



**Mid-term Review of the Management
of the Human Rights and IHL
Secretariat by NIRAS Natura AB in
Consortium with Birzeit University
Institute of Law**

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Executive Summary

The Human Rights and International Humanitarian Law Secretariat, hereinafter called the HR/IHL Secretariat, is a joint donor program that includes Denmark, the Netherlands, Sweden and Switzerland. It aims to: channel funds to, strengthen policy dialogue between and enhance the capacity of CSOs in the human rights sector in the Occupied Palestinian Territory and Israel.

The program's main objectives are:

1. To be an effective fund, for the promotion of HR and IHL in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, this is transparent and reduces corruption and duplication.
2. To strengthen the CSOs' environment in the HR/IHL sector through institutional development, internal efficiency, effective participation in democratic processes and improved performance.
3. To make a meaningful contribution to policy development in the sector and to participate actively in policy dialogue with donors and other sector stakeholders.

A review was conducted in April and May 2016, in order to gather the lessons learnt together and to provide recommendations for any improvements that might be needed in the mechanism.

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The focus of the mid-term review was twofold. Firstly, it assessed whether the Secretariat is contributing towards the achievement of the immediate objectives of the program. Secondly, it reviewed whether the structure of the program has facilitated its objectives, mostly in regards to: aid harmonisation, capacity building, policy dialogue, lower transaction costs and better quality assurance.

The review was conducted during a period of internal discussion, within the donor consortium, about the relevance and feasibility of two of the program's components: capacity building and policy dialogue. The review team was informed that some of the members prioritise these components, while others find them less important. Those who support the latter approach consider the provisioning of funds to be the main priority and focus of the consortium.

As the program's future focus, its objectives and its approach, remain undecided at the time of writing, the review team has concentrated its efforts on the first task: to assess whether the Secretariat is contributing towards the achievement of the immediate objectives of the program and to review whether the structure of the program has facilitated its objectives. It is the review team's hope that the findings and lessons learnt may inspire the donor consortium in its strategic planning and in its decisions for the future. To further facilitate decision making, the team has prepared an addendum that describes three different scenarios for the future. These scenarios are presented in a separate document.

Main achievements

The review finds that the Secretariat and the governing structure of the program have contributed towards the achievement of the first two objectives in particular by:

- Setting up a Secretariat that provides grants and that disburses and manages its funds, under criteria that are overall considered transparent and appropriate to ensure the quality and relevance of the interventions funded.
- Establishing a program, for peer-to-peer learning, the training of trainers and the individual coaching of organisations, that has the potential to improve the performance of CSOs – in particular CSOs that are less experienced and have weaker quality assurance systems.

The review was not able to verify if the Secretariat has made a meaningful contribution to policy development in the sector since its establishment in 2013. The main reason for this limited contribution seems to be the highly diverse perceptions and expectations of the donors and CSO about the meaning and purpose of policy dialogue. For this reason it has also been difficult for the program to use the expertise of Birzeit University to the benefit of this objective, during program implementation, as originally intended.

The contribution of the structural set-up to the program's achievements

The program's organizational setup consists of the following elements:

- The program strategy and results' framework
- The budget
- The Steering Committee, consisting of all members of the donor consortium
- A lead donor (The Swedish Consulate)
- A program management (Niras) and
- The Secretariat

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The review team finds that the structural set-up of the program and, in particular, the way this has been managed has affected the performance of the program and the Secretariat in several ways as outlined below:.

The program's strategy and results' framework

The program's strategy and results' framework represents an *organisational* vision and a definition of the objectives for the set-up of a Secretariat that will channel funds to HR/IHL CSOs, support capacity building and facilitate policy dialogue on issues of importance to the human rights sector and its stakeholders. It provides a clear description of the procedures and mechanisms that need to be in place to manage grants and process applications. The review team finds that the Secretariat has generally produced these results.

The strategic framework does not include a description how the *thematic priorities* of funds granted are likely to contribute to promoting human rights. The program has therefore not been able to report systematically on results of the program's support to human rights and changes made in areas that are important to promote human rights or prevent it from deteriorating. Weak definitions of what a human rights NGO is, and limited specifications of what kind of capacity building the Secretariat should prioritise, to whom and where may have hampered the formulation of a results' framework too, which would provide a clear direction for the results to be produced in the sphere of capacity building.

Recommendations 1: It is therefore recommended that the program management and the Steering Committee define which human rights organizations they would want to support and why¹, and that a theory of change and a results' framework that can guide the prioritisation and reporting of human rights' developments is formulated. It is advisable to include members of the Secretariat in this effort, in order to ensure ownership and commitment.

Formulating an overall theory of change does not prevent the donor consortium from being flexible or capable of responding to unforeseen events, such as a war in Gaza. However a theory of change does offer a method for common reflection and can help articulate how and why flexibility and response in such a situation (a war) can contribute to the prevention of further deteriorations of human rights in the affected area. It is also in line with the fourth principle of the Paris Declarations that urge developing countries and donors to ensure that programs are implemented in a way that focuses on desired results and uses the results for improved decision-making.

The budget

A large majority of the program budget is allocated to grant management and to the funding of CSOs. This has – naturally and rightly – set an agenda where granting procedures and practices have taken priority over other intervention areas. This was particularly true during the two first years of the program's implementation, where the Secretariat – a completely new team – invested substantial time and effort in developing guidelines and formulating procedures for grant management. Grants and funds management was also given more weight during the first two years of the project, as the Secretariat responded during the 2014 war in Gaza with emergency funding. They also provided project funding to CSOs in Jerusalem whose capacities to manage grants, transparently and professionally, appeared weaker than those of the other CSOs being supported. Budget reductions in 2016 have prevented the Secretariat from addressing capacity building, as originally intended; although some activities will continue through peer-to-peer training, train the trainers' sessions and individual coaching.

The review finds a sound balance between the original financial and human resources allocated for grants and grants management, capacity building and policy dialogue. Yet, the decision in 2015 to support smaller and weaker CSOs in and around Jerusalem contributed to alter that balance so that much more time and resources were spent on grant management and support than originally planned. This contributed to delay capacity building initiatives² and to drag the secretariat into basic program support operations that other grant providers such as the NGO Development Center might be better positioned to provide. As a consequence of these events were the original ideas of asking Birzeit University to host the Human Rights Secretariat side-lined.

¹ The addendum to this report may provide inspiration for this piece of work

² Other factors may have contributed to the delay as well, such as a high turnover of staff.

Recommendation 2: In line with recommendation one above, the consortium should therefore define the purpose, CSO targets and hoped-for results of future capacity building as well as the program's added value related to the program's affiliation with Birzeit University. For reasons described below, the review recommends a continuation of the current secretariat, yet on the condition that the current set-up with its expertise and profile matches the targets and hoped-for results of the future program. This would entail that the program continues to provide core funding to 3rd generation/big CSOs³ and provide joint project funding to smaller, 1st and second generation CSOs in order to stimulate closer cooperation between them and strengthen cost-efficiency of the operations of the secretariat.

Recommendation 3: Given the limited size and scope of capacity building in the current program – and the fact that capacity building was appreciated by the majority of CSOs interviewed, it is further recommended that the program continues to prioritise capacity building. Because of (and not, in spite of) budgetary constraints that may be necessary, CSOs should prepare themselves to adopt new approaches to resource mobilisation and use in the future. This may be vital if the sector is to remain sustainable.

The donor consortium and the Steering Committee

The donor consortium and its Steering Committee are united behind a common goal of promoting human rights in the Occupied Palestinian Territory and reducing the transaction costs, for both donors and recipients, by channelling funds through a joint Secretariat. However, consortium partners do not seem to share an explicit and joint understanding of *how* human rights are best promoted, by *whom* and *where*. The review team finds that the absence of an (explicit) joint understanding and consensus about the strategic approach weakens the function of the consortium which is defined as 'an association of two or more individuals, companies, organisations or governments (or any combination of these entities) with the objective of participating in a common activity or pooling their resources for *achieving a common goal*'. This is in combination with the need to consider and include the *individual* interests and concerns of each member in the decision making process and operations of the program – either as they are described in separate contracts or as separate instructions from donor headquarters. This leads to a situation where individual expectations and perceptions of the working relationship and purpose of the program risk taking priority over the joint vision and strategy, when the latter is less precise. See recommendation one above.

The contract holder and the lead donor

The Human Rights/IHL program is a relatively complex program with a large number of stakeholders – including donors, together with their headquarters and parliaments, CSOs and staff members of the Secretariat itself. It is the responsibility of the contract holder, not 'only' to implement the program as outlined in the program strategy, but also to ensure support, motivation and commitment among all the stakeholders of the program. The contract holder should clarify their expectations, interests and concerns and – where possible – find solutions that are satisfying to all. This latter task is one that the contract holder shares with the lead donor.

³ For more details on CSOs Generations, please see page 25.

The review team finds that the contract holder and the lead donor have the expertise and skills necessary to perform this task. The contract holder has been responsive to requests and issues raised by the consortium. Notwithstanding this, the review team finds that the contract holder's proposal (which was approved by the consortium), to base the program director in Stockholm, underestimated the complexity of the task of aligning and keeping the program's stakeholders behind a joint *organisational* and *strategic* vision for the program and hindered a timely response to needed adjustments of the program during its implementation.

During the first two years of the program, the lead donor partially compensated for the physical absence of the program director by investing time in coordination with members of the donor consortium and direct cooperation with the Secretariat. Staff changes meant that new staff was introduced to tasks associated with the 'lead role', but with limited opportunities for secure handovers. This seems to have left a periodic 'leadership vacuum' in which the roles, mandates and responsibilities of the Secretariat, the lead donor and other donors in the consortium have, *de facto*, been questioned and contested. This, in turn, resulted in inefficiency and frustration among all stakeholders.

Recommendation 4: It is therefore recommended that the program invests in the full-time local presence of the program director, so as to ensure sufficient program management 'internally', 'externally' and 'upwards towards the consortium'. The latter is to take place in close cooperation and coordination with the lead donor, who is ultimately responsible for ensuring the members of the consortium are maintained as one united group.

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The physical absence of the program director "on the ground" has been a particular source of frustration to donors, and has blocked the program director's access to the additional information that is to be gained from both verbal and non-verbal communication in between meetings – either face-to-face or on Skype. Additionally, the decision seems *de facto* to have left the majority of the day-to-day management of the entire program to the manager of the Secretariat, together with the lead donor. The review team finds that this would have been an unsustainable situation, even if the Secretariat manager would have been a very experienced human resources and teams' manager.

The absence of a strong program management seems to have contributed to blur the division of work between the secretariat, the steering committee and the lead donor. While donors feel that the Secretariat does not abide to the decisions and directions of the Steering Committee, the Secretariat complains about examples of 'interference' in its work and of 'micro-management' by donors. The review team considers it is outside its mandate to position itself in this dispute, but does note that the nature of the dispute seems to follow a very common pattern in the genealogy of disputes: lack of clarity, differences in expectations and interpretations of situations which are all likely to turn into personal conflicts, if not dealt with properly and in time.

Recommendation 5: To correct this situation it is therefore recommended that, as a start, the Steering Committee formulates terms of reference for its work that clearly describe its mandate, and the division of work between the committee and the Secretariat, as well as the expectations and mandate of the lead donor and other donors in the consortium.

Key principles may include, but should not be limited to, the following:

- The mandate of the Steering Committee (and therefore the members of the consortium) is to provide a strategic direction and framework for the program and to oversee and ensure that grants are provided in accordance with the criteria spelled out in the Secretariat's granting procedures.
- The responsibility of the lead donor is to coordinate and facilitate the Steering Committee in the fulfilment of its mandate and to act as a liaison between the Steering Committee/donor consortium and the program director.
- The mandate of the program director is to oversee the implementation of the strategy, in line with the Steering Committee's priorities and directions, and to supervise the work of the Secretariat and the Secretariat's management. In doing so, the director will liaise closely with the lead donor.
- The mandate of the Secretariat's manager is to manage the Secretariat and the day-to-day implementation of the program strategy.

The Secretariat

The Secretariat consists of two offices: one in Ramallah and one in Gaza. Feedback from CSOs/grantees suggests a general satisfaction with the staff and with cooperation with the Secretariat, although granting and reporting procedures – in particular in the Secretariat's first years – were considered bureaucratic and cumbersome. These procedures were later revised.

During the review process, concerns were raised about the high turnover of staff in the past three years. The review team was unable to identify one single or major contributing reason for this situation. Contributing factors may have been frustration over the lack of clarity in the Secretariat's mandate, with respect to policy dialogue; family issues and/or the fact that the values of a staff member were incompatible with the values of the Secretariat. Other sources suggest that limited experience of the secretariat manager in terms of management and a rather robust management style in the Secretariat may also have contributed to the high staff turnover.

Recommendation 6: It is therefore recommended that the program invests in leadership-supervision and coaching for the manager of the Secretariat, given the complex task and responsibilities that are associated with this position.

The Reference group

To provide the Secretariat and the Donor Consortium with independent expert advice and strategic dialogue regarding trends, developments and challenges in the human rights and IHL fields in Palestine, the program established a reference group of independent, impartial individuals, free from vested interest in either the Secretariat or the HR/IHL program in general.

The original purpose and idea of the reference group was never really realized however. Lack of clarity of the secretariat's and the donors' 'ownership' of the reference group, a heavy workload from granting procedures on the secretariat and the inability of the program to define a viable approach and strategy to policy dialogue are main reasons for this.

Recommendation 7: Provided that the program would wish to continue with a reference group, it is therefore recommended that the program management and the Steering Committee jointly agrees on the purpose of the reference group and the various program stakeholders', ownership to and responsibility for it, and that the purpose, meaning and scope of policy dialogue, as well as the potential role and contribution of the/a reference group in this work is redefined.

