



2020:3

Sida Decentralised Evaluation

NIRAS Sweden AB

Evaluation of: Fostering Regional Cooperation on Transboundary Water Management in Palestine, Jordan and Israel implemented by MEDRC

Final Report

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September 2019

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Abbreviations and Acronyms

CEPT	Continuing Education and Professional Training
EQ	Evaluation Question
IWA	Israeli Water Authority
JMWI	Jordan Ministry of Water and Irrigation
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MEDRC	Middle East Desalination Research Centre
MENA	Middle East and North Africa
MEPP	Middle East Peace Process
MFA	Ministry of Foreign Affairs
MoU	Memorandums of Understanding
NGO	Non Government Organisation
ODA	Official Development Aid
PWA	Palestinian Water Authority
SEK	Swedish Kroner
Sida	Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency
ToC	Theory of Change
ToR	Terms of Reference
UN	United Nations
USD	United States Dollars

Preface

The Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida) commissioned this “Fostering Regional Cooperation on Transboundary Water Management in Palestine, Jordan and Israel implemented by MEDRC” through Sida’s Framework Agreement for Reviews and Evaluations with NIRAS.

The evaluation was undertaken between April and September 2019 with country visits to Israel, Jordan, Palestine and Oman. The evaluation focuses on the project period 2016-2019

NIRAS collaborated with PEMconsult for the undertaking of this evaluation. The independent evaluation team consisted of:

- Eric Buhl-Nielsen (team leader)
- Kimiko Hibri Pedersen
- Loay Hidmi
- Astrid Høegh Jensen

Quality Assurance was conducted by Mats Alentun. The project manager at NIRAS Kristoffer Engstrand was responsible for ensuring compliance with NIRAS’ QA system throughout the process, as well as providing backstopping and coordination.

Executive Summary

Objectives and scope - The objective of the evaluation was to “*evaluate the relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability and gender equality of the project Fostering Regional Cooperation on transboundary water management and formulate recommendations as an input to upcoming discussions concerning the preparation of a new Middle East Desalination Research Centre (MEDRC) programme or project with possible support from Sida*”. The ToR presented a number of evaluation questions. These have been re-arranged as six main questions with a number of indicators and clustered under relevance, efficiency, effectiveness and sustainability. The scope of the evaluation covered the period from 2016 when the project started to March 2019.

Methodology - A combination of five different approaches and methods were used in this evaluation:

- Analysis of the theory of change and verification of the evaluation questions
- Surveys
- Desk study and interviews with stakeholders
- Use of earlier evaluations
- Country visits and participants interview/results seminars

Limitations – The main limitation was related to difficulty in extracting evidence on outcomes from the monitoring and reporting system of the project. As the project had only started in 2016 and was still ongoing, many of the outputs had not had time to mature into outcomes (e.g. students using their new knowledge in practice). The timeline of seeing the effects of the interventions was in most cases longer than the current project period, and it was hard to assess a lasting effect. This is further complicated by the political sensitive nature MEDRC works in.

FINDINGS

Question 1: Project conception - Were the objectives of the project founded on a firm understanding of the strategic priorities of the core parties and the context of the region?

The opportunities and challenges for MEDRC and the project have been affected by a changing political and technical context. The objectives of MEDRC and the project are still relevant in the changing context but not realistically achievable at least in the foreseeable timeframe. The objectives of the project built on the long standing programme of cooperation in trilateral and bilateral cooperation, they were informed by discussion with Sida but did not involve a special or new process of study or consultation. The project is relevant for and contributes to the current Sida regional strategy although in

practice the contribution is constrained by external factors and difficulty in linking with wider processes.

Question 2: Project design - Was the project design appropriate?

The project design with the trilateral and bilateral components is fully aligned to the MEDRC development cooperation program which in one form or another has been running since 2011. The trilateral program is designed as a catalyst and is necessarily optimistic and heavily dependent on external factors and the wider context. The bilateral program as a contribution to addressing the capacity gap in the region is realistic but appears to have been designed in isolation of other processes. The governance and decision making structures are well suited to the special circumstances of MEDRC's mandate. The results framework was developed late, is weak on outcome monitoring but also challenged by the process and indirect nature of especially the trilateral activities. The design of the reporting and decision making structures are more in tune with support to a political process than support to a development cooperation operation.

Question 3: Efficiency - Was the project efficient; were there other more efficient ways to implement the project and can the costs for the project be justified by its results?

The project has become better managed over time. However, disbursements are not as high as planned due mainly to external factors. MEDRC is aware of its key costs and has cost control systems in place that ensure budget compliance. There are procurement guidelines in place and MEDRC considers alternatives and prioritises cost-effectiveness. The procurement procedures of its counterparts are not assessed as this requirement was not made clear at the onset of the project. Costs per key outputs are in line with the approved budget and are generally reasonable considering the cooperation and capacity benefits they are foreseen to bring.

Question 4: Project management - Was the project flexible, well managed and well-reported on?

The project is well-documented and reported upon but technical reporting does not go beyond the level of outputs. Constraints facing implementation were identified and adjustments were made ensuring flexibility and continued relevance of activities to core parties in a difficult and volatile political context. MEDRC has shown willingness and taken action to promote gender equality but the meaningful participation of women remains limited primarily due to the gender specificity of the sector in a context where gender roles are pre-defined. Agreements are not made systematically with all partner universities and those involving the procurement of equipment do not articulate issues linked to the transfer of legal

ownership and financial responsibility for future maintenance and sustainability.

Question 5: Project outcomes - To what extent has the project contributed to intended outcomes? If so, why? If not, why not?

Trilateral workshops offer a unique space for core parties to meet, gain new knowledge and establish/re-establish contact but they have not led to a change in relations among core parties and driven transboundary cooperation and coordination on water issues. Strategic technical training workshop provided new knowledge and capacities but results achieved at the individual and institutional levels are not systematically monitored and documented. The project improved the efficiency and transparency of its MSc and PhD fellowships and developed/revived PhDs programmes in Palestine as a means to build local capacities within water management related issues but there is no system in place to capture results beyond outputs once these are completed in line with the project's theory of change. Gender equality is prioritised and action was taken to promote the participation of women in trilateral and bilateral activities including sex-disaggregated data to monitor and take corrective action but results achieved for women are not monitored and documented beyond outputs.

Question 6: Sustainability - What are the chances that benefits generated by the project will continue after project closure?

Where capacity has been developed and is put into use there is a long term and sustainable value created. There was not strong evidence of the project leading to cooperation between parties being institutionalised outside of project sponsored events but nor in the circumstances is this realistic in the short term. MEDRC's training and research operations within desalination are self-sustaining and offer good prospects for sustainability. Within the development cooperation sphere there are no medium term prospects for financial sustainability although the strategic plan (2017-2021) aims at reducing dependency on core funding. MEDRC has been putting in place a programme of continuous organisational improvements which should increase its fund raising capacity, however results monitoring remains a weak area. The risk matrix in the project proposal has been updated and developed and indicates that the greatest risks are in the political context and in the withdrawal of funding.

CONCLUSIONS

Overall conclusions drawn across the six evaluation questions are summarised below:

Conclusion 1 - The objectives of MEDRC and the project are relevant but highly dependent on the external context and the overall peace process. MEDRC was set up with the purpose “*to contribute to the peace process in the Middle East and to the raising of the standard of living of the people of the Middle East and elsewhere by improving the technical processes involved in water desalination*” (Establishment Agreement, 1996). These dual objectives are still highly relevant and even more so in the deteriorating environment for peace. In this environment, MEDRC offers one of few remaining channels for communication between Israel, Jordan and Palestine. MEDRC has recently widened its technical scope to being the principal catalyst in the search for fresh water. This is a broader remit in a crowded field and whilst highly relevant is not easy to achieve and is best mobilised in partnership rather than competing with existing actors.

