look like beyond 2021. The latest internal evaluation showed that CARIM's focus on religion and mediation is still highly relevant for conflict transformation. Furthermore, the evaluation highlighted that the partnership has great value addition for both the CSS and the RPC desk. CARIM also fits well within priorities set forth in the FDFA Foreign Policy 2020-2023, peace promotion being one among its four priority areas. Without any fundamental change in FDFA's or CSS' strategy and financial situation, the CARIM program is expected to be continued beyond its current phase.

Conducting an external evaluation of CARIM in 2021 seems opportune for several reasons:

- i. **10 years of CARIM:** CARIM will celebrate its 10-year anniversary in 2021 – a good moment to critically look back. The external evaluation is expected to provide insights and learning on what has worked well and what has had less success in CARIM and make recommendations for strategic adaptations of the program for the next years.
- ii. **Accountability:** CARIM has received direct financial contributions from the FDFA as well as human resources investment on the FDFA side, and a non-monetized contribution from the CSS-ETH Zurich for infrastructure and management (following the framework agreement between CSS ETH Zurich and FDFA) over the course of 10 year. An external evaluation will provide information from an external perspective if public resources have been put to good use.
- iii. **Covid-19:** The field of peacebuilding seems to be in a shift as a whole: Due to the current pandemic and related travel restriction, a lot of the work has moved online. Valuable insights could be drawn from an evaluation how the last months have changed CARIM's work and how the program could best use blended physical-online trainings in the future.
- iv. **HSD management request:** Finally, based on the FDFA evaluation & monitoring policy, every year the HSD management requests the conduct of external evaluations on a select number of projects for reasons of accountability, learning and efforts to improve its understanding about impact of peacebuilding activities. The external evaluation of CARIM hence also responds to this management request from the HSD.

## 2. Objectives of the evaluation

The main objectives of the external evaluation of the CARIM program are as follows:

- i. Provide information from an external perspective on the achievements and areas of improvement of CARIM.
- ii. Propose different options on how to “revamp” CARIM to be fit for purpose for the next 10 years to come.

The evaluation will be structured along the four OECD-DAC criteria with the focus being on different aspects of *effectiveness*. The main questions that will guide the evaluation under the four criteria are explained in the sections 3.1 – 3.4 and will provide insights on objective i. Objective ii. is prospective and will require looking into conflict trends as well as trends in the peacebuilding and the international policy community as far as they are related to religion, conflict and peace promotion. Section 3.5 provides a few points to guide the implementation of objective ii.

## 3. Evaluation areas and guiding questions

### 3.1 Relevance

How relevant have the CARIM program's three stated objectives been to the broader objective of FDFA's peace promotion activities? CARIM's objectives (as formulated in the current phase) are:

1. *Effective processes:* Opportunities for dialogue, negotiation and mediation processes that constructively address the religious dimensions of the conflict are identified and acted on.

2. *Competent practitioners*: Swiss, international and local peace practitioners are competent in addressing religion and worldviews in dialogue, negotiation and mediation processes.
3. *Informed policy-makers*: Swiss and international policy-makers are competent in addressing religion and worldviews in peace-promotion.

### 3.2 Effectiveness

- **Expected results**: To what extent has CARIM delivered what it had set out to do? What are major achievements, what are major shortcomings? How far have its three objectives on effective processes, competent practitioners and informed policy-makers been reached and CARIM efforts contributed to impact?
- **Unexpected results**: What are unexpected achievements of CARIM that it might not have planned for? If any, what are unexpected negative results?
- **ToC**: Is the Theory of Change adequate and realistic?
- **Institutional set-up**: How has the CARIM set-up (FDFA/CSS) contributed to or hindered the program's effectiveness? Are synergies among and within the partnering institutions sufficiently made use of to contribute to the implementation of CARIM?
- **Program components**: Are synergies among the program components (policy, training, process support) used sufficiently well to achieve the set outcomes? Is there any unused potential?
- **Gender**: How has CARIM integrated gender aspects into its work and has it achieved its objectives concerning gender considerations?
- **Covid 19 adaptation**: How has CARIM's work changed in 2020 due to Covid 19 and how could the program best use these new ways of working also in the future?

### 3.3 Efficiency

- **Value for money**: How do financial and non-financial inputs compare to the outputs and outcomes of the program?
- **Organisational set-up**: How efficient is the program's organizational set-up in view of its results?

### 3.4 Sustainability

- **Better processes**: To what extent have the CARIM activities aiming at better processes had a lasting impact?
- **Competent practitioners**: To what extent have the CARIM activities aiming competent practitioners had a lasting impact?
- **Informed policy makers**: To what extent have the CARIM activities aiming informed policy makers had a lasting impact?

### 3.5 Recommendations and Outlook

- **Recommendations**: Based on the insights from the evaluation and future oriented workshop, the evaluators will make recommendations on what aspects and elements of CARIM should be kept, be improved and built on further in the coming CARIM phase. They will also make recommendations on what to do away with and what to avoid.
- **Key questions** will be the following:
  - How narrow / broad should CARIM position itself (e.g. only work on specific types of conflicts, or work on specific types of problems in all conflicts?) in the future?
  - How can FDFA and CSS's potential in the field of religion and conflict transformation be better used and kept fit for purpose in the future?