1. Purpose of the review

The Human Rights and International Humanitarian Law Secretariat, hereinafter called the HR/IHL Secretariat, is a joint donor program that includes Denmark, the Netherlands, Sweden and Switzerland. Norway plans to join the program in 2017. Sweden, represented by the Consulate General of Sweden, leads the consortium of donor countries. The overall objective of the program is to *contribute to the effective realisation of adherence to human rights and international humanitarian law in the Occupied Palestinian Territory and to influence the behaviour of the relevant duty bearers, including Israel, the Palestinian Authority and the de facto government in Gaza*. Since 2013, the HR/IHL Secretariat has been managed, on behalf of the donors; by the Swedish consultancy firm NIRAS Natura AB in consortium with Birzeit University Institute of Law. During the period from 2008 to 2013 the Secretariat was managed by the NGO Development Centre, NDC. This mid-term review only refers to the management since 2013.

The HR/IHL program was launched to work towards four objectives:

1. That the HR/IHL Secretariat be institutionalised and considered a key player, and resourceful partner, in the promotion of HR and IHL issues in the OPT.
2. To be an effective fund for the promotion of HR and IHL, in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, that is transparent and reduces corruption and duplication.
3. To strengthen the CSOs' environment in the HR/IHL sector through institutional development, internal efficiency, effective participation in democratic processes and improved performance.
4. The Secretariat should make meaningful contributions to policy development in the sector and should actively participate in policy dialogue with donors and other sector stakeholders.

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This report outlines the findings of a mid-term review, conducted by Malene Soenderskov (team leader) and Naser Maali (evaluation consultant) between March and May 2016, of the IHL/HR program and the Secretariat's contribution to the program's objectives

The objectives of the mid-term review were:

- To assess whether the Secretariat is contributing towards the achievement of the immediate objectives of the program, taking into account what can be achieved by the type of funding and its constancy, the effect on the sector and the relationship between the donors and the NGOs.
- To review whether the structure of the Secretariat has facilitated the program objectives, mostly in regards to aid harmonisation, capacity building, policy dialogue, lower transaction costs and better quality assurance.
- To present lessons learnt and recommendations to improve the mechanism that will provide guidance for donors' decision making.

The review complements an assessment of *'Effectiveness of core funding to CSOs in the field of human rights and international humanitarian law in occupied Palestine'* conducted by Cecilia Karlstedt, in June 2015, and a recent review of the internal management and control procedures and processes of the IHL/HR Secretariat. Additionally, the review will be further informed by previous evaluations and assessments, including an *'Impact Assessment*

of the Human Rights and Good Governance Secretariat' (the IHL/HR Secretariat's predecessor) in 2013. To avoid a duplication of work, issues addressed in these reports will only be superficially explored in this report.

2. Rationale

The Secretariat and the program is based on the overall assumption that the funding of selected Palestinian and Israeli CSOs will enable them to motivate a change in the behaviour of different duty bearers operating in the OPT, prompting them to adhere to the international standards of IHRHL⁴.

According to the program's objectives, the program's theory of change is based on a rationale that
If the HR/IHL Secretariat is a key player and resourceful partner,

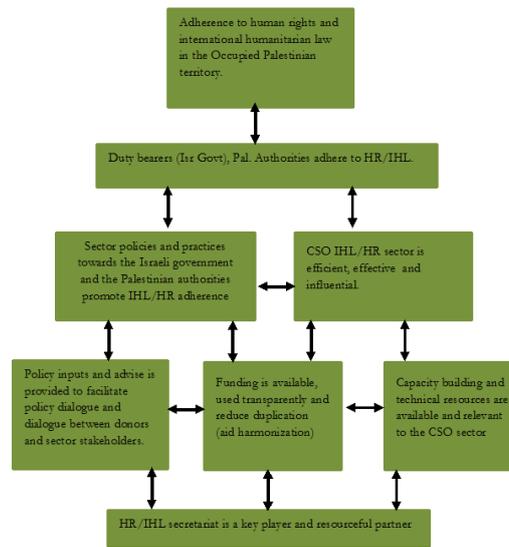
then

- Technical resources and inputs (organisational capacity building) will be available to CSOs
- Funds will be available and will be used transparently and effectively, and duplication of interventions will be avoided and
- Meaningful contributions will be provided to policy development in the sector and in policy dialogue with donors and other stakeholders.

This is likely to contribute to a situation where the CSO IHL/HR sector is efficient, effective and influential, and where sector policies and practices towards the Israeli government and the Palestinian Authorities promote IHL/HR adherence, eventually leading to a contribution to the program's overall objective: *The effective realisation of adherence to human rights and international humanitarian law in the Occupied Palestinian Territory and to influence the behaviour of the relevant duty bearers, including Israel, the Palestinian Authority and the de facto government in Gaza.* A graphical illustration of the program's intervention logic is shown below in Figure 1 on Page 12.

⁴ Secretariat Strategy, Final

Figure 1: The program's theory of change



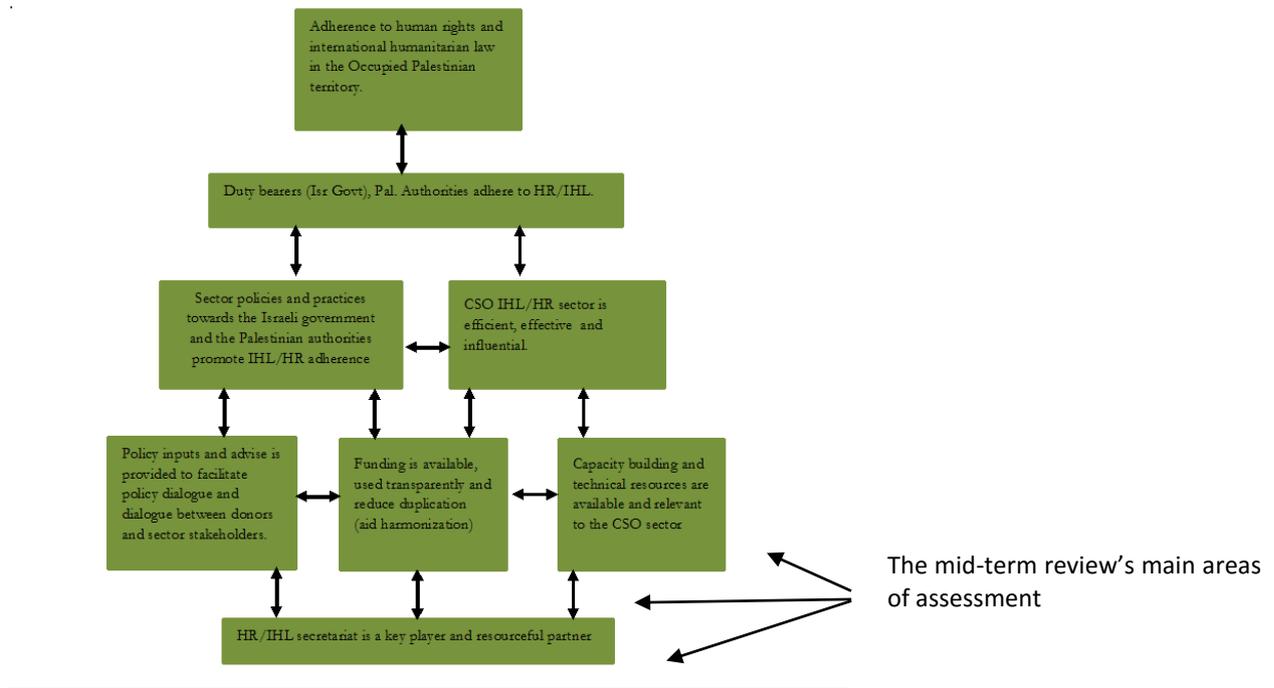
The relevance, viability and feasibility of the program's rationale rest on a number of key assumptions, of which the following seem to have been of key importance during the program implementation from 2013 until the present.

These include, but are not limited to:

- The feasibility and effectiveness of the governing structure of the Secretariat, including *how* the Secretariat is governed, *how* decisions are made and the role of the donor consortium in this respect.
- The institutional capacity of NIRAS/BZU as managers of the Secretariat and the contract.
- The institutional and management capacity of the Secretariat to provide technical support, funding and policy inputs, in a relevant, effective and cost-efficient way. This includes, but is not limited to, the extent to which NGOs, donors and other stakeholders have perceived the funding, technical and policy inputs provided by the Secretariat as relevant and legitimate in the actual context.
- The relevance, efficiency and effectiveness of the funding mechanism provided by the Secretariat as core funding or one-year project funding.

The assumptions listed relate to the program's theory of change as indicated in Figure 2 on Page 13. Other key assumptions that are important to the viability of the program's overall rationale are not assessed in this review. They include such things as whether or not strategies pursued by CSOs (and funded by donors) are effective and influence decision makers or how, and to what extent, capacity strengthening and policy dialogue may be more efficient in some contexts and situations than in others.

Figure 2: Assumptions relevant to the theory of change



3. Methodology

The review was conducted in an environment characterised by diverse perceptions and expectations to the HR/IHL secretariat and the program in general. A reality that caused frustration and dissatisfaction among some stakeholders. The team adopted appreciative enquiry approach to address this issue.

The appreciative inquiry approach is a non-judgemental approach that accommodates the potential complexity of realities and ‘truths’. When an appreciate inquiry approach is used, the role of the review team is not to identify one ‘truth’, but to explore the realities and perceptions of all the informants that participate in the review and, based on that, to contribute to a deeper understanding of why and where perceptions differ. The aim is to provide recommendations that may contribute to strengthen the understanding between stakeholders of the perspectives of ‘the other’ and suggest solutions that may accommodate the complexity and diverse perspectives presented to the review team.

The consultants applied the following methodologies in assessing the viability of assumptions relevant to the Secretariat’s governing structure, the institutional capacity of the contract holders and the institutional and management capacity of the Secretariat itself.

Document Review:

The consultants conducted a thorough desk review of documentation from the HR/IHL Secretariat, the donors and the CSOs, including, but not limited to:

- Past reviews and evaluations of the program

- Tender documentation and proposals presented to the donors, in 2013, by Niras and Birzeit University
- Needs assessments and the Secretariat's "scoping analysis"
- Strategic plans and budgets
- Contract materials and minutes from Steering Committee meetings
- Work plans and reports from the HR/IHL Secretariat
- Funding manual and complaints mechanism

Participatory Self-Assessment Workshops:

The review team facilitated two workshops for staff of the Secretariat and for members of the donor consortium/Steering Committee.

The purpose of the workshops was to provide members of the donor consortium and members of the Secretariat with the opportunity to:

- Reflect on the understanding and viability of the program's overall
- Reflect on achievements made.
- Assess the viability of the key assumptions that are the focus of the review and to assess to what extent the governing structure, has contributed – positively or negatively to achievements made.
- Identify key organisational challenges to the Secretariat and its governance, in terms of contributing to the program's objectives.

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The review team believes that a key pre-condition to findings having true ownership within the Secretariat and the donor consortium, is to make sure that they are included in the defining and identifying of both challenges and solutions.

The review team gained important information, by involving members of the donor consortium and the staff of the Secretariat in reflections about these issues and these discussions led to focus group discussions and semi-structured interviews after the workshops were concluded.

Focus Group Discussions

Nine focus group discussions were organised with CSOs from Gaza, the West Bank, Israel and East Jerusalem, including both recipients of core funds, of project funds and unsuccessful CSOs. 35 CSO representatives and organisations participated in these discussions and meetings.

The purpose of the focus group discussions was to assess CSO's perception of the relevance and feasibility of the Secretariat's work. A questionnaire was developed to facilitate and inform the discussions. The questionnaire is attached in Annex IV.

Semi-Structured Interviews

Interviews were conducted separately with each donor, the present Secretariat in Ramallah and in Gaza city, with representatives from the program's reference groups and a handful of selected key interviewees and external experts including government representatives, UNDP, managers of big CSOs supported by the program and other HR/IHL stakeholders.

4. Main findings

The human rights situation is deteriorating. Funding to the Human Rights/IHL sector has decreased or stagnated in the past eight years. At the same time, the number of CSOs, working to mainstream a human rights based approach into their work, has increased. This has led to a situation where competition for the fewer funds has increased and CSOs spend more time fund-raising and sustaining basic operations and less time on developing new approaches or attending to the key mandate of the organisation.

For this reason, this review was conducted in an environment of frustration and intense competition between CSOs in the human rights sector in Gaza and on the West Bank. 'Old' and 'traditional' human rights organisations watch with disbelief as organisations, who were once perceived as 'disability organisations,' 'gender organisations' or 'agricultural organisations', receive 'human rights funding' – funds that they thought 'belonged' to them. The result is criticism and frustration.

'Sorry to be selfish, but I think the Secretariat should support the giants only. We should not spend time on fund-raising. This is a new situation from the last six-seven years. This is really not good',

CSO interviewee

Establishing and running a human rights Secretariat, in such an environment, is delicate affair. This is made even more difficult as organisations, which used to communicate directly with donors and receive funding from each individual one, are now obliged to communicate through a joint Secretariat, and receive a much smaller proportion of funds than before. This is not only considered a loss of 'income' but is also seen as a loss of privileges and proximity to the 'real' funding source and decision makers. Furthermore, the overhead of an international manager is perceived as a 'waste of money' which could have been better spent if it had been given to the CSOs directly.

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The Secretariat shouldn't disperse itself, working on a lot of things. It is possible to limit its work to core and project funding, without capacity building and policy dialogue

CSO interviewee

For these reasons, the review team strived, during the review process, to distinguish between: criticism and issues that reflected an overall frustration of the funding and human rights situation in *general*, criticism and issues that were relevant to the set-up of *the idea of a Secretariat* as such and criticism and issues that were relevant to the current Secretariat *specifically*. This was not always an easy task.

The major findings in this section relate to the team's assessment of how the *current* set-up has contributed to the program's overall objectives. If the choice was left entirely to the CSOs, then most – and in particular those who have 'lost the most' in the transition from a bilateral relationship with each donor to a Secretariat – would definitely choose to revert to the 'good old days' of bilateral cooperation and more funding.

This has not been our main focus, however. In line with the Terms of Reference, we have striven to assess the relevance, the effectiveness and the contribution of the current set-up to the program's overall set-up and objectives as well as trying to analyse this within the context of scarce funds and strong competition.