Conclusion 2 - The project was built on a long running engagement in the region that followed political rather than development cooperation principles. The project which was based on an earlier and ongoing project supported by the Netherlands benefited from feedback and interaction with the stakeholders over a longer period. The earlier project supported by the Netherlands was financed through the Dutch foreign ministry as political cooperation whereas the Swedish finance came under development cooperation. This meant that the project design, reporting and decision making was more detailed and demanding than the earlier and ongoing project funded by the Netherlands. In particular, the development cooperation funding required a greater focus on results compared to the political cooperation support which focussed more on processes and the continuity of engagement. As a result it has not been easy for MEDRC to meet the development cooperation expectations of Sida.

Conclusion 3 - Although it has taken time to adapt to the demands of development cooperation there have been significant operational improvements. Building on the re-organisation of 2013 and stimulated by the demands of the Sida financed project, MEDRC has steadily improved its project management and reporting. And, although not yet able to fully report on results, it has developed strong and professional routines in a relatively short period. MEDRC recognises that this heightened level of accountability will serve its longer term purpose well and give confidence to potential new donors. However, it has meant that Sida has had to spend a disproportional amount of resources on monitoring the project given the volume of disbursement and its other regional activities. The higher accountability has also meant that MEDRC has used more resources than for other programmes financed through political rather than development cooperation channels.

Conclusion 4 – The cost efficiency of the project has been improving significantly. The project has an activity-based budget and annual targets and is well managed but disbursements are not as high as planned. MEDRC is aware of its key costs, tries to manage them and has cost control systems in place that ensure budget compliance but no mechanism to verify whether proposed costs are reasonable. MEDRC has procurement guidelines in place, considers alternatives and prioritises cost-effectiveness but procurement procedures of its counterparts are not assessed as this requirement was not made clear at the onset of the project. Costs per key outputs are in line with the

approved budget and are generally reasonable considering the relational and capacity benefits they are foreseen to bring, although in some cases costs are not fully justified. Although constant efficiency improvements were made, it was too early to consider strategic alternatives

Conclusion 5 - The project has promoted gender equality at activity level but outcomes have been more challenging to monitor and achieve. Responding to Sida's focus on gender equality, MEDRC has increasingly become aware of the importance of addressing gender imbalances in its activities. It has shown willingness to learn and embrace this priority. However, it has not been easy to measure progress beyond participation and it will take time before gender imbalances in the sector and other root causes affecting women's participation are addressed in the region.

Conclusion 6 - Trilateral events offered a unique meeting space, increased confidence and contributed to a readiness for technical cooperation in the future. The core parties found the trilateral events highly relevant and noted that they contributed to relationship building. Awaiting a more positive environment for the peace process, the main role of the trilateral program and MEDRC as a whole is to keep a pipeline of communication and interaction open. The design-related features such as the stop-start that affect the trilateral activities appear well-conceived even if limiting. But they are underpinned by the judgement of MEDRC guided by the council rather than reflected in a coherent stakeholder and political economy analysis. Although the arguments and implicit theory of change appear sound, they are not easy to test.

Conclusion 7 - Bilateral activities are appreciated and have become more efficient although they are still fragmented and not well enough linked to other ongoing processes. The masters and PhD studies as well as the strategic technical training workshops provided new knowledge and capacities. But the results achieved at the individual and institutional levels were not systematically monitored and documented. The training topics are quite scattered with little evidence of cumulative skills being developed that address high priority issues and have the potential to create a critical mass of expertise. Nevertheless, for both the training and further education interventions, the selection of participants and the cost efficiency of the training has improved significantly over the years and the current practice addresses many of the issues raised in earlier evaluations.

Conclusion 8 - Capacity related benefits at individual level will be largely sustained after project closure but achievement of the overall objectives will require continuous support. Where individual capacity has been developed and is put into use there is a long term and sustainable value created. However, as the capacity development does not build up institutional capacity or link to other efforts that do this the institutional capacity gap between the core parties is likely to remain and even increase after project closure. The wider mission of MEDRC is a continuous one and will need to be sustained through external financing either as core support or as project support. The MEDRC strategic plan (2015) seeks to enhance sustainability by diversifying funding and enhancing efficiency, a strategy which is well on the way to being realised. The new objective presented in the strategic plan, of developing a model organisation

that could be used to enhance peace through the lens of cooperation on a shared natural resource, brings the potential of scale and replicability.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendation 1: Undertake and update a stakeholder and political economy analysis to guide advancement of MEDRC objectives in the changing context.

This recommendation could be implemented through the following actions:

- Identify, review and test the implicit assumptions that guide MEDRC's approach
- Map the stakeholders and initiatives that operate in the same "water solutions and peace through water" space as MEDRC
- Review, in the light of the above, the advantages and disadvantages of closer co-ordination with other initiatives and linking with concrete projects

This recommendation should be implemented by: MEDRC

Recommendation 2: Develop a systematic capacity development intervention to guide the bilateral education and training so it contributes to institutional as well as individual capacity.

This recommendation could be implemented through the following actions:

- Structure two thirds of the training interventions around key topics to allow a cumulative capacity to be developed, allowing a third of the interventions to respond to new or bottom up demands
- Exploring the potential for providing a structured fellowship programme aimed at staff of relevant water authorities

This recommendation should be implemented by: MEDRC

Recommendation 3: Continue to strengthen and professionalise project management of the development cooperation

This recommendation could be implemented through the following actions:

- Align the theory of change and results frameworks to allow easier monitoring and reporting at outcome level (including gender)
- Integrate post-activity follow up to capture and document results as well as lessons learnt
- Strengthen project management and compliance with Sida guidelines on grant support for NGOs and research (specifically related to the Sida project)

This recommendation should be implemented by: MEDRC

Recommendation 4: Sweden should initiate preparation for a second phase of support and explore options for how best to channel that support.

It is important that MEDRC's trilateral and bilateral activities continue in order to strengthen and bring continuity to one of the few remaining channels of communication between Israel, Jordan and Palestine. The project contributes to the Swedish regional strategy and also supports the gender equality aims of Swedish development cooperation. Swedish support enhances MEDRC through diversifying its funding and by expressing solidarity with its aims. However, it is also recognised that the current

project arrangement places a disproportional burden of monitoring on regional Sida resources. This recommendation could be implemented by considering the following options:

- Adopting a similar project arrangement but outsource monitoring
- Provide core support rather than project support
- Delegate cooperation to another donor
- Channel funds through existing regional body
- Fund through Swedish political cooperation

This recommendation should be implemented by: Sida.

1 Background

PURPOSE AND CONTEXT OF THE EVALUATION

The objective of the evaluation was to “*evaluate the relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability and gender equality of the project Fostering Regional Cooperation on transboundary water management and formulate recommendations as an input to upcoming discussions concerning the preparation of a new Middle East Desalination Research Centre (MEDRC) programme or project with possible support from Sida*”.

The scope of the evaluation covered the whole implementation of the Sida funded project from 2016 until June 2019, with a forward-looking approach. The expenditure disbursed under review for the period between 2016 and 2019 was SEK 18,8 million.

Box 1.1 objectives, rationale and results framework

The long-term objective of the project is to support the peace process through technical cooperation with three core parties (Palestine/Jordan/Israel) – at ministry level; Palestinian Water Authority (PWA), the Jordan Ministry of Water and Irrigation (JMWI) and the Israeli Water Authority (IWA). The purpose is to enhance coordination on water sector issues, regional cooperation and transboundary water management among core parties. The two other main strategic objectives are finding solutions through research to fresh water scarcity and to create a model organization for regional or trans-boundary challenges.

The rationale is that MEDRC through activities like technical trainings, trilateral workshops, the fellowship programme and capacity building workshops will improve technical capacity, promote better and more sustainable networks of expertise, and strengthen institutional ties. This will lead to enhanced cooperation on water sector issues between the core parties and regional cooperation on transboundary water management. Regular meetings in a neutral setting will build confidence and relationship and reduce the likelihood of escalation due to breakdown in communications.