## 4. Scope and timeline for the evaluation

- **Time period**: The evaluation will cover the entire period of CARIM from 2011 up to the present, with a special focus on the last two and the current phase (2016-2020).
- **Programme elements to be covered**: CARIM consist of three objectives: effective processes, competent practitioners, informed policy makers. As the component of better processes was the focus of the last internal review and included an external

consultancy and workshop (see their report), this external evaluation will give priority to the two other components.

- **Timeline for the assignment:** The evaluation report should be finalized by June 30 2021. This means that the actual work should start no later than 1 March 2021 to leave enough time for drafting the report and feedback loops. A detailed but indicative timeline is mentioned in the deliverables section (chapter 6).

## 5. Methodology

### 5.1 Desk research

A range of documents, reports and publications are available about and produced by the CARIM program and external consultants including two CARIM self-evaluation reports and evaluation reports for each of the Religion and Mediation Courses. The CSS and RPC will provide these to the evaluation team at the start of the assignment.

CSS and RPC will further provide relevant strategic documents from their organizations as well as indicate other literature that they deem relevant for the assignment.

### 5.2 Interviews

Interviews with a range of stakeholders and beneficiaries of the CARIM program will complement the desk research. The list of interviewees will be defined at the start of the assignment in consultation with the CSS and RPC team. All interviews will be carried out online / via phone.

### 5.3 Future oriented workshop

The evaluators will be asked to suggest a workshop and method (e.g. desk research, link to existing mapping of religion and mediation landscape, scenario building, visioning, systemic organizational development) with the aim to shape the strategic orientation of CARIM for the coming 10 years. The workshop would include CSS, RPC and externals, and the insights from the workshop will feed into the recommendations of the final evaluation report.

## 6. Deliverables

	What	Due date <sup>5</sup>
a.	Draft report part 1 covering objective i. (evaluation)	30 April 2021
b.	Future oriented (online <sup>6</sup> ) workshop to discuss the findings and to develop recommendations (part 2 of the report covering recommendations and future options)	31 May 2021
c.	Final evaluation report	15 June 2021

Requirements for the reporting:

- Language: English
- Format and length:
  - o Executive summary to the attention of the FDFA (2 pages)
  - o Executive summary for publication (1 page)
  - o Main text part 1 (15 pages)
  - o Main text part 2 (15 pages)
  - o Annexes (evaluation methodology, list of interviewees, literature consulted etc.)

## 7. Qualifications of the evaluator(s)

The main requirements for the evaluator(s) are expertise in

- evaluation methodology (practical and theoretical)

<sup>5</sup> The dates are indicative and will have to be refined upon the start of the assignment. The due date for the final report, however, is fixed.

<sup>6</sup> If the pandemic situation allows it, both the CSS and the HSD have a preference for a face-to-face workshop. A travel budget should be foreseen by the evaluators for this purpose. The FDFA or ETH Zurich will provide the meeting room at no further cost.

- ii.) religion and conflict transformation
- iii.) peace mediation

Furthermore, the evaluator should have some familiarity with the Swiss and FDFA policy environment as well as the international peacebuilding community (at practical and policy level).

As the reporting and most of the interviews will be in English, proficiency in English is a must.

Finally, the evaluator should be transparent about any prior working relationship with either the CSS' mediation support team or the HSD's team on Religion, Politics and Conflict to guarantee a maximum of independence.

The assignment can be carried out by a team of max. 3 consultants who combine the above-mentioned qualifications.

## **8. Application and award process**

### **8.1 Applications**

The complete application should be sent by e-mail **no later than on Dec. 30 2020** to the contact mentioned under point 9 and comprise of the following:

- **Proposal** (max. 5 pages):
  - Description of the methodology for the assignment
  - Description of the proposed consultant(s) for the assignment; if there are several team members include a description of the division of roles of each team member.
- **Detailed budget proposal**
  - Number of days for the different steps of the assignment (based on methodology outline): 1) evaluation, 2) future oriented workshop
  - Daily rates are indicated separately for each consultant if different rates apply
  - The daily rate includes all overhead costs (insurances, office costs etc.)
- **CVs** of the consultant(s)

### **8.2 Procedure for the award**

- Deadline for submission of bids: 30 Dec. 2020
- Evaluation of bids: by 15 Jan. 2021
- Award of the assignment: 20 Jan. 2021
- Start of contract: 1 March 2021
- End of contract: 30 June 2021

## **9. Contact at FDFA**

Sonya Elmer Dettelbacher  
Programme Manager Religion, Politics, Conflict (RPC)  
Human Security Division / Directorate of Political Affairs  
Federal Department of Foreign Affairs,  
3003 Berne / Switzerland

[sonya.elmer@eda.admin.ch](mailto:sonya.elmer@eda.admin.ch)