4.1. Objective 1: An effective fund for the promotion of HR and IHL issues in OPT, which is transparent, reduces corruption and duplication

Aid effectiveness, with respect to grant making, is usually understood as funding provided with as low a transaction cost – for the recipient as well as for the provider – as possible. In the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness of 2005, governments from the North and South and international organisations agreed on five principles for increased aid effectiveness, that have had great implications for civil society support since then:

- 1) Ownership - Developing countries should set their own strategies for development, improve their institutions and tackle corruption.
- 2) Alignment - Donor countries should be aligned to these objectives and should use local systems and processes for aid delivery.
- 3) Harmonisation - Donor countries should coordinate, simplify procedures and share information to avoid duplication.
- 4) Managing for Results - Developing countries and donors should ensure that programs are implemented in a way that focuses on desired results and uses the results for improved decision-making.
- 5) Mutual accountability - donors and partner governments should work in a transparent and mutually accountable way and should be mutually accountable for developments' results.

Core funding; the provisioning of funds to the general operational budget of CSOs, rather than to individual projects, is generally understood to contribute to, to fulfil or to be aligned with these principles, as core funding is allocated to fund priorities and strategies formulated by CSOs themselves (Criteria One and Two). This was also confirmed by the Israeli and Palestinian grant receivers of core funds. Core funds were highly appreciated, as they offered organisations the stability and “space” to think strategically and to build their organisations.

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The establishment of a joint HR/IHL program and ‘pooling funds’ from the governments of Denmark, the Netherlands, Sweden and Switzerland would also realise the third criteria, concerning aid harmonisation. Funds would be granted through one joint Secretariat that applied one set of joint funding criteria. This would reduce the time and effort needed by applicants to build relationships, to communicate with and to accommodate the needs and procedures of each individual donor.

Since 2005, three different Secretariats have worked on behalf of the donor consortium, administering funding to the human rights sector from the four government donors. (The current Secretariat was established in 2013 after the mechanism had been administered by the NGO Development Centre for a number of years.) One of the key motivations for the change seems to have been a wish by donors to strengthen the Secretariat’s professional inputs to the field of *Human Rights* programming as opposed to programming in general. Partnering with Niras and Birzeit University was believed to fulfil this aim.

4.1.1. Main achievements

Procedures and processes have been formulated

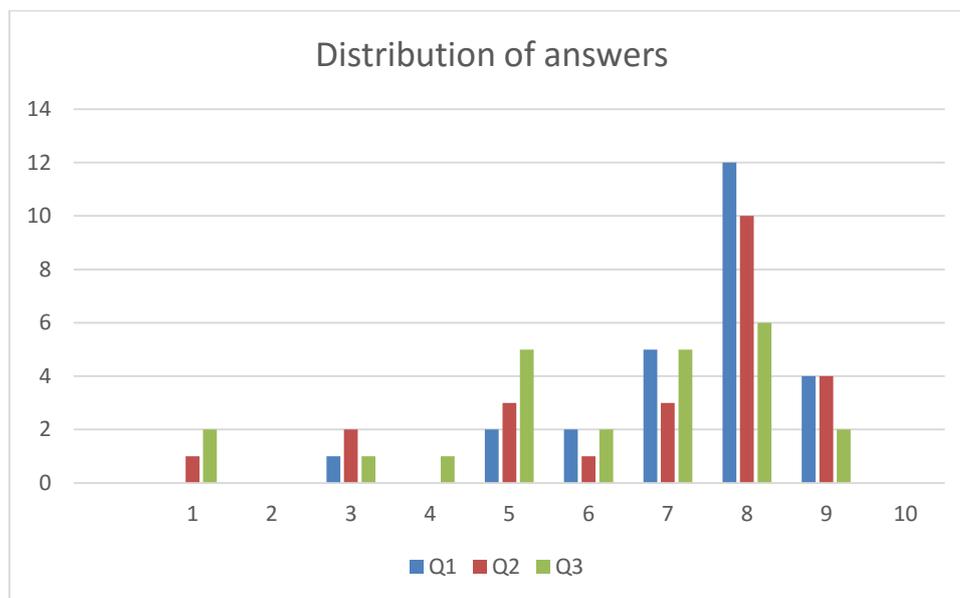
During 2014 and 2015, the Secretariat (Niras and Birzeit University) invested substantial human resources and activities into building the Secretariat’s fund management system and process, formulating a funding manual, describing the procedures for granting, introducing a participatory organisational capacity assessment tool (POCAT) and increasing mutual trust with partner CSOs, donors, and other stakeholders.

According to the Secretariat, two factors necessitated this investment. Firstly, because they were a completely new team with no institutional memory (institutional memory remained with the donor consortium however), and because the team found that the systems inherited from the former secretariat were insufficient to meet the requirements of the new terms of reference, the Secretariat team and management decided to revise and adopt the systems and structures for grant making used by the former secretariat. Secondly, the Secretariat decided on a participatory approach to formulating funding manuals and financial guidelines, which is generally a time-consuming procedure, but at the same time is a process that strengthens ownership and understanding of the product. This investment was 'worth the effort', according to some CSO interviewees whom the team interviewed, as it enabled applicants and grantees to familiarise themselves with the procedures and guidelines, when the granting process started and as it created a sense of ownership in the Secretariat's strategy.

Good working relationship between the Secretariat and CSOs –stronger human rights based approach in grants

Within this process, the Secretariat seems to have fulfilled one of the original intentions of its establishment – to strengthen the human rights profile and inputs of CSOs into the grant making process. On a scale from 0 – very weak – to ten – excellent – CSO interviewees rated the overall cooperation, relevance and quality of the support provided by the Secretariat at an average of 7,6.

Figure 3: CSO's level of satisfaction with services provided by the Secretariat



Question 1: On a scale from 0 (very weak) to 10 (excellent): How did you find the overall cooperation with Secretariat? (Please indicate on the line below with an "x": Average score: 7.3

Question 2: On a scale from 0 (very weak) to 10 (excellent): How did you find the relevance and quality of the direct support that the Secretariat has provided to the formulation of your application for core funding/project funding? Average score: 6.6

Question 3: On a scale from 0 (very weak) to 10 (excellent): How did you find the relevance and usefulness of the events and mechanisms initiated by the Secretariat for policy dialogue? Please note that many interviewees interpreted this question as the 'dialogue' between them and the Secretariat – not the 'policy dialogue' planned in the program document. Average score: 6.3

CSOs particularly highlight the fact that requirements are not imposed on them and that the dialogue always takes the applicants' own plans and priorities, as a point of departure. Other interviewees explained that the application process – even when the application was turned down – had been useful, as it consolidated their own awareness of their strengths and weaknesses.

Staff interviewees whom the team interviewed generally felt that after a 'year of accommodation' the CSOs who are supported today have a good understanding of the funding procedures and the requirements for managing funds granted by the Secretariat and that financial and narrative reports are now received more or less on time.

Coordination and cooperation among CSOs on documentation of human rights' violations

During the Gaza war, in 2014, the Secretariat provided emergency funding to four Gaza NGOs, to document violations of human rights. Together, the four NGOs employed approximately one hundred field workers, to document violations of the International Humanitarian laws against, and atrocities towards, the civil population in Gaza. The results were presented in a joint report and submitted to the International Human Rights Commission.

This joint documentation of war atrocities was facilitated by the manner in which the emergency funds were distributed - a first of its kind in Gaza – and it helped to strengthen the legitimacy and credibility of the documentation that was written. Because the CSOs presented one joint report, they were able to present consolidated and consistent figures which could prevented them from being easy targets of critique and attacks from external opponents. By presenting the documentation jointly, the CSOs were able to speak with one louder voice, compared to an earlier situation where each would have prepared its own report.

4.1.2. Main limitations

'Too much Bureaucracy'

While CSOs seem, in general, to have become accustomed to the funding procedures and guidelines of the Secretariat, this has not been without difficulties.

The introduction of a Participatory Organisational Capacity Assessment Tool (POCAT), which aimed to assist CSOs and the Secretariat identify focus areas for capacity building, turned out to be too cumbersome and bureaucratic. It earned the Secretariat a reputation for 'USAID style'. The tool was later abandoned.

'Delays in funding – and too little of it'

Delays in funding and lower amounts of funding remain a key concern for grantees. Several factors have caused this delay:

Outstanding contractual issues between the secretariat and individual CSOs. Some CSOs interviewed complained about funding delays, apparently caused by outstanding contractual issues between them and the secretariat. This was confirmed by documentation from the secretariat that showed that many CSOs delayed providing contractual documents, including narrative reports, budget and audits that would enable the release of funds.

Transfer time between Niras and the Secretariat: Several informants mentioned lengthy 'transfer time' between the time when the secretariat made a funding request to the time funds were received as a cause for funding delays that affected timely payment to CSOs as well as timely transfer of salaries to staff members at the secretariat.

Holdups caused by external financial audits and reviews: The fact that payments were – and had to – be withheld until external audits had been completed may have caused delay in funding to CSOs as well as to the secretariat from donors.

Box 2: Payment flows 2015-2016

- The First Payments of 2015 were due by February 2015. The review team found that those payments were released from the Secretariat Office in Ramallah between March and June 2015, with two- four months delay. You need to add more time till these payments were issued from Niras Sweden.
- The Second Payments of 2015 were due by August 2015. The review team found that those payments were released from the Secretariat Office in Ramallah between September and November 2016. The Secretariat indicated that during October and November 2015, there was delay of payments, due to cash shortage. Cash from donors was only received on 11 November. Another reason for the delay during the same period has been the discussion with donors respecting the currency variance.
- The First Payments of 2016 were due by February 2016. The review team found that those payments were released from the Secretariat Office in Ramallah between March and May 2016.

Additionally the CSOs that received core funding complained that what they received was less than anticipated – and much less than they had received before, when they signed agreements with each consortium member individually.

The following are feed-back and reflections from CSOs, taken during focus group discussions, and they reflect this dissatisfaction:

- *Expand the funding term from three to five years,*
- *Provide an annual increase of the committed fund, in line with the changes that result from the increased needs of projects, the large size of the CSOs and staffing,*
- *Reduce unnecessary funded items, such as capacity building, as per the CSOs' needs and priorities,*
- *CSOs can train each other, on a voluntary basis and without financing, with reinforced cooperation between them,*

- *The Secretariat shouldn't disperse itself working on a lot of things. It is possible to limit its work to core and project funding, without capacity building and policy dialogue.*

Staff turnover and resources

High staff turnover in the Secretariat and an apparently in-adequate and uneven distribution of tasks amongst staff members have contributed to a situation where the monitoring and follow-up with supported CSOs have been less regular, than anticipated and desired by the CSOs themselves.

Some staff members have access difficulties e.g. Jerusalem and the way workloads are distributed has de facto led to a situation where a few staff members are responsible for the monitoring and follow-up of a very high number of CSOs, while others find it difficult to spend their time in a meaningful way.

Peaks in the workload associated with the war in Gaza, as well as two rounds of project funding, may have contributed to this situation as both fund managers, finance and administration managers and capacity building advisors have been deeply involved in the granting, associated with the rounds of granting. The workload associated with the granting procedures does also seem to have delayed the training and capacity building events being offered by the Secretariat.

Today, the need for the fund manager seems less pressing, as all the funds have been disbursed. Capacity and technical advisors are still over-loaded however, and find it difficult to follow-up with CSOs as frequently as they would like to.

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Allegations related to transparency and objectivity in grant making

The granting procedure is guided by an extensive fund management manual, that is publicly available on the Secretariat's home page and which describes the funding process, the roles and responsibilities of the Steering Committee and the technical appraisal committee, the eligibility criteria and procedures for identifying funding themes and the difference between core funding, project funding and emergency funding. The manual also includes a description of the procedures whereby the Secretariat will observe accountability and transparency.

“With respect to the objectivity, or the lack thereof, in the Secretariat's work, it is difficult to define because of our ignorance of the criteria they use for the selection”

“We can't say that there is a bias towards any party, but there is a problem in the Secretariat and the country, as the small CSOs are marginalised while the big CSOs get the support”.

Despite this, the review team was presented with allegations of 'lack of transparency', bias and favouritism. The steering committee members in particular felt, that the secretariat had not been able to account for and explain in a satisfactory manner why some CSOs and projects were proposed for funding while others were not. This caused general frustration among the donors with the secretariat's management of fund.

The review team was not able to find substantial documentation to support allegations of bias or favouritism beyond the favouritism that occurs when grant managers and administrators consider their own, previous experiences with and knowledge of an organization in their judgement of a new proposal. Having said that, the

review team is of the opinion that explanations for the persistence of such allegations might be founded in factors such as:

- The inadequate match between the funding criteria formulated and used by the secretariat and the priorities and expectations of donors. Support for women's rights organizations and activities were for instance completely omitted from the second round of project funding, although gender rights is a key priority to several members of the consortium
- The general competition and scarcity of funds in the sector, which may lead to complaints among CSOs who are unsuccessful
- A limited knowledge, among the CSOs, of the criteria used when funds are allocated – and the reasons why their proposal has been rejected.
- A widespread perception in the CSO community that 'some NGOs are the 'darlings' of certain donors whilst others are favoured by other donors
- Diversion from the criteria from time to time.

An instance of the latter was when the Secretariat and the Steering Committee decided to give special attention to CSOs in Jerusalem, despite the difficulties some of them had complying with the eligibility criteria. While this and other decisions, to support individual CSOs, may be justified for other reasons they do risk contributing to rumours of favouritism, when the reasons for such deviations are not clearly communicated.

According to interviewed staff members, such situations are highly frustrating because they undermine the Secretariat's efforts to be transparent and they bypass the work of the technical assessment committee which rates all projects, based on technical criteria.

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One staff member mentioned that the reasons for rejection are not always clear to the staff members either. That includes members of the technical assessment committee themselves. This is a cause of frustration among the staff and of disappointment and anger among the concerned CSOs too.

As mentioned, the review team was not able to find any documentation to substantiate allegations of systematic favouritism or bias. Rejected NGOs that the review team talked to all seemed to have been rejected for a good reason. But the rumours themselves, together with the highly sensitive context that the Secretariat work in, does point out the necessity for the Secretariat to make an extra effort to communicate, very clearly, both internally to staff and publicly, why some CSOs are successful while others fail to receive a grant and how this is in line with the Fund Management Manual.