The results framework (Annex E, project document 2016) is not structured in a conventional way – it is summarized below at impact, outcome and output level.

Impact: (i) Assist in the Middle East Peace Process (MEPP) through mainly technical cooperation; (ii) research results on fresh water scarcity; and (iii) create a model organization for regional and transboundary challenges.

Outcomes: (1) Political - Enhanced coordination on water sector issues between the Core Parties to the Middle East Peace Process; (2) Capacity - Capacity building, training and knowledge transfer between the Core Parties enhanced; (3) Technical- Regional cooperation on transboundary water management between Palestine, Jordan and Israel fostered.

Outputs: 1.1) Forum for coordination and dialogue regarding water cooperation is provided; 1.2) Institutional ties built and strengthened at a regional level. 2.1 Improved technical capacity within the Core Parties on water sector issues, management and policy; 3.1 Sustainable network of expertise built and strengthened.

The objectives, rationale and results frame of the project are summarised in box 1.1- more details on the project itself are provided in the project document (see Annex C). The project's theory of change is based on the latest version of the theory of change developed by the project, slightly adapted during the inception phase in line with comments from Sida and MEDRC and presented in figure 1.1.

Figure 1.1 Theory of change and intervention logic

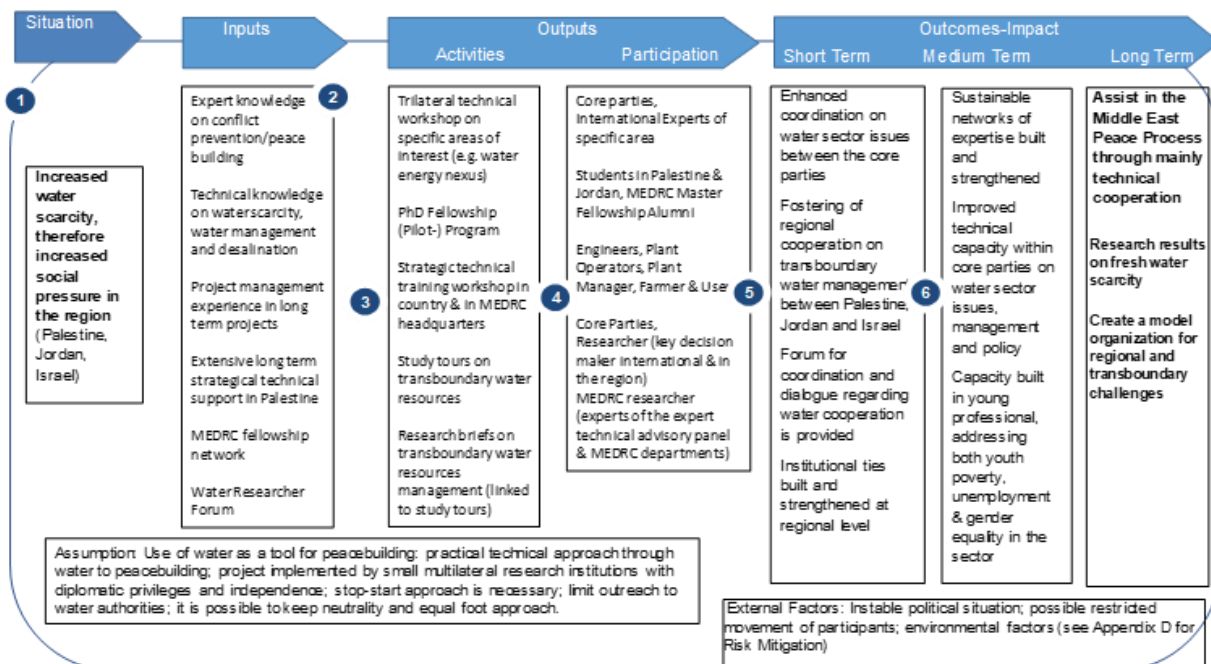
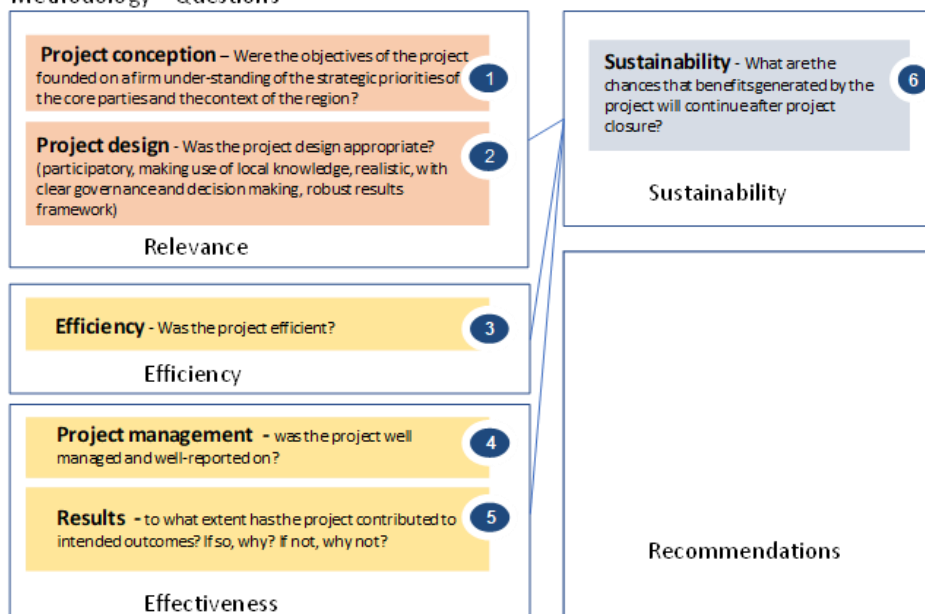


Figure 1.2 – Clustering of evaluation questions

Methodology - Questions



1 Evaluation question

Following the inception report, the evaluation focussed on six main questions which were clustered under the overall evaluation criteria of relevance, efficiency, effectiveness and sustainability (and shown in the theory of change (figure 1.1 and in figure 1.2). Impact is too early to evaluate, although it might prove possible to derive plausible statements about the likelihood of impact.

METHODOLOGY

The team used a combination of mostly qualitative but also quantitative data collection tools. The following 5 approaches were adopted and combined:

- Analysis of the theory of change and verification of the evaluation questions
- Surveys
- Desk study and interviews with stakeholders
- Use of earlier evaluations
- Country visits and participants interview/results seminars

See Annex D for more details of the methodology.

2 Findings

2.1 RELEVANCE

2.1.1 Question 1 – project conception

Question - Project conception	Indicators
1 Project conception – Were the objectives of the project founded on a firm understanding of the strategic priorities of the core parties and the context of the region?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There was a process to understand, identify and confirm the needs and demands • An assessment/awareness was done of the niche the project could offer given other efforts in the region • Assumptions and assessment of influence of external factors is realistic and comprehensive
Summary of main findings <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The opportunities and challenges for MEDRC and the project have been affected by a changing context • The objectives of MEDRC and the project are still relevant in the changing context but not realistically achievable at least in the foreseeable timeframe • MEDRC has had a long history of managing the changing context which can partly explain why it is the only surviving organisation from the 1994 peace process • The objectives of the project built on the long standing programme of cooperation in trilateral and bilateral cooperation, they were informed by discussion with Sida but did not involve a special or new process of study or consultation • The absence of a stakeholder and political economy analysis has not led to any problems but does increase MEDRC's dependence on the tacit knowledge and skills of key staff • The project is relevant for and has a high to medium contribution to the current Sida regional strategy although in practice the contribution is constrained by external factors and difficulty in linking with wider processes. 	