Cooperation between the Secretariat and members of the donor consortium

The review team finds that the cooperation between the management of the Secretariat and some members of the donor consortium is constrained and that trust in each other is low. While some members feel that the Secretariat does not abide by the decisions and directions of the Steering Committee, the Secretariat complains about examples of 'interference' in its work and of 'micro-management' by consortium members. The review team considers it outside its mandate to position itself in this dispute. Yet, its very existence remains a concern and an issue that needs to be resolved, if cooperation is to be maintained in the future.

4.1.3. Overall performance of the Secretariat

Based on interviews with Secretariat staff members, CSOs and members of the donor consortium, the review team will summarise the performance of the Secretariat in terms of grant management, as outlined in Table 1 on page 22. While some issues can be improved, merely by the intervention of the Secretariat and the contract holder alone, others- such as reducing funding gaps and limiting donor intervention in the grant process – may only be achieved through a closer cooperation and a specification of the mandates of each stakeholder in the program.

Table 1: Overall performance of the Secretariat ‘average rating’ based on all stakeholders’ inputs

Poor	Barely acceptable	Good	Very good
Funding/selection criteria are unavailable. Selection is not transparent.	Funding criteria exist but are not completely clear or consistently followed. 	Funding criteria are generally followed and clear to staff and grantees.	Trust among all stakeholders that funding criteria are rigorously followed.
Financial management guidelines do not exist/CSOs follow own their procedures for financial management and audits.	Financial management guidelines partly followed by CSOs.	Financial management guidelines are generally followed, with minor corrections from the Secretariat to CSOs only. 	CSOs follow financial procedures systematically. Budgets are consolidated and clear and human rights focused.
Coaching of CSOs and follow-up from the Secretariat in financial management is weak.	Coaching and follow-up with CSOs takes place but on ad hoc basis.	Coaching and follow-up takes place with regular meetings with partners.	Coaching and follow-up takes place with regular meetings with partners.
No coordination with other donors/ risk of overlaps in funding.	Ad hoc coordination with other donors. 	Systematic coordination of grants with other donors. 	Systematic coordination of grants with other donors. Policy dialogue and coordination of ‘donor practices’.
Major funding gaps and delays of transfers.	Minor funding gaps and delays of transfers.	Funding gaps are rare.	No funding gaps.
Frequent interventions from donors in management.	Regular donor intervention in management. 	Occasional donor intervention in management.	No donor intervention in management.

4.2. Objective 2: Strengthened CSOs in the HR/IHL sector through institutional development, internal efficacy, effective participation in democratic processes and improved performance

The original idea as described in the proposal from Niras and the Birzeit University, in 2013, seems to have been to provide access to a huge ‘hub of knowledge’ at Birzeit University, for CSOs in the Human Rights Sector, which they would be able to use to strengthen their capabilities in areas such as campaigning, legal research and NGO management.

University entities of particular relevance were:

- **The Institute of Law** – for legal research and capacity building on IHL related issues.
- **The Centre for Continuing Education (CCE)**, which functions as the University's main community-service extension and provider of professional development programs in Palestine. It offers an NGO Management Diploma, designed to assist NGOs in building the capacity of middle and upper management cadres in areas of organisational development, project cycle management, networking and fundraising and financial and human resource management⁵.
- **An MA program in Democracy and Human Rights** which provides training, education, and capacity building in the field of democracy and human rights.
- **A Media Development Centre (MDC)** which aims to encourage the development of independent media including by the CSO community.
- **An Institute of Women's Studies (IWS)** offering an MA program on Gender, Law and Development, which involves research, teaching and advocacy for gender equality in Palestine and beyond.

Birzeit University is committed to making these services available, through the Institute of Law, for the project to use throughout the life of the project. The opportunity to link the CSOs in the Human Rights Sector to a community of professional expertise and research in exactly this field seems to have been a key motivation for the donor consortium's signing a contract with Niras and Birzeit University. Rather than continuing its cooperation with the NGO Development Centre (NDC), which administered the fund until 2013, it was felt that the program needed a stronger Human Rights profile that was founded in legal research and practices. It was felt that partnering with Niras and Birzeit would fulfil this aim.

It is up to CSOs themselves to decide if they will participate in capacity building events. It is the review team's opinion that this is a wise approach, since learning always comes from 'within' and its success depends upon the motivation and demand of those engaged in it.

4.2.1. Main achievements

During the course of the program, the Secretariat has provided informal capacity building and coaching of CSOs on program design, financial management and fund management to ensure compliance with funding guidelines. This has included coaching by the finance and fund managers in best practice in financial management, fund management, programme cycle management and M&E. In addition, the secretariat has engaged in more formal capacity building initiatives using four different approaches in addition to training of trainers:

- 1) **'Tailored' capacity building;** financed through the core grants provided by the Secretariat and consultations about CSOs project strategies, financial and M&E procedures. This has been conducted as part of the granting procedure and in field visits during project implementation. It is estimated that 30% of the staffs' time has been allocated to this. CSO interviewees, whom the team interviewed, appreciated the obligation for allocating funds from the core grant to capacity building. This enabled them to plan, according to their own needs and interests, and to adopt a strategic approach to capacity building and organisational development that was in line with their own priorities. For some the obligation was an opportunity to 'finance training activities that we could otherwise

⁵ Technical Tender, March 2013

not afford', while others found it 'strange in the beginning' but had come to appreciate it as a gentle reminder not to forget to develop the organisation.

2) Collective capacity building activities conducted as workshops for recipients of project and core funding.

Results based reporting: In 2015, capacity building was conducted for 12 out of 24 partners in M&E and results based reporting. The training included two times three-day workshop and two additional days where participants brought their draft reports, so that these could be reviewed and revised during the workshop. CSOs in Gaza and on the West Bank felt that the training had been very useful and that it had improved their ability to report on results. This impression was confirmed by the CSO facilitator in Gaza, who thought that reporting had improved. The CSO facilitator on the West Bank had not reviewed the reports, at the time of the mid-term review, and was therefore not able to confirm the findings of other interviewees.

Human Rights Based Approach: 18 partners on the West Bank and seven in Gaza have participated in Training of trainers' and have developed a plan on how they will share the lessons learnt, on key principles and approaches of applying a human rights based approach and IHL/human rights, with colleagues inside their own organisations as well as with other CSOs. The Secretariat staff will follow-up with trainers individually, in 2016, to support the implementation of their plans. CSO facilitators, as well as supported CSOs, confirmed that the training had affected their discourse and design of projects, their applications and their reporting. It helped them to strengthen their focus on the rights of beneficiaries, rather than their needs only, and taught them to plan and implement interventions accordingly.

I now have high capabilities in the field of international law and human rights'

CSO interviewee commenting on HRBA training

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3) Peer-to-Peer Training

Since the start of the program, the Secretariat has facilitated a number of peer-to-peer training courses, in a variety of issues, such as women's rights, worker's rights etc. Most interviewees expressed their satisfaction with the training and told the review team that they had been able to use the experiences, that they had been exposed to from other organisations, in their own work. Being exposed to the training methodologies of other CSO was also a learning opportunity for those participants and trainees who act as trainers themselves.

The peer-to-peer training seems to have not only benefitted the training participants but for some of the trainers representing smaller CSOs. The training was also an opportunity for them to strengthen their network and to build working relationships with other CSOs.

4) Internship program

Since 2014, the program has hosted law students from Birzeit University and Azhar University, in Gaza. The students selected are third year law students who work as interns with CSOs in Gaza and on the West Bank, for a total of 80 hours. Work plans and responsibilities are agreed between the CSOs and the intern, with the facilitation of the Secretariat's advocacy advisor.

The experiences of the students and the CSOs are mixed. Some CSOs expressed their appreciation of the arrangement, which they thought had benefitted both the organisation and the intern. Other CSOs – including those who used to host interns bilaterally –perceived the internship program mainly as a liability. They complained that interns were not serious, unaware of their responsibilities and indifferent to the tasks requested from them.

4.2.2. Main limitations

Absence of the 'Birzeit touch' and potential added value in capacity building.

The program's cooperation with Birzeit University provided the potential to offer advanced training related to human rights, campaigning and NGO management; all within the University's field of expertise. Yet, it is the review team's impression, that this potential remains largely untapped.

While the provided training has been both relevant and appreciated, by most of the CSOs who received it, it is questionable if this, or similar training, could have been offered by other well-established training providers in Palestine, including the NGO Development Centre and PNGO. The Human Rights NGO Al Haq also provides training opportunities.

As an example, PNGO conducts training in topics such as:

- Strategic planning
- Project management
- M and E
- Financial practices
- Advocacy
- Membership development; incorporation of youth and women in boards
- Codes of conduct for NGOs
- Gender mainstreaming
- Managing and motivating volunteers

The training requirements and capabilities that CSOs need, to operate effectively, are very diverse and depend on their focus and strategic approach, as outlined in Table 2, below. It is questionable whether the program's attempts to offer capacity building that is relevant *all kinds* of CSOs – from the smallest CBOs in Jerusalem to the biggest and most highly specialised in Israel, Gaza and the West Bank - has led to a result where the program was unable to capitalise on the particular added value and/or the expertise of Birzeit University. One might ask if Birzeit University would not be better positioned responding to the needs of highly specialised 'third generation CSOs', than to the more general needs of 'first and second generation CSOs', whose training needs are also addressed by other actors.

Table 2: Strategies applied by CSOs and the corresponding organisational capabilities required

	Strategies adopted by CSOs		
	First generation	Second generation	Third generation
Focus	Relief, charity	Self-reliant local development	Sustainable systems development
Problem definition	Shortages of goods and services	Individual and community social, political and economic disempowerment	Institutional and policy constraints
Time frame	Immediate	Project life	Indefinite, long term
Spatial scope	Individual or family	Community, village	Region, nation, global
Chief actors	CSO/charity	CSO and beneficiary organisations/grassroots	All public and private institutions that define the system
Management capabilities needed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Logistic and financial management 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Logistic and financial management • Project/program planning, • M&E and reporting • Staff management • Fundraising 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Logistic and financial management • Project/program planning, • M&E and reporting • Staff management • Fundraising • Strategic management to sustain and create commitment among stakeholders for the vision. • Management of allies, constituencies and volunteers. • Technical skills: Lobbying, policy analysis, campaigning

If this were true, then the program might consider focussing its future capacity building initiatives around issues that are more specialised and where the program might be better placed to capitalise on the expertise and added value of Birzeit University. Such an approach may match well with a future where more support is likely to be provided, as core funding, to bigger CSOs. It could help prepare support CSOs for a future where donor funding is unlikely to increase and where other funding sources – such as cooperation with private enterprises, social enterprising and building on local constituencies and ‘members’ - may be exploited. This exploitation is necessary if the CSO community is to continue to mobilise wider support for their ideas, either through alliance building, mobilising local or global constituencies, creating attention through conventional or social media, presenting convincing policy papers and proposals, negotiating with decision makers or a combination of these.

The review team is concerned, therefore, that capacity building initiatives are more likely to target the needs and interests of the specialised, more advanced CSOs and those that are more in line with the ‘Birzeit added value’ have been omitted from the 2016 budget, because the budget’s has been reduced by 1,4 million USD. These include:

- Training on IHL and HR conventions in Jerusalem and the West Bank
- Harmonisation of national legislation in the light of international conventions
- Media strategy/strategic communication
- Shadow reporting
- Documentation of human rights’ violations

Instead, the Secretariat envisions focussing its capacity building on financial and procurement management – topics that may well be covered by other training providers in Israel and Palestine.

It is therefore recommended that the program defines the added value of Birzeit University and specifies the purpose, targets and hope-for results of future capacity building and engages in a closer coordination and cooperation with other training providers, who may offer training in areas other than those provided by the program's Secretariat.

4.3. Objective 3: The Secretariat makes meaningful contributions to policy development in the sector, through evidence based measures and effective IMS against the monitoring of services, and participates actively in policy dialogue with donors and other sector stakeholders

The program defines policy dialogue as *a process where donors and government can listen to CSOs on the subject of priorities and about the situation on the ground. Policy dialogue with donors should be a process where donors outline and debate their respective country's policy positions*⁶.

As such, policy dialogue was originally intended to provide a forum for stakeholders (primarily CSOs and donors) to:

- Share information with CSOs about policy context, concerns and the interests of key stakeholders in Europe and nationally and internationally which would ultimately qualify their policy analyses and advocacy interventions.
- Share information with donors about the Palestinian context, which would ultimately qualify their policy briefs and recommendations to headquarters and other relevant stakeholders.

“CSOs have no problems maintaining the policy dialogue as one of the Secretariat's components, on the condition that it is given the necessary meaning with a clear work”.

Therefore, the Secretariat's role, in policy dialogue, would be to facilitate and set-up meetings between donors and CSOs (or between national decision makers and CSOs) on key issues of interest to both parties. Ultimately they would aim to *inform and inspire understanding and policy analysis of both parties about the context that they operate in and seek to influence.*

4.3.1. Main achievements

The program's inception phase facilitated by the contract holder confirmed the interest of CSOs to engage in policy dialogue initiatives and the need to enhance such dialogue, both between CSOs and national duty bearers and between CSOs and donors with the secretariat as the facilitator. Although the inception phase did emphasize the need to introduce a human rights based discourse into the policy dialogue, it did not define the specific

⁶ Secretariat strategy, December 2013

purpose and scope of such dialogues, the anticipated results, nor the specific role or contribution of the secretariat to it⁷.

It is therefore hardly surprising that the review team was unable to identify tangible results that would directly contribute to ‘policy development’, as outlined in the program’s result framework, yet the Secretariat did organise a number of events during which CSOs were able to exchange experiences and views. Donors also participated in some of these events.

Several interviewees stressed that these events had been useful in terms of bringing CSOs together and in listening to each other as well as in strengthening an understanding between stakeholders. A meeting, about the reconstruction in Gaza, between donors and CSOs, in Gaza prior to the donor meeting in Egypt in October 2014, was mentioned as a particularly valuable event that provided an opportunity for CSOs to provide input to donors for that meeting.

4.3.2. Main limitations

There are highly diversified interpretations, and understanding, of the concept of ‘policy dialogue’ among all stakeholders: internally in the HR/IHL Secretariat, among the donors and among the partners. These differences seem to have been a major obstacle to the Secretariat’s ability to fulfil its mandate in the field of ‘policy dialogue’.

There has been an understanding, both among some donor consortium members and among some partners, that policy dialogue equals ‘advocacy’ and that policy dialogue would provide a forum for partners to influence donor policies and positions. Some CSOs have welcomed this (perceived) opportunity and were deeply disappointed when it didn’t materialise. Other CSOs felt that this (perceived) mandate of the Secretariat prevented them from engaging with donors directly on policy issues; they felt this as a great loss which caused a lot of frustration. Donors, for their part, have looked at ‘policy dialogue as advocacy’ with deep scepticism and questioned if this really was the role of the Secretariat.

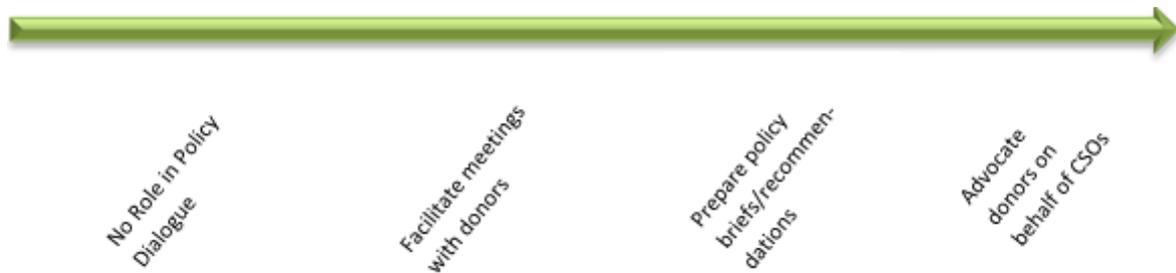
‘We consortium partners produced several reports about what happened in Gaza. We expected that the first reaction of the donors would be to support this report in their countries at a higher level. So, when we went to the ICHR we were shocked that the four countries voted against our report. They even supported the preparation of the report financially, and then they voted against it’.

CSO interviewee

Other interviewed stakeholders understood ‘policy dialogue’ more as a process that would lead to ‘joint positioning and an alignment of CSOs in questions of key interests to the human rights sector, while others emphasised opportunities to influence national decision-makers as key to policy dialogue. The figure below outlines some of the positions that the review team was presented when conducting semi-structured interviews:

⁷ Scoping and capacity assessment studies, October 2013

Figure 4: Perceptions of 'policy dialogue'



The highly divergent positions on what constitutes policy dialogue, who should be involved, the ultimate aim of it and the added value that the Secretariat and Birzeit University could offer in facilitating such a dialogue, seems to have hampered the ability of the Secretariat to *'make meaningful contributions to policy development in the sector and participate actively in the policy dialogue with donors and other sector stakeholders'* in accordance with the third program objective. It is the review team's impression that the divergence of opinions has placed the Secretariat in a very difficult situation as – regardless of its response – it is destined to disappoint either donors or CSOs or everybody at the same time. The ambiguity as regards the definition of 'policy dialogue' has

been an obstacle to the program's ability to exploit the expertise of Birzeit University as well as the ideas and resources of the reference group.

Box 2: Topics proposed to the review team for policy dialogue

- What does it take to ensure that UN conventions, ratified by the PA, are mainstreamed into the legal framework and policy implementation of the Palestinian authorities?
- What are the lessons learnt in the BDS campaign and the efforts to emphasise third state responsibility, in enforcing the fourth Geneva Convention on Israel's occupation policy?
- What are the opportunities and limitations, interests and concerns of donor representatives in promoting a human rights' agenda among their national constituencies, and how can CSOs contribute?
- In what ways does 'the Palestinian split' affect the advocacy environment and ability of CSOs to promote human rights? And what can be done to overcome these challenges.

Nevertheless, the review team is also convinced that there is indeed an added value in policy dialogue if it is defined as a forum and a method to strengthen mutual understanding between donors and CSO about 'what it takes' to promote human rights in the Occupied Palestinian Territory as well as the opportunities and obstacles related to human rights' advocacy. The disappointment of the CSOs after they presented their Gaza report to the International Committee on Human Rights is an example of this. Interviewees state, that policy dialogues can be arranged for as little as 100 shekels (for coffee and a piece of cake) if Birzeit University or one of the partner CSOs volunteers to host the event.

It is therefore recommended to continue the dialogues, in 2016, on the condition that their costs for them can be maintained at this level.

It is further recommended that the Steering Committee, the program management and the

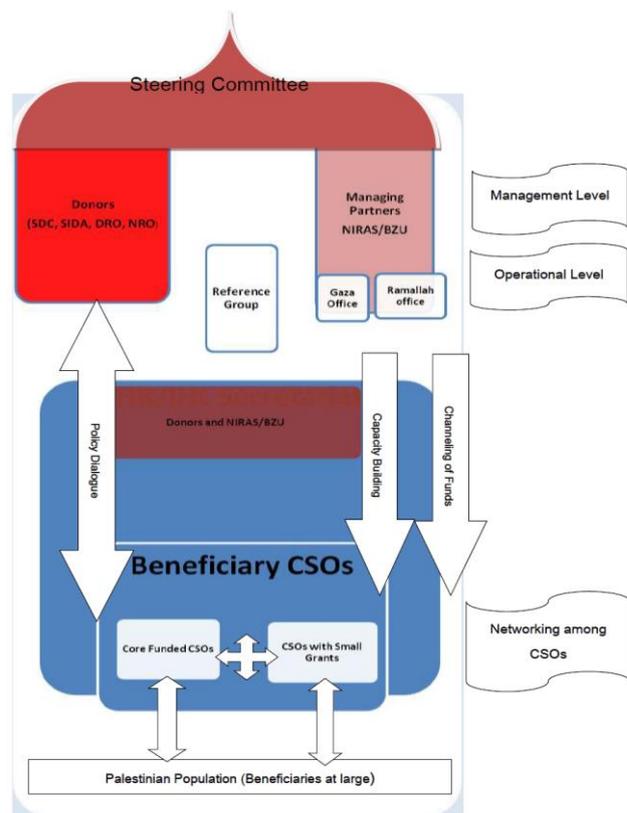
Secretariat jointly formulate a definition of what ‘policy dialogue’ is, what the purpose of dialogues should be and who should be involved and how.

If not applicable, then CSOs suggest to continue policy dialogue under a form and with a definition decided by themselves.

5. The role of the program's governing structure

The program’s governing structure consists of a Steering Committee with representatives from the program’s four (five) donors, a lead donor, a program management and a Secretariat consisting of staff members from Birzeit University and Niras. Their contributions to achievements are analysed below.

Figure 5: Organisational diagram for the program



In addition, the program is governed by a results’ framework (LFA) and a budget. Therefore the review team has decided to include these two documents in the assessment of the governing structure also.

5.1. The Terms of Reference

The Terms of Reference ‘*Managing partner for support to a joint donor fund for human rights and international humanitarian law in the Occupied Palestinian Territory*’, of February 2013, constitute the overall governing framework for the program.

The Terms specify that it is the responsibility of the HR/IHL Secretariat to carry out all activities in relation to grant making and its follow-up, on behalf of the donors to the fund, and that the Managing Partner (Niras) shall develop a programme document with clear objectives and a draft results’ framework’ at outcome level’ for the Secretariat’s three main working areas (funding, capacity building and policy dialogue).

Annex I to the Terms further outlines the eligibility criteria under which CSOs may be funded by the Secretariat.

5.2. The Program strategy and LFA (results’ framework)

Niras and Birzeit University have developed a program document/strategy in line with the donors’ requirements, which was approved by the program’s Steering Committee (donor representatives) on December 2013.

Prior to the formulation of the strategy, a capacity building needs’ assessment and consultations were carried out with various stakeholders and CSOs in the West Bank (including East Jerusalem) and in the Gaza Strip, as well

as with Israeli Human Rights organisations. Several CSOs praised this process and stated that this had contributed to their feeling of ownership in the program.

It is the review team's assessment that the strategy meets the requirements of the Terms of Reference and describes in details *how* the Secretariat is going to work to fulfil its mandate in the field of grants' management, capacity building and policy dialogue.

Results' framework for the HR/IHL sector

As outlined in the Terms of Reference, the purpose of the funding mechanism (equalling more than two thirds of the programme's total budget) is to promote human rights and international humanitarian law in the Occupied Palestinian Territory. However, the strategy does *not* include an explanation of the analysis of *how* the Secretariat would prioritise granting towards this goal. Neither does it explain *why* certain types of interventions and their expected results, such as improved policy and legal frameworks, responsiveness and capacity of authorities to enforce legal frameworks, the prevalence of a public discourse supportive to human rights, the ability of human rights CSOs to speak with one voice internationally etc. could have been prioritised at the expense of other interventions and results.

An effort to produce a much more detailed analysis, either on its own or in a dialogue with the CSO sector or the reference group, was never made.

It must be emphasised that this exercise – and product – was never a donor requirement nor was it a part of the Terms of Reference. However, as a result of this, the program – and with it the HR/IHL Secretariat - has remained without a clear results' framework against which it would have been able to report more clearly on the contribution of CSOs towards promoting or defending human rights and IHL in the Occupied Palestinian Territory. The latter has been particularly problematic for members of the donor consortium, as they are required to report on such results to their capitals and would normally be an issue for the program management/contract holder to address. A rough outline of what such a results' framework may look like is included in Annex I.

Are the results progressive or defensive?

The Secretariat supports human rights' initiatives in a wide range of sectors and a wide range of thematic areas. Some are characterised by a gradual but steady deterioration of the human rights' situation (such excessive and unlawful use of force), while others – such as aspects related to women's rights - are more likely to experience progress.

Maintaining the 'status quo' or 'preserving a discussion about human rights and the rights of stone throwing Palestinian youth in an Israeli public discourse' may therefore be a satisfying, yet 'defensive' result in some situations, whilst satisfying and/or progressive results in other situations might be: positive changes in the perception and attitudes of decision makers, support to legal amendments or improved networking among CSOs or CSOs and international agencies.

As far as the review team can tell, defining and articulating the meaning of 'satisfactory and realistic results' in the various contexts, in which CSOs operate in Gaza, on the West Bank and in Jerusalem and Israel, does not seem to have been a priority to the program, neither to the Steering Committee, nor to the Secretariat. This may contribute to a situation where donors, in particular, are left without sufficient guidance as to 'what to expect' and what can realistically be communicated to their headquarters in Europe.

It is therefore recommended that the program management, the Steering Committee and the Secretariat formulate a theory of change that can guide granting and reporting against results and achievements in the human rights sector.

Formulating a theory of change on what the program thinks it takes, to promote human rights and why, could do more than just help the Steering Committee and the Secretariat prioritise its funding thematically. It is also a useful tool to help CSOs, the Secretariat and the donors themselves to reflect on results, progress, or drawbacks in factors that the program thinks is important to human rights. Finally, this approach is in line with the Paris Declaration's Fourth Principle: that developing countries and donors should ensure that programs are implemented in a way that focuses on desired results and uses the results for improved decision-making.

Results' Framework for the Secretariat

The Secretariat's strategy includes a results' framework with objectives and a draft results' framework, at outcome level, in line with the Terms of Reference.

It is a challenge to formulate specific, measurable, achievable, realistic and time-bound outcomes, particularly if activities and interventions are to be formulated during the intervention itself. Despite this, it is the review team's assessment that the quality and specificity of the objectives and outcomes (indirect areas of contribution) formulated and their relationship with planned outputs (areas of direct contribution) could have been formulated more clearly than is actually the case and that ultimately, the contract holder would be responsible for this.

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Outcome formulations such as:

- Needs based CSO capacity building opportunities, including HRBA, that strengthen core functions and programme management
- Organised space for CSO-donor-duty bearer policy dialogue on key rights issues in the sector
- Facilitated networking amongst like-minded CSOs for key rights issues in policy dialogue and strengthens networks

leave a limited impression of the actual *changes* that the Secretariat's work aims to contribute to, and thus the success parameters that the Secretariat's performance should be evaluated against. This seems to frustrate both donors, and staff members at the Secretariat, as it makes it difficult to define the parameters for success and to plan for tangible results.

The absence of clear definitions for key terminologies that are important to program implementation, such as 'policy dialogue' and what a 'human rights CBO' is, may have contributed to the challenges of defining a specific results' framework, suitable for measure performance against. In a situation where many organisations mainstream a rights-based approach into their service provisioning, this opens up a very broad spectrum of potential target beneficiaries. While that may not be a problem as such, it does affect the nature of the program and the focus of the Secretariat's work, for instance as it relates to 'the kind of policy dialogue' that the Secretariat should engage in, or what kinds of capacity building interventions are most relevant to offer.

It must be stressed that a less precise results' framework does not exclude the possibility that a project or a program can be managed effectively, towards tangible results. However, as has been documented and articulated by strategic management scholars over the years; you 'get what you measure'. Thus, if performance is measured in terms of activities, then activities will be produced. If, on the other hand, performance is measured against tangible changes, for instance in knowledge and skills of training participants and/or their commitment to turn this knowledge into changing practices, then knowledge and skills will be produced.⁸ Annex I provides an example of how changes in organisational practices, and with individuals targeted, could have been reflected in the results' framework. The example is based on the review's findings from the focus group discussions and semi-structured interviews with key interviewees.

It is recommended that the program management revise the results' framework to ensure a deeper reflection of the changes that the program contributes to – both, directly through improved knowledge and skills of CSO representatives and indirectly, through the changes that that these representatives bring to their own institutions when they implement what they have learnt.

5.3. The budget framework

A total of 15 million USD was originally allocated to the Human Rights Secretariat for the period 2014-2016.