The opportunities and challenges for MEDRC and the project have been affected by a changing context. MEDRC was set up with the purpose “*to contribute to the peace process in the Middle East and to the raising of the standard of living of the people of the Middle East and elsewhere by improving the technical processes involved in water desalination*” (Establishment Agreement, 1996). The two mutually re-enforcing purposes of peace and finding solutions to freshwater scarcity have both been affected by a changing context.

The prospects for the peace process which were close to their height at the establishment of MEDRC are not as optimistic as before and perhaps have even worsened over time. This has meant that the peace related objective which has always had a low official profile has had to

be even more tentative and less explicit. MEDRC and the activities of the project cannot advance further than the underlying peace process. In the current and foreseeable future, MEDRC is not well positioned to support any processes that appear overtly as endorsing normalisation of relations without unanimous approval of all parties.

At the same time since 1996, desalinisation technology has advanced and has become commercially viable with the private sector taking a lead in innovation. Some of the role originally assigned to MEDRC in desalinisation has thus been filled by the private sector and in fact MEDRC's activities in desalination are largely self-financing through its commercial training and research arms. In response, whilst retaining a core competence in desalinisation, MEDRC has sought to broaden its remit to include more general water related issues with the strategic plan (2017-21) presenting a goal of “*MEDRC Will Become The Principal Catalyst in the Search for Fresh Water in the MENA Region*”.

The objectives of MEDRC and the project are still relevant in the changing context but not realistically achievable at least in the foreseeable timeframe. The dual objectives of peace and improving the technical processes involved in water desalinisation are still relevant in the region and even more so in the situation of a deteriorating environment for peace.

However, given the situation, the potential contribution to peace is indirect and limited to providing and keeping alive one of the few but not the only avenue for: i) establishing personal relations between officials in the water administrations; ii) reducing the sense of isolation of particularly the water officials in Gaza; iii) increasing the level of common understanding on technical aspects of regional water issues; iv) reducing the imbalance in capacity between the three countries (mainly through the bilateral programme). The major contribution is perhaps an internal one in that the expectation is that project activities, by supporting during difficult periods, will increase the goodwill towards MEDRC and enable it to play a more active role in peace building as and when the overall peace process improves. Linked to and reinforcing this contribution is a deepening of the appreciation that Palestine, when treated as an equal partner in the region, plays a constructive part in multi-lateral forums.

As noted above, whilst improving the technical processes involved in water desalinisation is still relevant it can best be promoted mainly through commercial channels as MEDRC is doing through its research and training departments. MEDRC has widened its technical scope to being the principal catalyst in the search for fresh water. This is a broader remit and whilst highly relevant is not easy to achieve. The field in this area is crowded and MEDRC has yet to develop the platform and skills base to make a strong contribution. But this does not mean it cannot as it has considerable comparative advantages which are perhaps, in recognition of the technical strength of other organisations, best mobilised in partnership rather than competing with existing actors – as the research in particular has been doing.

MEDRC has had a long history of managing the changing context which can partly explain why it is the only surviving organisation from the 1994 peace process. It is not easy to explain why MEDRC has survived when other organisations and initiatives have not. One key aspect has been the dual objectives that allowed, even in the worst periods, a focus to be

kept on the neutral technical goals of improving the technical processes involved in water desalination. In the regional press and in communications it is the technical aims that are the main outward facing part of MEDRC. MEDRC has also deliberately kept a low profile on advancing its objectives on peace by never pushing and only responding when all parties are ready. Thus, whilst it cannot point to breakthrough progress neither has it offended or been rejected by the relevant parties. The involved core parties of Israel, Jordan and Palestine as well as regional members such as Oman and the international members have differing but also complementary reasons for continuing to support MEDRC. The low profile on the peace front combined with wider and even differing incentives among the council has allowed the technical objective to shield the more political peace objective and given MEDRC relevance in difficult times.

The objectives of the project built on the long standing programme of cooperation in trilateral and bilateral cooperation, were informed by discussion with Sida but did not involve a special or new process of study or consultation. A theory of change was developed, updated and refined through discussion with Sida. Through its long experience in the region, MEDRC had an overview of other organisations and initiatives involved in water diplomacy, desalinisation and water scarcity that gave it familiarity and insight into the region and its challenges and opportunities. A separate study or consultation exercise was not conducted and in the circumstances this seems reasonable and preferable to undertaking an artificial exercise that might just prove to be a veneer. Overall, the project at outline concept level was submitted to the Executive Council and agreed by the 11 members including the representatives of 3 core parties of Israel, Jordan and Palestine.

The absence of a stakeholder and political economy analysis has not led to any problems but does increase MEDRC's dependence on the tacit knowledge and skills of key staff. Without a stakeholder and political economy analysis¹ it is more difficult for MEDRC to explain and position itself in the rapidly changing context. For example the niche and particular contribution that MEDRC could make towards becoming the principle catalyst for the search for fresh water solutions and the interaction and partnership with other initiatives could be refined. Similarly, a number of those interviewed pointed out that there was potential for taking a stronger role as a credible platform for dialogue on concrete water development projects. Some observers have argued for more openness for holding trilateral meetings in the region where the topic or nature of discussion allows. Others note the potential benefits of linking the bilateral training and education programmes to wider processes in the region that support institutional reform in the water sector and access to the labour market. It has also been argued that MEDRC could engage more vigorously with external partners and initiatives. Whereas there are often good reasons for not pursuing any of these opportunities this judgement can appear to outsiders as relying on tacit knowledge and explanation of key staff rather than

¹ There are a variety of approaches adopted by different donors. Sida has been guided by a power analysis approach https://www.sida.se/contentassets/83f0232c5404440082c9762ba3107d55/power-analysis-a-practical-guide_3704.pdf; A useful overall guide is available here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-beginners-guide-to-political-economy-analysis-pea>

being grounded in an analysis that can be updated, revised and subject to scrutiny.

The project objectives rely to a large extent on external factors and the assumptions are only partly covered by the theory of change. The theory of change identifies a number of assumptions and external factors but at a very broad level and not informed by a detailed stakeholder or political economy analysis as noted above. For example, the aim to reduce the capacity gap between Israel, Jordan and Palestine does not acknowledge (at least on paper) the issues of: institutional reform within the different water administrations; the effect of internal institutional wrangling over control between universities and the water administrations; the limited link between the universities and the labour market and the power (as opposed to capacity) imbalance which will continue to constrain cooperation. Efforts to reduce the capacity gap potentially suffer from not taking these aspects into consideration.

The trilateral participants found MEDRC and the trilateral events sponsored by the project as strategically relevant but more had doubts on the relevance for relationship building and technical cooperation. As shown in figure 2.1.1 the trilateral participants in general had a high regard for the relevance of the trilateral events. In total more than 88% found the events satisfactory or more than satisfactory. Figure 2.1.2 shows that there was a high degree of satisfaction when considering the strategic relevance than when reflecting over the relevance of the trilateral events for relationship building and technical cooperation. Whilst this is difficult to interpret it does seem that the message is that the project is relevant in broad terms but there is less confidence that it will be relevant for creating more tangible results such as relationship building and technical cooperation. This fits well with the overall findings that the project and MEDRC as a whole is relevant but constrained by external factors that it cannot influence.