Funds were distributed as follows⁹:

Table 3: Original Budget

Item	Costs	Total USD (mill)
Objective 1: Set-up of Secretariat	Staff costs	0,6
Objective 2: Funding	Core funds	8,4
	Project funds	2,1
	Grant fund management	0,9
Objective 3: Capacity building	Staff costs	0,8
Objective 4: Policy Dialogue	Staff costs	0,7
Other costs	Inception phase	0,6
	Reimbursable costs	0,5
	Closing Phase	0,4
Total		15

⁸ See for instance David Hunter, Working Hard and Working Well – A Practical Guide to Performance Management

⁹ Financial proposal, Niras, Birzeit University, March 2013. While this budget does not represent the final budget, it does indicate the relative distribution between the various components of the program

The staff costs reflect the Secretariat's original intention, to ensure an approximately equal investment, in terms of time, between the program's three main intervention areas: funding, capacity building and policy dialogue (0,9, 0,8 and 0,7 million USD respectively).

However, the administration of the 10.5 million USD, as grants, turned out to be a much heavier administrative burden, than originally anticipated, for both the Secretariat and the donor consortium. As a new team without the institutional memory of the donor consortium, the secretariat staff developed all granting and work procedures and this was a process that took considerably more time and resources than planned.

Even more time was invested in granting when it was decided to support small and less experienced CSOs in Jerusalem in an effort to strengthen civil society and human rights violations in and around the city. This seems to have absorbed so much of the secretariat's time, that other activities, most importantly policy dialogue and capacity building had to be postponed.

Given the character of the secretariat and its affiliation with the Birzeit University, one may question if managing grants to small CSOs in need of basic project planning and administrative support is the most efficient way to utilize the secretariat's resources?

During the war in Gaza, joint funding turned out to be a very effective way to motivate CSOs to cooperate and reduce the number of grants to be administered by the secretariat. It may therefore be considered how or if joint funding may be a way forward. Not only promote alliance building between CSOs but also to strengthen cost-efficiency of the secretariat's work in the years to come.

Two of the Secretariat's donors experienced a sharp decrease in currency rates (compared to the USD) in 2015. The actual and expected losses in cash flow, due to exchange rates, is therefore expected to amount to a total of around 1,5 USD by the end of 2016, equal to a reduction of the original budget by ten percent. Because of this it has been decided to limit spending on certain budget items during 2016, in particular the use of international (and national) consultants. This is likely to confine capacity building and policy dialogue to activities that will be carried out by the existing staff alone, or those already contracted in February 2016.

The Secretariat had ambitious plans for 2016, including further increasing its focus on capacity building and policy dialogue, which they planned to take up about 50% of staff resources, rising to 70% (of human resources) in 2017. These plans included carrying out OD activities and policy dialogue themed meetings, initiated by the Secretariat. Unfortunately, these plans had to be reduced significantly.

Currently, the Secretariat plans to redirect staff time, during 2016, in order to provide more support to:

- Increasing and maintaining mutual trust with partner CSOs and to bolstering partner CSOs cooperation (CSO – CSO) around issues of common interest and concern.
- Further simplifying and streamlining procedures, to allow partners to dedicate more resources to carrying out their human rights work¹⁰.

The review team is concerned that significantly reducing, or completely omitting, capacity building from the Secretariat's portfolio will work against the consortium's current immediate objective - to strengthen the CSOs'

¹⁰ Secretariat Work Plan 2016

environment in the HR/IHL sector through institutional development, internal efficiency, effective participation in democratic processes and improved performance.

In a world of scarcity, donor funding will never be sufficient to meet the needs - or the demands - of any human rights sector. The reasons for this are found in the nature of the work of the Human rights CSO sector itself. A majority of the organisations that receive core funding from the Secretariat find themselves working as 'catalysts' and 'advocates' as much as, or more than, direct service providers. They direct their attention to facilitating change through, and by, other organisations such as the PA, the Israeli Government and International Institutions.

At best CSOs may be able to influence – but never control – these other organisations. They may even be working with resources that seem inconsequential, relative to those of the organisations they are stimulating to change. For these reasons, their success depends on their positioning their resources skilfully - members, volunteers, paid staff and funding - in relation to the organisations and systems they seek to influence.

It is key, therefore, that they maintain the capabilities: to sustain a vision, to provide direction and prioritise, to adapt to the changing contexts and lessons learnt, to manage organisational resources effectively and to implement all of the key organisational and programmatic functions (such as finance, budgeting, fundraising, lobbying, campaigning and marketing through social and conventional media).

It is therefore recommended that the program continues to prioritise organisational capacity building in the future. Not in spite of budget constraints, but precisely because of these constraints.

5.4. The Donor Consortium

A **consortium** is defined as 'an association of two or more individuals, companies, organisations or governments (or any combination of these entities) with the objective of participating in a common activity or pooling their resources for achieving a common goal'.

A consortium's effectiveness is generally defined by its ability to exploit the resources of all of its members effectively, in order to achieve a common goal. Important key factors include (but are not limited to):

- The extent to which the consortium is guided by a common vision and mission, that unites its member and which is equally understood by everyone.
- The effectiveness of decisions that are made and how communication and knowledge is shared among the members of the consortium.
- The manner in which potential conflicts of interest are managed and resolved.
- The degree of commitment and the contribution of members (in time and funding) to the joint work and towards the joint goal.

The efficiency of alliances is often reduced when the coordinator or the 'Secretariat of the consortium' becomes synonymous with the alliance itself, as it reduces the members' ownership of plans and interventions carried out and often necessitates an expansion of staff.

The relationship between the program management and the donor consortium for the HR/IHL program is guided by a general framework agreement signed between the program manager (Niras) and the Swedish Consulate on

behalf of the consortium. Despite this, bilateral agreements between the contract manager and the Government of Switzerland and the Government of Denmark have also been signed. The latter agreements prevail in case of *'any inconsistency or contradiction between the terms and conditions of the common agreement'* and the bilateral agreements between the program manager and the donors bilaterally.

The donor consortium and its Steering Committee are united behind a common goal to promote human rights in the Occupied Palestinian Territory and to reduce the transaction costs for both donors and recipients by channelling funds through a joint Secretariat. This goal is spelled out in the program strategy, which was approved by the donors, in December 2013. However, the program strategy does not explicitly spell out *how* human rights are best promoted, by *whom* and *where*. The formulation of a joint theory of change (see section 6.1.1 above) would meet this need.

We agree on what we want, but not on how to achieve it.

Donor representative

Additionally, consortium members do not appear to agree on the level of engagement with the Secretariat's day-to-day work or how closely the Secretariat should be monitored by each donor as well as the values that would guide this relationship. While some members are very alert to, and wish to, follow the work of the Secretariat closely others favour more delegation.

It is the review team's impression, that a stronger (explicit) joint understanding and consensus about the strategic approach and the relationship between the Secretariat and the consortium, in combination with a more consistent focus on the joint interests (as opposed to the interests of the individual member) would significantly strengthen the ability of the program to work systematically towards promoting human rights, to reporting on progress made and to reflecting systematically on lessons learnt. While this may not have been a need or a request, from the donor consortium, at the onset of the program, it is now.

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The bilateral agreements between the contract holder (Niras) and individual consortium members are meant to be compatible with the spirit and provisions of the consortium's contract framework agreement. It is the review team's impression that, despite intentions to the contrary, the separate contracts between individual consortium members and the contract holder (Niras) weaken the function of the consortium as it is defined¹¹.

This happens because individual expectations and perceptions of the working relationship and the purpose of the program risk taking priority over the joint vision – at least as long as this vision remains less precise.

Although the Secretariat and the program management has managed, so far, to navigate between the individual interests and requirements of each donor, the general feeling is that it is time-consuming and may become even more so when Norway joins the consortium, bringing its own bilateral contract with the program management as well as its own expectations for the way the Secretariat prioritises work.

Furthermore, the bilateral demands from each member seem to challenge the relationship, between the consortium as a group and the Secretariat, which is mandated to implement the strategic and policy decisions and frameworks formulated by the consortium (the steering group). Individual demands seem to contribute to a relationship where the Secretariat has become a supplier of services to a group of 'demanders', who are ultimately not responsible for the supply itself, rather than a corporate relationship where the Secretariat works

¹¹ 'An association of two or more individuals, companies, organisations or governments with the objective of participating in a common activity or pooling their resources for *achieving a common goal*'.

to pursue common goals and implement the common plans and strategies to which both the Secretariat, but ultimately the consortium, can be held accountable.

The program seems to be particularly vulnerable, finding itself in a situation where the joint vision and strategic approach may not have been sufficiently communicated. This could be due to the periodic absence of a lead donor and with having the program director based in Stockholm. Under these circumstances, staff turnover among the donors has required a regular 'repetition' and 'psychological renegotiation' of the vision between the project manager and the donor consortium/Steering Committee.

To strengthen the efficiency of the consortium – and ultimately that of its 'implementing body', it is recommended that the consortium members jointly reassess: the overall vision, the mission and values of the consortium, the rules and procedures that govern the relationship between the consortium and its implementing body, the expectations and mandate of the lead donor and the expectations of each of the other members of the consortium.

To facilitate this process, it is further recommended that each member clarifies the following issues, internally:

- What do we want to achieve with our membership (individually as a donor, and jointly)?
- What are the values that should guide our cooperation with the Secretariat?
- How, and in what manner, would we like to contribute – in addition to our contribution of funds?
- What are our 'red lines' and where are we willing to compromise, for the sake of the joint vision and unity of our consortium?
- What are the criteria that may lead to us exiting the consortium and what is our exit strategy?

5.4.1. The Steering Committee and the lead donor

The program is governed by a Steering Committee made up of the 'Heads of Cooperation' from the members of the donor consortium. The Steering Committee is commissioned to:

- a) Determine the general framework and policies for the Secretariat;
- b) Approve the Secretariat's main documents, standard forms, annual work plans and budgets;
- c) Approve (or give no-objection to) funding, as proposed by the Secretariat;
- d) Open calls for proposals for project support;
- e) Approve annual narrative reports and audited financial statements of the Secretariat; and
- f) Initiate mid-term reviews or any other external evaluation of the Secretariat.

The Steering committee is supposed to meet at least semi-annually. The Secretariat is present at all Steering Committee meetings as an observer and interviewee. It is the program director's responsibility to organise and document meetings and to provide the donor consortium with the relevant and necessary information.

The Swedish consulate is the lead donor and represents the interests of the Steering Committee in between meetings. It may be difficult, at times, to identify precisely, where the mandate of the lead donor ends and begins, because of the donors' holding individual contracts with the program manager (Niras). For instance, it can happen that an individual donor approaches the Secretariat with an individual request and the lead donor is obliged to take sides, thereafter.

A situation seems to have arisen where the Steering Committee has partially lost direction and cannot see an orientation for the way ahead. This is most likely due to: the absence of a clear strategy, that has moved beyond the establishment of the Secretariat itself (see section 6.1.1 above); the lack of a clear definition of, and strategy for, 'policy dialogue'; factors such as the War in Gaza in 2014; the reallocation of the lead donor representative to Stockholm; the leadership vacuum that resumed in August 2015 and, finally, the need to accommodate the needs and interests of individual members. As explained by one interviewee: *"Differences in interests and concerns are always solved, but sometimes it can be challenging to follow why and how decisions made contribute to the overall goal or are in line with criteria defined"*.

Box 3: Proposed Standard Agenda Items for Steering Committee Meetings

1. Status of the work of the Secretariat

- How, and to what extent, are key results in the Secretariat's result framework being fulfilled?
- What are the enabling and disabling factors?
- What requirements are necessary, if any, to revise the Secretariat's implementation strategy, to take these factors into consideration?

2. Status of the support to promote Human Rights and IHL in the Occupied Palestinian Territory

- What are main achievements/results with respect to promoting HR/IHL since the previous SC meetings? (see proposed result framework in Annex II)
- What are key enabling and disabling factors that contribute to this development?
- Based on these answers, what are the relevant issues for future policy dialogue meetings between the CSO, the Secretariat and donors?

This, in turn, may have caused the 'deterioration of cooperation with/in the steering group' that was expressed to the review team, by both members of the Secretariat and members of the Steering Committee, and to a situation where both the Secretariat and the Steering Committee feel that the other side occasionally 'interferes' and oversteps its mandate.

The deterioration of the relationship, plus the cessation of regular meetings in the Steering Committee, seems to coincide with the point in time where key milestones were achieved regarding the establishment of the Secretariat itself, and where the agenda that was framed by the results' framework, relevant to the Secretariat, had either been exhausted or remained unclear.

As indicated, it is the review team's opinion that the work of the Steering Committee might be revitalised and their sense of direction renewed if the results' framework were revised to move beyond the establishment and performance of the Secretariat itself, and if the

vision and mission of the donor consortium were re-imagined. Annex II to this report provides a description of how the consortium can accommodate the need for flexibility in a three or four year program in a challenging and fast moving context as the Palestinian and the role of a program manager in this respect.

To further strengthen the work of the Steering Committee and to facilitate a reflection on progress towards joint goals, it is recommended that the committee incorporates a few standard agenda items in all of its meetings, as outlined in Box 2.

5.5. The reference group

To provide the Secretariat and the Donor Consortium with independent expert advice and strategic dialogue regarding trends, developments and challenges in the human rights and IHL fields in Palestine, the program established a reference group of independent, impartial individuals, free from vested interest in either the Secretariat or the HR/IHL program in general.

The Reference Group was supposed to meet at least twice a year or more frequently if requested to by donors in order to

- ❖ Review the Secretariat's strategy, in the light of sector priorities, and CSOs scope of activities;
- ❖ Provide thematic input and advice to the Secretariat's policy dialogue activities;
- ❖ Follow up, on annual basis, of the Secretariat strategy, including advising on its relevance and added-value, and,
- ❖ Review the Secretariat's results framework, and advising on the suitability of its indicators, given the context, key players, past experience and best practice.

Reference group members interviewed by the review team expressed their regret that the reference group function as a partner for strategic reflection was never fully realized. Three reference group meetings were held, one in March 2014, one in November 2014 and another in July 2015. The meetings were used to gather the inputs and comments from the reference group to the Secretariat's strategy, the work plan, the annual reports and the 2nd round of call for proposals.

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Lack of clarity about the responsibility and 'hosting' of the reference group the heavy workload of the secretariat and the management vacuum that appeared, when the lead representative was transferred to Stockholm seems to have contributed to this situation where the potential role and contribution of the reference group was never fully realized:

When the idea of the reference group was launched, the Secretariat was thought *to act as Group chair, coordinate the group's work, and facilitate exchange of views and free flow of information among its members and between its members and the Secretariat team, both in the periods between regular, annual meetings, as well as in the run up to each Group meeting*. The Secretariat, in consultation with Reference Group members, and the lead donor, was supposed to call for and arrange Reference Group meetings (Reference Group ToRs draft 2 October 2013).

This formulation was deleted from the final version of the terms of reference (of 15 Nov 2013) and changed to a situation where *the lead donor on behalf of all donors will call/invite for the meetings of the reference group. A donor representative would chair the meetings*

Secretariat staff interviewed interpreted this change as an indication that the main responsibility of and ownership to the reference group remained with the donors, although the secretariat would provide logistical support in terms of preparing an agenda, drafting minutes etc. Thus, in a situation where grants management absorbed considerably more of the secretariat's time than originally anticipated, was the strategic dialogue with the reference group not prioritized by the secretariat.

Another contributing factor might have been the inability of the program to realize the original idea of the policy dialogue component, which was an area, where the program would have been able to capitalize on the in-depth knowledge and expertise of the reference group on issues of more strategic character. Yet, without this component, were the reference group’s inputs reduced to more ad hoc comments and suggestions regarding initiatives and plans already developed by the secretariat.

5.6. The institutional capacity of the contract holder

The contract holder is a large consultancy company that operates from offices in Denmark and Sweden and has a number of offices in East-Europe, the Middle East, East Africa and Asia. The contract holder works in institutional strengthening, governance and capacity development, as well as in supporting community level development. Activities are executed in concert with local experts, national institutions and agencies and are supported by international consultants and advisers.

As such, Niras possesses, in principle, all of the qualifications required– and expected – by the donor consortium, to execute their duties as outlined in the Terms of Reference.

These include, but are not limited to:

- Set-up and manage a funding mechanism and a Secretariat to administer it
- Provide quality assurance of the granting process and procedures
- Manage funds and budgets
- Provide advice in the field of advocacy, capacity building, facilitation of civil society-state relations, gender mainstreaming and human rights and IHL based approach
- Guide the process of project cycle management, including design and appraisal of projects and strategic plans, monitoring of results, analysis of financial and narrative reports and results based approaches
- Facilitate Steering Committee meetings, including the preparation of materials that would provide the basis for clear decisions from the members of the committee and their follow-up

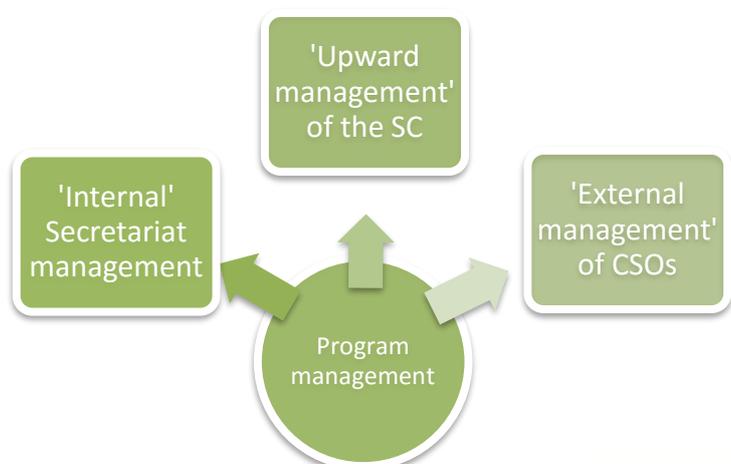
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However, it is the review team’s impression that the Terms of Reference, the Steering Committee, the lead donor and the contract holder have all underestimated the complexity associated with managing a program of multiple stakeholders and interests and with aligning these stakeholders behind a joint vision for the program.

This is a task that requires internal, ‘upward management’ as well as external management and leadership. An overview of the tasks is outlined in Table II below.

Table 4: The management task

Figure 6: The management task



The Management Task

Aim: To ensure support, motivation and commitment, among donors, CSOs and staff, to a shared vision for the work of the Secretariat.		
Internal management	'Upward' management	'External' management
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Program implementation ➤ Internal team building ➤ Coaching and guidance of staff ➤ Establishment and maintenance of knowledge sharing ➤ Financial resource management 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Facilitate and support joint decision making ➤ Engagement and commitment of all members to the joint program ➤ Inform members of implications, strengths and advantages of potential decisions and strategic directions and their implications for the overall goals and objectives of the program. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Clear and consistent communication about the program's goals, objectives and orientation; resources available, priorities of the Secretariat and the consortium and reasons for priorities and decisions made ➤ Receiving and incorporating interests and concerns of CSOs into the Secretariat's planning, to ensure the program's continued relevance to CSOs. ➤ Relationship management with CSO leaders and other stakeholders

The underestimation of the complexity of the task and the challenges involved in 'upwards', 'internal' and 'external' management and coordination of the program is most clearly demonstrated in the contract holder's decision to create – and the Steering Committee's approval of – a management setup, where the contract holder manages the program from Stockholm, leaving the day-to-day management to the manager of the Secretariat in Ramallah.

The program manager has been responsive to requests from the lead donor and Steering Committee members and has been in frequent contact with the Secretariat director. Despite this, it is the review team's impression that a long-distance setup is incapable of fulfilling the expectations of the donors as well as the requirements to meet the task. Although much can be said and discussed on a good Skype connection, physical presence makes a difference. Even the best Skype connection cannot compensate for non-verbal communication and the flexibility of encounters that is associated with face-to-face meetings and with spending time together in the same venue.

In addition, a long-distance set-up risks – de facto –leaving the majority of management responsibilities to the Secretariat manager, who is physically located in Ramallah. This is not in line with the contract holder's contract with the donor consortium, nor is it a responsible or fair solution for the Secretariat manager, who is left with a huge management responsibility on top of his own portfolio of day-to-day supervision and support.

It is the review team's opinion that program management cannot be handled from Stockholm and that the contract holder needs a local, full time presence. It is the program manager's/contract holder's responsibly to ensure 'upwards' and 'external' management as outlined in table 4 above. Likewise, it is the program management's task to supervise the secretariat manager in his management of secretariat staff and operations. The review team finds that a full time local presence of the program manager are much more likely to ensure

that the requirements for such ongoing management, relationship building and adjustments to the program's strategy to the concerns and interests of stakeholders are carried out in a timely and adequate manner.

Therefore, it is recommended, that the program invests in the full-time presence of the program director in Jerusalem/Ramallah, so as to ensure sufficient program management, not only internally among staff members of the Secretariat, but also externally among CSOs supported and 'upwards' among consortium members and members of the Steering Committee. The latter is to take place in close cooperation and coordination with the lead donor, who is ultimately responsible for maintaining the members of the consortium as one united group.

5.7. The institutional and management capacity of the Secretariat

The Secretariat consists of a main Secretariat in Ramallah and a smaller unit in Gaza City. Both are managed by a Secretariat manager who resides in Ramallah and manages the Gaza office from Ramallah.

The secretariat in Ramallah holds the following competencies:

- Secretariat Manager
- Fund manager
- CSO Facilitator and Capacity Building Advisor
- Finance and Administration Manager
- Human Rights Advisor
- Administrative and Finance Assistant
- Administrative Assistant

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The Gaza Office holds the following competencies

- CSO Facilitator and Capacity Building Advisor,
- Admin and Finance Officer,
- Administrative Assistant.

The review team finds that the staff is highly experienced, and feedback from interviewed CSOs suggests that cooperation and support generally takes place in an atmosphere of respect, understanding and reciprocity. These findings are confirmed by the results of the score cards presented in Section 5.1.1.

The feedback from staff, and from CSOs, also seems to suggest that CSO facilitators, in particular, are overstretched – more so on the West Bank, where facilitators have to cover a much larger portfolio of CSOs than in Gaza.

Concerns were raised, during the review, about the high turnover of staff in the past three years. The review team was unable to identify one single major reason for this. Contributing factors may have been: frustration over a lack of clarity about the Secretariat's mandate with respect to policy dialogue, family issues and the values of a staff member that were incompatible with the values of the Secretariat. Other sources suggest that a rather robust management style in the Secretariat, characterized by top-down management and limited involvement of staff members in the actual decision making may also have contributed to the high staff turnover.

In light of the complexity of the management task associated with the program and the Secretariat manager's lack of previous (formal) leadership experience, it is recommended that the program prioritise management supervision and support to the manager. It is the responsibility of the program director to ensure this.

6. Conclusion

Imagine if the Palestinian and Israeli Human Rights Sector were to enjoy the presence of a Secretariat that

- Provides a smooth transfer of funds in a transparent and accurate way
- Provides legal advice and professional skills (HRBA) to the sector in a manner that satisfies NGOs and Donors, so that the impact and effectiveness of CSOs is strong
- Facilitates joint planning among CSOs, projects and programs that are in line with/complement donors' priorities and plans so that cooperation between CSOs is increased
- Facilitates policy formulation – so that new ideas and approaches are created in the sector
- Facilitates cooperation and thematic platforms between CSOs, in a timely and systematic manner
- Communicates clearly about the results achieved and how they contribute to the program's objectives - so that the results can be communicated to stakeholders and donors nationally and internationally.

The donor consortium formulated this vision during a mid-term review workshop of the current program, in April 2016.

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It is neither easy, nor is it impossible to realise this vision. As this review demonstrates, it may be next to impossible to satisfy everyone in a CSO sector that is characterised by a deterioration of the human rights' situation, an intensified workload and increased competition for a decreasing pool of funds. This is likely to cause frustration among those who did not receive funds regardless how accurately and transparently the funds are allocated.

It is also a challenge to implement a program with a completely new team of staff members, in a context where agendas change, wars erupt and where the political space for CSOs to work and articulate themselves is threatened. This requires that you 'build the boat as you sail' and adjust the 'course as you go'. Mistakes and misjudgements are difficult to avoid.

It is therefore not surprising, that the program's implementation has been less than perfect. Cumbersome administrative procedures were introduced, that should not have been. Granting took much more time than expected. Monitoring and support to CSOs was delayed, as some staff members were denied travel permits. Funds were disbursed late, just to mention some of the difficulties.

Despite this, progress towards the program's immediate objective – and the donor consortium's vision – has been made:

- A Human Rights' Based Approach was introduced in project planning and monitoring and most CSOs reported that they had been inspired by the training, to a degree where they applied the principles in their work.

- A result's based reporting was introduced and some changes are being felt, both by the CSOs themselves and by staff at the Secretariat, in the way CSOs report. The changes have not yet reached the donor consortium, however.
- A 'recipe' for joint planning among CSOs seems to have been identified also, both in terms of creating incentives for CSOs to plan and work together towards joint goals, and in terms of strengthening the impact and cost-effectiveness of funds granted, as the *joint* emergency *grant* to four CSOs in Gaza during the war in 2014 shows.

So, is the program on track? Unfortunately, not as much as it should be. Capacity building has been delayed and the secretariat's contribution to policy dialogue has been limited. During the past year, the cooperation and level of trust, between the Secretariat's management and some members of the donor consortium, seems to have deteriorated to such an extent that future cooperation seems difficult. While donors feel that the Secretariat does not abide to the decisions and directions of the Steering Committee, the Secretariat complains about examples of 'interference' in its work and of 'micro-management' by donors. The review team considers it is outside its mandate to position itself in this dispute, but does note that the nature of the dispute seems to follow a very common pattern in the genealogy of disputes: lack of clarity, differences in expectations and interpretations of situations which are all likely to turn into personal conflicts, if not dealt with properly and in time.

The management set-up, that should prevent and sort out disputes and misunderstandings, has not been helpful with the program director based in Stockholm. The review team finds that this set-up has underestimated the management task linked to the program. This task was partly dealt with by the lead donor's representative, until his transfer to Stockholm in 2015. As his successor received no overlap or handover he has struggled to follow this up. A result's framework, where results are less clear than they could be, has not helped either. Neither has a weak definition of – or communication about - the meaning of policy dialogue or the clarity of the specific purpose of capacity building and who should benefit (most) from it.

Unclear definitions always increase the risk that stakeholders – in this case donors and CSOs alike – will develop different interpretations and expectations. In the world of psychology expectations that remain unfulfilled are, more often than not, a cause of frustration, disappointment and blame.

It is therefore not surprising that the results of the program are viewed with frustration. However, as the findings and recommendations from the review team reveal, we do find that contributions towards the program's objectives have been made. The potential exists to develop the cooperation with Birzeit University further, *provided* that trust can be rebuilt and that donors want a future set-up, where the added value of the University makes sense – both in terms of highly specialised training to third generation CSOs and in terms of policy dialogue. The addendum to this report on future scenarios explains how.