Figure 2.1.1 Response of participants on relevance of trilateral events (n=37)

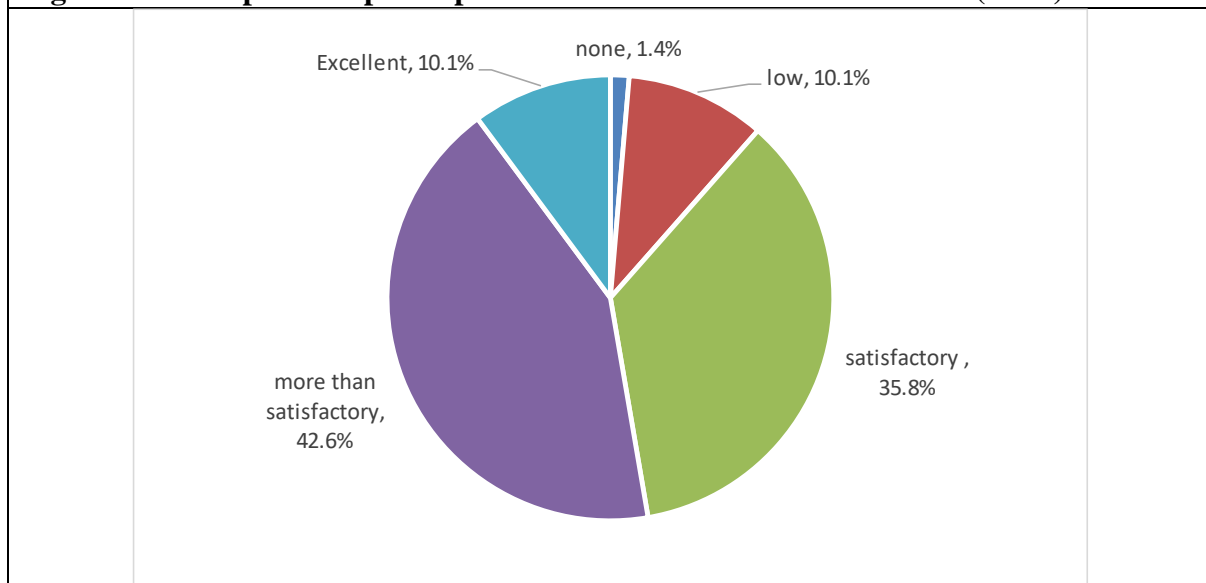
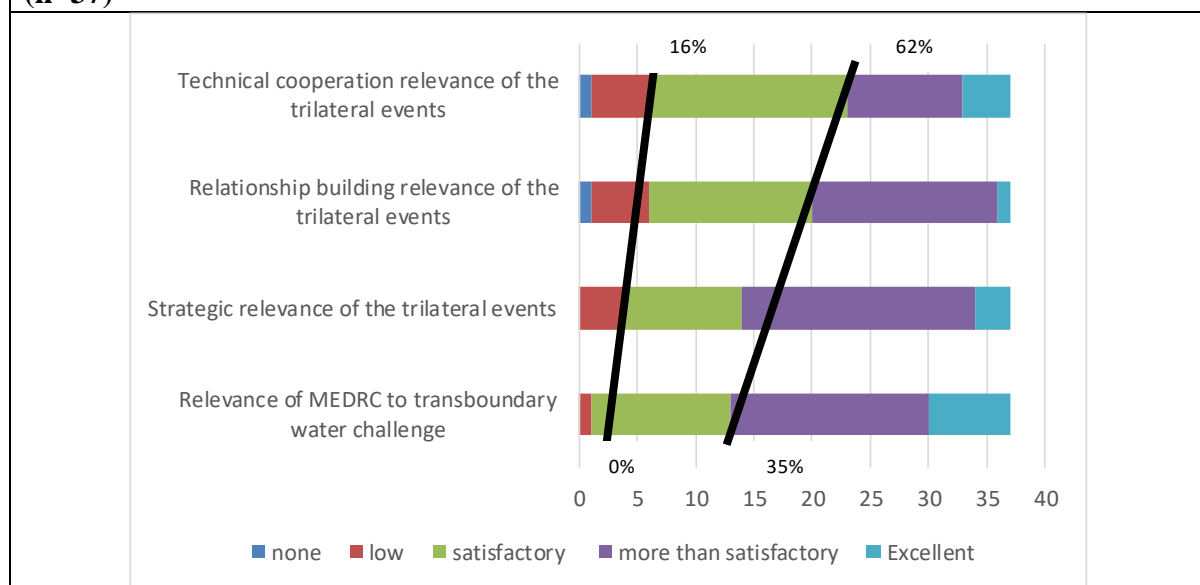


Figure 2.1.2 Response of participants on aspects of relevance of trilateral events (n=37)

The project is relevant for and has a high potential contribution to the current Sida regional strategy although in practice the contribution is constrained by external factors and difficulty in linking with wider processes. The project proposal (2016) presents an analysis of the contribution of the project to the Sida regional strategy. This is reviewed in table 3.1 below bearing in mind the experience to date. In general there is evidence that the potential is still high but that in practice there are a number of constraining factors. The deteriorating prospects for peace make it difficult and potentially even counterproductive for MEDRC to do more than they are in terms of enhancing regional cooperation or even contributing significantly to the enabling conditions. The strategy of not engaging strongly with other wider processes beyond the immediate confines of the three water administrations also constrains the contribution to meeting the strategic goals of the Sida regional support. There are strong arguments put forward for this more guarded approach which focus mainly on the need to ensure that MEDRC is not seen to take a lead or go beyond the willingness of the parties and a concern that working with others will make it difficult for MEDRC to remain neutral or avoid taking positions. These arguments appear quite plausible but as noted above they are not set out or derived from or supported by a more exhaustive stakeholder or political economy analysis.

Table 3.1 Contribution to Sida regional strategy

Strategy	MEDRC contribution as outlined in the project document
1. Strengthened democracy and gender equality, and greater respect for human rights ➤ Strengthening the capacity of the region's public institutions to promote gender equality and the rights of women and children in society ➤ Strengthening the capacity and	1. It recognizes each of the Core Parties as co-equal members of a multilateral forum, improving the conditions for regional cooperation between public institutions in the water sector. 2. Training and capacity building of public institutions in the water sector leads to increased efficiency and improved transparency. 3. It supports Jordan and Palestine in managing increased demand in the water sector caused by external humanitarian factors, creating an environment for strengthened gender

2 FINDINGS

increasing the transparency of public institutions and improving the conditions for regional cooperation between them	equality and greater respect for human rights.
<p><u>Evaluation notes:</u></p> <p>#1 High potential contribution, medium in practice due to the fact that although MEDRC increases confidence among the stakeholders the deterioration of the wider peace process impedes regional cooperation</p> <p>#2 High potential contribution, medium to low in practice as the public institutions are not targeted in a coherent way and the interventions are not linked to wider institutional reform</p> <p>#3 Medium potential contribution, medium to low in practice as much of the capacity development intervention is not targeted at managing increased demand. However the striving for gender balance and reporting does have a significant contribution.</p>	
2. Environmental improvement, reduced climate impact and increased resilience to environmental impacts, climate change and natural disasters.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. It provides an important forum for the discussion of improved, sustainable and inclusive administration of trans-boundary natural resources with a focus on water resources, renewable energy and food security. 2. It creates opportunities for investment and innovative solutions in the field of renewable energy and capacity building - for example funded research opportunities linked to national water strategies create innovative solutions directly addressing local need.
<p><u>Evaluation notes:</u></p> <p>#1 High potential contribution, medium in practice as the forum tends, for good reasons, to shy away from administration of transboundary natural resources and focus on more general principles and practices that could underpin future administration.</p> <p>#2 High potential contribution, medium to low in practice as the research activities are not sufficiently well linked to concrete projects.</p>	
<p>3 Improved opportunities for regional economic development, enabling poor people to improve their living conditions.</p> <p>➤ Increased economic integration and improved opportunities for countries in the region to participate in free, sustainable and equitable regional trade</p> <p>➤ Increased collaboration between countries and social partners in efforts to achieve decent work, with a focus on social dialogue and rights</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. In the short term, foundation level training directly increases farmer's yield and cuts the costs of irrigation, improving poor people's living conditions. 2. In the medium term, by funding research and innovation MEDRC contributes to cutting the costs of desalination. 3. In the longer term, by improving condition for regional cooperation, new commercial opportunities in the private sector are encouraged and will enable regional economic development.
<p><u>Evaluation notes:</u></p> <p>#1 Medium potential contribution, low in practice as the bilateral program has not been able to involve significant practical training or link to wider efforts</p> <p>#2 High potential, medium in practice as much of the cost reduction in desalination is led by the private sector, although the training provided by MEDRC contributes by increasing the skills in the region to operate plants efficiently</p> <p>#3 Medium potential in the long term, medium to low in practice as the improving regional cooperation has not taken place even though confidence has been built.</p>	

2.1.2 Question 2 – project design

Question - Project design	Indicators
2 Project design - Was the project design appropriate?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The design involved the participation of the core parties and other key regional actors • Design made use of local knowledge • Design was financially, politically, institutionally realistic • Governance and decision making was robust • Robust results framework was in place
Summary of main findings <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The project design with the trilateral and bilateral components is fully aligned to the MEDRC development cooperation program which has been running since 2011 • The bilateral program as a contribution to addressing the capacity gap in the region is realistic but appears to have been designed in isolation of other processes • The trilateral program is designed as catalyst and is necessarily optimistic and heavily dependent on external factors and the wider context • The governance and decision making structures are well suited to the special circumstances of MEDRC's mandate • The results framework was developed late, is weak on outcome monitoring but also challenged by the process and indirect nature of especially the trilateral activities • The design of the reporting and decision making structures are more in tune with support to a political process than support to a development cooperation operation 	

The project design with the trilateral and bilateral components is fully aligned to the MEDRC development cooperation program which has been running for over 5 years funded mainly by the Netherlands. Thus, although the detailed design of the Sida funded project did not involve an explicit process of consultation and participation of the core parties, it built on long running experience and feedback and interaction with the stakeholders. Over the years since 2011 (bilateral) and 2013 (trilateral) there have been a number of changes prompted by interaction with the participants that have shaped the design of the project. Among these are the decision to base trilateral events outside the region, and the use of the stop start arrangement to ensure that all core parties were fully committed. More recently, as documented under question 3 of this evaluation, changes have been made to improve efficiency and ensure that the selection of students for bilateral education and training was transparent and targeted towards those who could make most use of the support. On this basis the design can be said to have involved the participation of the core parties and regional actors and to have made use of local knowledge albeit through the lens of the senior MEDRC staff.

There were elements of project design, reporting and decision making that were different and more detailed than the earlier and ongoing project funded by the Netherlands, possibly because the Swedish finance came from development cooperation and the Dutch from foreign ministry sources. A major difference was that the Sida funded project brought in a new topic of funding PhDs as a pilot project.

The bilateral program as a contribution to addressing the capacity gap in the region is realistic but appears to have been designed in isolation of other processes. The programme of MSc and PhD studies is student driven but not guided by a coherent strategy. Although there is some link between the thesis subjects and the needs of the two countries involved (Jordan and Palestine – for example in the area of olive oil processing) there is generally not a strong or cumulative effect whereby work could build on what was done in earlier years. Recently the project design has been adjusted to give more attention to the potential of alumni networks but overall there has, by design, been little budget or attention set aside for making or linking with post-training interventions. The support to MSc and PhD studies does not seem to have been tested against the Sida check list for support to research (published in various places by the Sida research secretariat and Research Cooperation Unit (FORSK)). The check list provides a useful and thought provoking set of questions and considerations. There was probably not time at appraisal stage to undertake an exhaustive check and Sida was joining an ongoing programme (apart from the PhDs). Nevertheless, an opportunity was lost to rigorously assess and potentially improve the programme, and there is of course still opportunity to do so. Indeed, many of the more recent improvements in the design of the programme respond to elements in the check list such as the selection of students.

The training held as part of wider training program that does not involve formal tertiary qualifications is also demand-led. But it is not guided by a strategic plan unlike the Continuing Education and Professional Training (CEPT) systems of MEDRC's desalination training which is admittedly easier to formalise and configure in terms of graded attainment levels. Senior figures interviewed in Jordan felt that there was value in leaving space for the demand-driven approach and it was proposed that 70% should be planned and 30% left open whereas the project design at present is closer to the reverse.

The bilateral programme is, in part because it is small, isolated and not well linked to wider capacity development efforts and is, in part because of wider issues mentioned under question 1², necessary but far from sufficient. It is considered realistic but compromised by its design as it is scattered, not well linked to other efforts and with insufficient attention to the post training phases.

The trilateral program is designed as catalyst and is necessarily optimistic and heavily dependent on external factors and the wider context. MEDRC through the trilateral activities provides, in the words of the Chair of the executive council, “a proactively constructive neutral platform” (quoted in project proposal September 2016). It is seen as setting up a pragmatic mechanism which it is then up to the core parties to use. In this sense it is necessarily optimistic, dependent on the environment for peace and the response of the core parties. Awaiting a more positive environment for the peace process, the main role of the trilateral program and MEDRC as a whole is to keep a pipeline of communication and interaction open.

² For example the need for institutional reforms and the underlying power imbalance in the region

Although the use of the trilateral platform has, in practice, been limited to confidence building rather than cooperation, this is a limitation mainly arising from lack of progress in the wider peace process and in particular the sensitivities of approaching normalisation, rather than as a result of an inbuilt design issue. As pointed out in question 1, the design-related features such as the stop-start that affect the trilateral activities appear well-conceived even if limiting. But they are underpinned by the judgement of MEDRC guided by the council rather than reflected in a coherent stakeholder and political economy analysis. Outsiders, including this evaluation team, are obliged to take the arguments for the stop-start and the limited engagement with others, developed by MEDRC over many years, at face value rather than being able to examine their intellectual foundation and the body of evidence that supports them. Although they appear sound, they are not easy to test.

Governance and decision making structures are well-suited to the special circumstances of MEDRC's mandate. The Executive Council and core parties are engaged at an appropriate level of detail. The Executive Council is informed through twice yearly meetings on progress and major changes and the core parties are closely consulted and involved in the design of the tripartite events. To protect the decision makers and to proactively enhance cooperation MEDRC has evolved a decision making and governance format whereby the MEDRC informs the relevant parties on its proposed actions and gives all a chance to comment or object rather than requiring parties to make a formal consent or take an active decision making role on sensitive subjects that might expose them. This is one of the advantages of MEDRC's diplomatic and official status as it allows MEDRC to reflect and nudge forward the underlying intentions of the parties that might otherwise be constrained by what the states acting alone and under individual scrutiny might be able to agree to. An example of this in action was a recent decision needed on where to hold a trilateral event. After some proposals by core parties with discussion and objections to various suggestions, MEDRC proposed Cyprus as a neutral venue and whilst no one party was prepared to actively endorse it as a preferred option, neither was it rejected by any party and as a consequence went ahead.

The results framework was developed late, is weak on outcome monitoring but also challenged by the process and indirect nature of especially the trilateral activities. The results framework underwent a number of changes and iterations before and after the project submission for approval. The appraisal reacting to the final proposal dated September 2016 that formed part of the agreement with Sida noted that “*there is no baseline developed and no set of clear indicators developed which can, at least in part, be explained by the process orientated nature of the work of the organisation*” (Sida, Appraisal of Intervention, October 2016, p11). In early 2017, once the project had started, a more detailed logical framework was developed with targets for key activities with a focus on the number and gender of participants involved. This formed the basis for the activity reporting presented in annual reports. The logical framework also presented a column of “outputs/impacts” that should arise from the activities. The column of “outputs/impacts” has some targets that seem to relate to the carrying out of activities and holding of events but without indicators and not in a way that MEDRC (or others) have found easy to understand or report on. As noted repeatedly during the annual

reviews with Sida³, the reporting was “activity to output” based and did not reflect on outcomes and in part this can be traced back to an unconventional results framework design.