7. Annex I – Example of revised results’ framework for the Secretariat

Table 5: Example of revised results framework

Objectives	Outcomes (indirect contributions)	Outputs (Direct contribution)	Activities	MoV
1) Stability and predictability of funding to CSOs working in the HR/IHL sector	<p>Funds to the HR/IHL sector are transferred smoothly, transparently and in a timely manner to eligible CSOs</p> <p>Transferred funds are handled adequately and transparently by CSOs</p>	<p>Funding manual prepared Finance guidelines in place Criteria for funding and eligibility formulated</p> <p>Mechanisms for coordination and information sharing established with other donors</p> <p>CSO grantees are familiar with, and adhere to, guidelines and procedures that are transparent and professional.</p>	<p>Prepare relevant guidelines for the Secretariat’s operation and granting procedures</p> <p>Consultations and orientation of CSOs</p> <p>Ongoing coaching and support (face-to-face and by phone) with CSO – applicants and grantees</p>	<p>Secretariat’s manuals and guidelines</p> <p>Audit reports from CSOs</p>
2) CSOs in the HR/IHL sector have capabilities to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Manage grants effectively • Adapt their strategies and approaches based on regular assessment of their results and contextual changes 	<p>Training topics introduced to participants are reflected in changes of organisational procedures, daily practices, project descriptions and results reports</p>	<p>Trained CSO participants are thoroughly informed about the training issues shared with them</p> <p>75% of CSO training participants have developed plans for implementing training</p>		<p>Pre- and post-tests from training facilitated or hosted by the Secretariat.</p> <p>Capacity building plans of CSOs.</p>

Objectives	Outcomes (indirect contributions)	Outputs (Direct contribution)	Activities	MoV
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Apply a human rights' based approach to their analysis, operations and reporting 		<p>lessons in their own work or with their colleagues.</p> <p>Interns are placed with CSOs and assigned relevant responsibilities</p>	<p>Facilitation of intern program</p>	<p>Narrative reports from CSOs describing effects of capacity building in their organisations.</p>
<p>3) Policies, positions and advocacy approaches of stakeholders (duty bearers and CSOs) in the HR sector are informed by legal analyses and understanding of interests and positions of other stakeholders</p>	<p>Policies, positions and advocacy approaches of stakeholders (duty bearers and CSOs) in the HR sector, are informed by legal analyses and understanding of interests and positions of other stakeholders</p>	<p>'Duty bearers' well informed about the concerns and interests of CSOs and the constituencies that they represent</p> <p>CSOs well informed about the interests and concerns of duty bearers</p>	<p>Facilitate meetings between 'duty bearers' (donors, PA representatives) and CSOs on issues of common interest to both parties.</p> <p>Prepare policy analyses describing the interests and concerns of key opinion makers to issues of interest to the sector and legal implication of solutions proposed by key stakeholders</p>	

8. Annex II - Developing a framework for improved reporting on results

The current Secretariat provides grants to organisations on the basis of organisational and thematic criteria and within the follow 'rights issues':

- Settlement construction, land confiscations and related activities
- Judicial independence and fair trial
- Excessive and unlawful use of force
- Torture and ill-treatment
- Women's rights and gender-based violence
- Freedom of expression, association and assembly
- Freedom of travel, movement and residency rights
- Socio-economic rights

Support is provided to Israeli and Palestinian organisations operating in Jerusalem, Gaza and areas C.

Criteria are deliberately kept broad to avoid a prioritisation and ranking of some human rights over others and to ensure a framework that can accommodate diverting interests and priorities of donors and contextual changes that necessitates flexibility and ongoing adjustments.

However, the ability of the grantees, the Secretariat and the donor consortium members themselves to assess and report on achievements against planned or desired results is hampered by a prioritisation of funding. This prioritisation is made in terms of organisational capabilities (as stipulated in the terms for the HR/IHL Secretariat) and in terms of geographic or thematic areas, rather than results or situations that must be created to prevent human rights violations. The review team is convinced that the needed and desired flexibility of the program can be maintained, even under a more precise definition of 'results'.

Respect for human rights – regardless of their focus – generally depends upon the following preconditions/results/outcomes:

- The presence of a legal and policy framework/frameworks that recognises human rights.
- Judiciary and executive authorities that are willing and capable of implementing the law.
- Grassroots and community level structures (incl. religious and community leaders, CBOs and other stakeholders) that are supportive of promoting human rights or/defending groups whose rights are violated.
- Public norms that are supportive of human rights.
- Cooperation and coordination between key stakeholders that promote synergy and maximise the effects of efforts.
- Knowledge and skills of rights' holders to claim and defend their rights and challenge discriminatory practices.

A graphical illustration of the relationship between the respect for rights and preconditions, or factors that enable the fulfilment of rights can be outlined as follows in Figure 7 on Page 48.

Figure 7: Factors that promote or support human rights



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Naturally, the preconditions, or factors, that enable the fulfilment of a situation where a legal framework is in place, or a situation where rights holders are able to defend their own rights, differ from one context to another. Preconditions may also change with contextual changes, such as a war in Gaza, the introduction of a new legislation or the Palestinian authorities' accession to UN conventions, as was the case in 2015.

To enable the program (and ultimately the consortium partners) to report against results and to remain flexible and able to accommodate contextual changes at the same time, it is recommended that the consortium identify a number of overall result areas or 'dimensions of change' - such as those outlined above in Figure 7. - for each grantee (core and project) to report its achievements against.

Grantees would be required to explain how and why their intervention contributes to the fulfilment of one or more of the results areas/dimensions of change (or hampers their further deterioration).

When grantees report, key questions to be answered may include, but not be limited to, the following:

- 1) Which result area(s) does your work (and the grant received) contribute towards?
- 2) When you first planned your intervention, how and why did you think you would contribute to this/these results through your planned interventions?
- 3) Which changes did you see as a result of your efforts (activities) in the reporting phase? NB: Changes will usually relate to either changes in individuals' knowledge, skills, behaviour, attitudes or opinions or changes in policies or procedures of institutions.
- 4) Based on what you know now, how do you think that these changes contribute towards the result area(s) that you report against (question one)?

- 5) Are there changes in the context that necessitate a revision of your intervention – and which you need to implement in order to stay 'on track'?
- 6) Are initial assumptions and beliefs about how and why you think you can achieve your goal still relevant? If not – what needs to be revised?

9. Annex III - Questionnaire for NGOs who have received core or project funding from the HR/IHL Secretariat

1. How did you find the overall cooperation with Secretariat? (Please indicate on the line below with an "x")

Very weak											Average	Excellent
0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10		

Optional: Explain your answer:

2. How did you find the relevance and quality of the direct support that the Secretariat has provided to the formulation of your application for core funding/project funding?

Very weak											Average	Excellent
0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10		

Optional: Explain your answer:

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3. How did you find the relevance and usefulness of the events and mechanisms initiated by the Secretariat for policy dialogue?

Very weak											Average	Excellent
0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10		

Optional: explain your answer:

4. What has been the most important contribution from the Secretariat to the work of your organisation in terms of

Contributing to the quality of your program or project design and implementation _____

Strengthening capacity of your organisation _____

Policy dialogue _____

5. What has been *the least* relevant contribution or requirement from the Secretariat to the work of your organisation in terms of

Contributing to the quality of your program or project design and implementation_____

Strengthening capacity or your organisation_____

Policy dialogue _____

1. If it was entirely up to you to decide, in what way would you like the Secretariat to support or contribute to the work of your organisation in the future:

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6. Where is your organisation located (mark with an X)

West Bank_____

Gaza_____

East Jerusalem_____

Israel, incl. West Jerusalem_____

7. What kind of financial support did you receive from the Secretariat (mark with an X)

Core funding_____

Project funding_____

Emergency funding_____

8. What is the annual turnover of your organisation (mark with an x)

Below 150.000 USD/year_____

Below 500.000 USD/year_____

Above 1.000.000 USD/year_____

10. Annex IV: The Work Plan

Date	Time	Activity	Notes	Consultant	Location
Mar 15-28		Desk study	Done		
Mar 28		Submission of inception Note	Done		
Mar 30	14:00-16:00	Teleconference on inception note	Done		
April 6	16:00-18:00	Preparatory meeting- The Evaluators & Sr. Mustafa	Done	Both	Secretariat O. Ramallah
Apr 18	13:30-16:30	Workshop with the Steering Committee		Both	Danish Rep Office Ramallah
Apr 18	17:00-18:30	SSI: Head of Law Institute- BZU	Jamil Salem	Both	Ramallah
April 19	08:30-10:30	SSIs: Niras	Khalil Ansara	Both	Secretariat O. Ramallah
April 19	10:30-11:30	SSIs: The Secretariat Ramallah staff	CSO Facilitator & Capacity Building Advisor; Rania	Both	Secretariat O. Ramallah
April 19	11:30 – 12:30	SSIs: The Secretariat Ramallah staff	Human Rights Advisor; Fadi Touma	Both	Secretariat O. Ramallah
April 19	13:00 – 16:00	Workshop with the Secretariat	All Staff	Both	Secretariat O.
April 20	09:00-11:00	SSIs- SC: The Swedish Team	Consul General+ Kim Zander	Malene	S. Consulate Jerusalem
April 20	11:30-13:30	SSIs- SC: The Swiss Team	Head of SDC+ Terry Boullata	Malene	SC Jerusalem
April 20	14:30-16:00	SSIs: UNDP	Marisa Consolata-Kemper	Both	UNDP O. Ramallah
April 20	16:30-18:00	Leader of DCI	Khalid Quzmar	Both	Secretariat O. Ramallah
April 21	08:30-10:00	SSIs- SC: The Norwegian Team	Muntaha Aqel	Both	Secretariat O. Ramallah
April 21	10:00-11:30	SSIs: The Secretariat Ramallah staff (FM)	Fund Rasha Salah Dinn	Both	Secretariat O. Ramallah
April 21	11:30 – 13:00	Democracy & Workers Rights Center	Howaida Ja'far	Both	Secretariat O. Ramallah
April 21	13:30-15:30	SSIs: The Secretariat Ramallah staff (FM, MDM)	HR Advisor Admin/ Fin M	Both	Secretariat O. Ramallah
April 21	16:30 – 17:30	Leader of JLAC	Issam Aruri	Both	Secretariat O. Ramallah
April 21	17:30 – 18:30	Leader of Addameer	Sahar Francis	Both	Secretariat O. Ramallah
April 22	08:30-10:00	SSIs- SC: The Danish Team	Esther Lønstrup, & Miral al Far	Both	Danish O. Ramallah
April 22	11:00-13:00	SSIs- SC: The Dutch Team	Head of Office+ Dicky Methorst	Malene	Ambassador H. Jerusalem
April 22	13:30-16:30	SSI: Reference Group	Jessica Montell	Malene	Jerusalem
April 25	09:00-11:00	FGD- WB&EJ mid-size CSOs	5-8 Participant	Naser	Secretariat O. Ramallah
April 25	11:00-13:00	FGD: WB Small CSOs	5- 8 participants	Naser	Secretariat O. Ramallah
April 25	14:00 – 15:00	BZU President	A.Latif A. Hijleh		Ramallah
April 26	10:00-12:00	FGDs- Unqualified CSOs- WB&EJ.	5 participants	Naser	Secretariat O. Ramallah

Date	Time	Activity	Notes	Consultant	Location
April 26	13:00-15:00	FGD- WB&EJ strong/big CSOs	5 – 8 Participants	Naser	Secretariat O. Ramallah
April 27	15:00-17:00	SSIs- SC: The Norwegian Team	Stian Nordengen Christensen	Both	Skype
Apr 28	13:00-14:00	SSI: Leader of Breaking the Silence	Yuli Novak	Both	Skype
Apr 28	14:30-15:30	SSI: Leader of Physicians for HRs	Ran Goldstein	Both	Skype
Apr 29	11:00 – 12:00	SSI: Niras	Marjo		Skype
May 3	10:00-13:00	SSIs: The Secretariat staff in Gaza	Jawad Harb- CSO Facilitator & Capacity Building Advisor.	Malene and/or Naser	Secretariat O. Gaza
May 3	13:00-15:00	FGDs- Gaza large CSOs	5- 8 participants	Malene and/or Naser	Secretariat O. Gaza
May 3	16:00-17:00	SSI: Ad-Dameer- Gaza	Yonis Al-Jarow & Samer Mosa	Malene and/or Naser	CSO O. Gaza
May 3	18:30-20:00	SSI: Reference Group	Talal Okal	Malene and/or Naser	Latirna Restaurant
May 3	20:00 – 21:00	SSI: PNGO network	Amjad Al Shawa	Malene and/or Naser	Latirna Restaurant
May 4	9:00-11:00	FGDs- Gaza Unqualified CSOs	3 participants	Malene and/or Naser	Secretariat O. Gaza
May 4	11:00-13:00	FGDs - Gaza small/ mid-size CSOs	5- 8 participants	Malene and/or Naser	Secretariat O. Gaza
May 4	Check Time	Travel back to WB- Check the time at which Erez Checkpoint closes			Erez Checkpoint
May 5	08:30-10:30	FGD- Israeli mid-small CSOs	5- 8 participants	Malene	Jerusalem
May 5	10:30-12:30	FGD- Israeli Large CSOs	5- 8 participants	Malene	Jerusalem
May 5	13:00-14:00	Government- MoFA-	Majed Bamyra	Naser	MoFA O. Ramallah
May 5	17:00-19:00	SSI: Leader of Al-Haq	Shawan Jabarin	Both	Ad-Haq O. Ramallah
May 6	11:00 – 12:30	SSI- Diakonia	Yasmine Sherif	Both	Secretariat O. Ramallah
May 6	14:30 – 15:30	SSI:WCLAC	Randa Siniora	Both	Café de la Paix
May 6	15:30 – 16:30	SSI: CSO Leader	Amal Khraisheh	Both	Café de la Paix
May 9	13:00-15:00	Debriefing and 'next step' workshop (steering group & staff)	Tele conference	Both	Tele conference
May 14		Finalization, write-up and submission of draft report			Email
May 23		Hearing process– deadline for Comments to draft			Tele conference
May 30		Final report			Email

11. Annex V: Documents Reviewed

1. Annual Report 2014
2. Capacity Assessment Scoping Study first draft with Stakeholder analysis
3. Common Donor Secretariat Support to NGOs in the PT
4. Contract materials and minutes from steering committee meetings
5. End of Phase Report for HRGG Secretariat-August 2014 Final
6. Final Report Effectiveness of core funding 5 June 2015
7. HRIHL_FMM_revised_29_April_2015
8. Impact Assessment of the Human Rights and Good Governance Secretariat in the OPT
9. Mapping Study of Civil Society Organisations in the occupied Palestinian territory
10. MoM Steering Com 150813 signed
11. Needs assessments and the secretariat's scoping analysis,
12. Past reviews and evaluations of the program
13. Reference Group Meetings' Minutes
14. Reference Group ToR both versions: Oct 2 + Nov 15 2013
15. Review of Human Rights Good Governance Secretariat in OPT
16. SC Minutes of Meetings – DONE
17. Scoping and Capacity Assessment Report
18. Secretariat Strategy FINAL
19. Newsletters
20. Strategic plans and budgets
21. TAC Minutes of Meetings
22. Tender materials and the proposals presented by Niras and Birzeit University to the donors in 2013
23. Terms of Reference ISK NIRAS Jan 2016
24. Work plans and reports from the HR/IHL secretariat