The design of the reporting and decision making structures are more in tune with support to a political process than support to a development cooperation operation. All of MEDRC’s earlier and other ongoing development programmes have been funded as support to political processes through Ministries of Foreign Affairs, often as core support, rather than through development cooperation agencies which have a higher expectation on results reporting. This also explains in part the design of the project and the difficulty experienced by Sida in obtaining results reporting. The political process as noted by the Sida appraisal makes it inherently difficult to measure results. The institutional set-up of MEDRC, with the Executive Council providing a very broad governance oversight rather than monitoring programs in detail, also makes it difficult for Sida to rely on MEDRC’s normal governance structure to provide the level of accountability usually required by development cooperation programmes. As a result Sida, unlike the other donors, has had to become involved in detailed support to the development of reporting and others’ systems. Whilst MEDRC acknowledges the value of this input it also puts a strain on cooperation for both parties.

2.2 EFFICIENCY

2.2.1 Question 3 – efficiency

Question - Efficiency	Indicators
3 Was the project efficient? 3.1 Were there other more efficient ways to implement the project? 3.2 Can the costs for the project be justified by its results?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Procurement and cost control system in place (including definition of eligible and ineligible costs) • Cost per student , and/or other costs per key outputs (Study tours, trilateral events, workshops etc) • Benefits of the project outweigh the costs • Alternative strategies for reaching objectives were considered
Summary of main findings <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The project has an activity-based budget and annual targets and is well managed but disbursements are not as high as planned. • MEDRC is aware of its key costs, tries to manage them and has cost control systems in place that ensure budget compliance but no mechanism to verify whether proposed costs are reasonable. • MEDRC has procurement guidelines in place, considers alternatives and prioritises cost-effectiveness but procurement procedures of its counterparts are not assessed as this requirement was not made clear at the onset of the project. 	

³ For example the performance report of 2017 notes “Sida stressed the need for MEDRC to report on the results specified in the logframe, not simply input – output reporting” (Sida, conclusions on performance report, 1.No-vember 2018)

- Costs per key outputs are in line with the approved budget and are generally reasonable considering the relational and capacity benefits they are foreseen to bring, although in some cases costs are not fully justified.
- Although constant efficiency improvements were made, it was too early to consider strategic alternatives.

The project has an activity-based budget and annual targets and is well managed but disbursements are not as high as planned. The project budget is an activity-based budget and provides annual disbursement targets to monitor timely conversion of inputs into outputs, which is good practice. Overall, the cumulative disbursement rate for 2017 and 2018 is on the low side and stands at 48% of the total approved budget with a total of USD 1,070,380 disbursed out of an approved budget of USD 2,247,318⁴. Disbursement rates stood at 62% and 67% of annual targets in 2017 and 2018 respectively⁵. This is primarily due to no disbursements in 2016⁶, recurrent postponement of the study tour and no disbursement on PhD fellowships in 2017 as the PhD programme was still under development. It is also partly due to budgeted figures that are generous compared to actual costs. The evaluation team notes that there is a budget for monitoring and evaluation (M&E) that has not yet been consumed⁷. However, there are no funds allocated to the annual audit of the project in the approved budget.

The budget is managed in line with MEDRC's internal best practices in a satisfactory manner⁸. The organisation has improved its budget oversight overtime and integrated learning into its practices, for instance in the design of budgets, accounting procedures and in monitoring expenditures of key activity and sub-activity lines. These improvements were initiated under the Sida grant but they were not guided by Sida's general conditions applicable to grants from Sida to NGOs regarding project/programme support and core support (2018), known as Annex A. Due to an oversight, Annex A was not attached to MEDRC's signed agreement. Therefore, the issue of compliance with certain requirements, such as the creation of a separate bank account for the Sida grant, the management of exchange rate losses/gains, conditions for the procurement and transfer of ownership of equipment above €5000, and the assessment of internal control, systems and procedures of implementing partners receiving Sida funds, was not raised prior to this evaluation.

⁴ Figures are provided in USD as the approved budget and financial reports are in USD.

⁵ It is worth noting that annual targets do not take account of the cash balance carried over from the previous year.

⁶ The agreement between MEDRC and Sida was signed in October 2016 with project start in November 2016 but no disbursements were made in the last quarter of 2016.

⁷ The evaluation team was informed that ToR for an evaluation have been recently disseminated and the study is now complete.

⁸ MEDRC is in the process of finalising its financial management manual in line with the recommendations of the Sida audit of 2016.

MEDRC is aware of its key costs, tries to manage them and has cost control systems in place that ensure budget compliance but no mechanism to verify whether proposed costs are reasonable. To assess cost management⁹, the admin cost ratio is looked at as well as the key costs of the project. The admin cost ratio is acceptable with 66% allocated to activities. The key costs of the project are staff (21% of total budget), PhD fellowships (20%) and trilateral meetings (17%):

- *Staff*: The key cost driver for the staff budget is salary rates. This is however justifiable in the context of the organisation which is an international organisation with diplomatic status. Historically, MEDRC's salary scale followed the United Nations (UN) scale. While there is no salary scale today, these rates are reported to lie within the range of UN salary scales and to be aligned to market rates in Oman. According to MEDRC, the organisation is in the process of working on a new salary scale that can be used as a benchmark to manage salaries in the development cooperation department more systematically in the future. This is in line with the recommendation of the Sida audit of 2016 regarding the development of administration and personnel manuals. In terms of the project, the overall allocation of the number of days to the project per year as presented in the table below is deemed reasonable.

Position	Centre director	Programme manager	Project officer ¹⁰	Administration ¹¹
Expected per year	12 days	50 days	100 days	45 days

Source: Approved budget

- *PhD fellowships*: PhDs represent the core activity of the project from a budget perspective. The largest budget lines of PhD fellowships include i) books and printing costs including lab material and supplies, ii) research costs and iii) thesis work. The calculation of the budget for PhDs is broken down in a budget note. However, there is no information that indicates that cost data in the budget was verified to ensure that proposed costs are reasonable. During implementation, MEDRC optimised the use of the approved budget to increase the planned number of PhD fellowships from three PhD students to ten, which suggests that the budget was overestimated. In practice and within the approved budget, the amount of the scholarship is defined by budgets proposed by students in their applications. Based on a sample of three out of ten proposed budgets, the key cost of the PhD degree is living expenses primarily housing, food and transportation in two of the samples. These budgets were proposed by female students. In one sample, the highest cost is tuition and no living expenses are covered. The difference in the breakdown of the PhD cost indicates some flexibility and responsiveness to needs. However, there is no justification as to why high living expenses such as rental of flats and family allowances for food are needed when the degrees are done in country. Similarly, there is no reflection as to whether this was accepted because of intended benefits to female PhD students that would outweigh

⁹ Costs include budgeted/planned figures unless otherwise mentioned.

¹⁰ This position is shared by more than one person (see section 2.3.1). It is co-financed with Dutch funding.

¹¹ This is shared between finance and operations.

these high costs. Furthermore, while MEDRC is generally aware of what costs are in Jordan, Gaza and the West Bank, there is no formal mechanism that ensures that proposed costs are reasonable. Nevertheless, receipts are provided to MEDRC in progress reports which are a milestone for subsequent payments.

- *Trilateral workshops*: The key drivers of trilateral workshops are airplane tickets, accommodation/venue expenses and per diem. MEDRC is aware of these costs and manages them through differentiated procurement practices for services and goods (see procurement) and reliance on the UN per diem rates and rules. There are mechanisms in place to ensure that per diems are paid in line with the UN per diem list and rules, for instance accommodation cost and meals provided are deducted in line with UN procedures.

MEDRC has procurement guidelines in place, considers alternatives and prioritises cost-effectiveness but procurement procedures of its counterparts are not assessed as this requirement was not made clear at the onset of the project. MEDRC developed procurement guidelines for the procurement of services and goods in line with the recommendation of the Sida audit of 2016. The main procurement items for the project are airplane tickets, meeting venues and accommodation facilities. These are purchased directly by MEDRC:

- *Tickets* are obtained through MEDRC's travel agent. Price is not the only determining factor. Other considerations such as direct flights or flights with minimal transit time to avoid overnights and long journeys for participants including high-level officials are taken into account. Within these preferences, the most price advantageous tickets are bought. According to MEDRC, all tickets bought by the project are economy class tickets.
- *Meeting venues and accommodation* are procured through a request for three quotations from potential service providers. Typically, these are four or five star hotels. Alternatives within the budget are considered and the selection takes into account the suitability and competitiveness of the package offered. There are however no guidelines that set a ceiling on the hotel luxury level when requesting quotations. This is left to the best judgement of the individual project officer. Key considerations are that hotels are easily accessible and can provide workshop facilities in line with MEDRC's requirements for trilateral workshops. This is in view of the foreseen benefit of creating a suitable and neutral space to nurture a sense of equality among core parties and encourage interaction among them (e.g. outside the region, round table facilities). Findings suggest that trilateral workshops have created a unique space for core party representatives to meet and interact in an informal setting. In the context of the peace process which is stagnating, this can be considered a benefit that justifies the cost of these workshops if support to the peace process is a political priority of the project, even if no concrete results are yet achieved in terms of coordination and cooperation on transboundary water issues (see EQ5).

At the level of partner universities, the project procured some lab equipment in conjunction with the PhD programme. A prior assessment of procurement procedures of partners was not done, primarily because Sida's guidelines for such a practice was not communicated to MEDRC at the onset of the project. In line with MEDRC's procurement guidelines, universities are requested to collect three quotations from potential suppliers. Options are discussed with MEDRC, including considerations for promoting local procurement, and a selection is made. Funds are transferred directly from MEDRC to the selected suppliers. It is worth noting that the purchase of lab equipment was not initially planned. It was introduced to ensure better utilisation of the allocated budget while responding to the needs of universities. The purchase

of lab facilities is covered by the PhD fellowship budget line as agreed in the non-cost extension but it is not visible in financial reports (see EQ4).

At the level of students, lab material and supplies are purchased directly by PhD students in line with their approved budget. These purchases are documented with receipts attached to progress reports. There is however no verification mechanism that ensures that the costs of these purchases are reasonable as long as they fall within the approved budget.

Costs per key outputs are in line with the approved budget and are generally reasonable considering the relational and capacity benefits they are foreseen to bring, although in some cases costs are not fully justified. The project follows good budget practice and shows unit costs, which allows for unit cost analysis. Based on data extracted from the accounting system, planned and actual costs of key outputs are looked at, namely trilateral workshops, strategic training, alumni networks and fellowships. Due to the time constraints, indirect costs were not allocated to outputs. The below costs per key outputs should therefore be treated as indicative¹²:

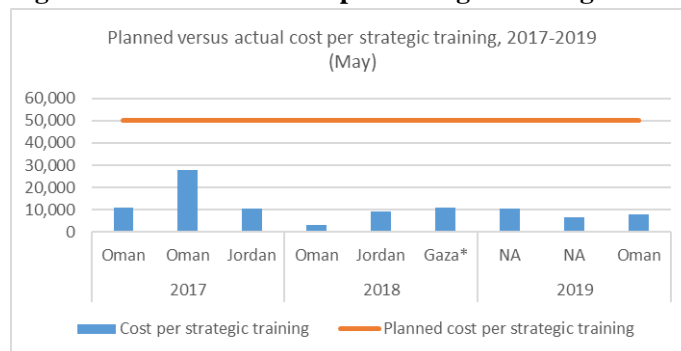
- The cost per *trilateral workshop* stands at USD 65.000 and are planned for a total of 20 participants per workshop. There is no benchmark of similar activities to assess whether this cost is reasonable. Looking at the cost of trilateral workshops held over the years, the actual cost per workshop ranges between around USD 40.000 and USD 74.000, almost doubling from 2017 to 2019 (see figure 2.2.1) This increase in unit cost over time is generally within the approved budget but it was not accompanied by a proportionate increase in the total number of participants, which varies from 23 to 29 participants. However, the representation of core party participants improved over time from 39% of total participants in the first trilateral workshop to around 50% in subsequent workshops (see EQ5). The strengthened commitment of core parties to participate in MEDRC's trilateral activities represents a positive development in a context where there is little progress in the peace process. This can be considered a benefit that justifies the cost of this output.

¹² As study tours have not yet taken place, their actual cost cannot be compared to their planned unit cost of USD 75.000 and are therefore not covered.

Figure 2.2.1 Indicative cost per trilateral workshops in USD, 2017-2019 (May)

Source: MEDRC budget and monitoring data

- Strategic technical training* workshops on water issues are provided to Jordan and Palestine as ODA eligible countries. The training sessions take place in country when requested and as part of a training series at MEDRC in Oman¹³. The planned cost per strategic workshop is USD 50,000. The actual cost per strategic training lies substantially below the budgeted figures and ranges from around USD 3,300 to around USD 28,000 with a number of participants that varies considerably, between 4 and 15 participants. The evaluation team does not have information to assess whether the cost of this output is reasonable. The team was informed that the costs for training under the project are less than those provided commercially which are to some extent market tested. This would tend to support a conclusion that the costs are reasonable. However, given that planned cost per strategic training is substantially higher than incurred costs, the unit cost budgeted for this output is not seen to be realistic (see figure 2.2.2).

Figure 2.2.2 Indicative cost per strategic training in USD, 2017-2019 (May)

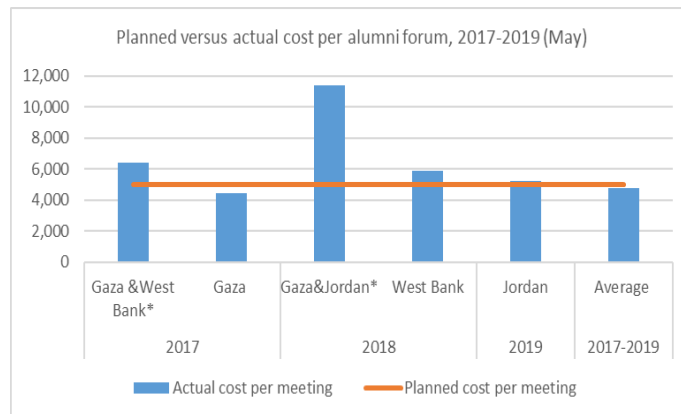
* See footnote

Source: MEDRC budget data

¹³ The research methods training workshop in Gaza was related to the PhD programme and gathered 32 participants. It is classified under strategic training even though it is not a training on technical water issues per se.

- The planned cost per *alumni network* meeting, which is now called the water research forum, is USD 5000¹⁴. The actual cost of these events is within the approved budget but there is no mechanism that verifies whether the budget figures are reasonable. In some instances, these events take place in hotels, in other cases they take place at universities. There are benefits that are linked to this output that could justify its cost, namely that it is a tool to provide students with hands-on experience organising events and to expose them to representatives from government institutions and the private sector (see EQ5).

Figure 2.2.3 Indicative cost per alumni water forum in USD, 2017-2019 (May)

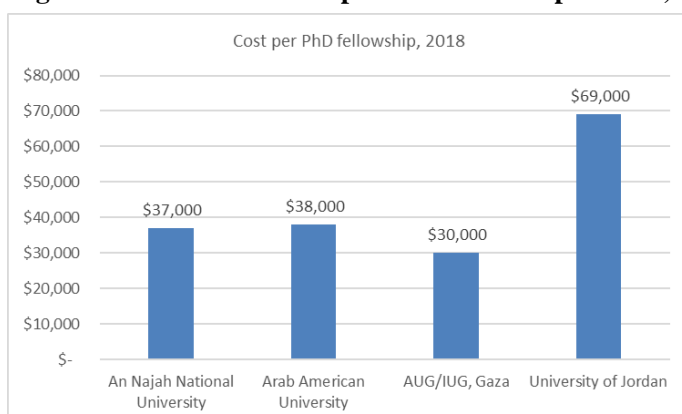


*These include two meetings.

Source: MEDRC budget data

- Cost per research fellowship* are different for MScs and PhDs. The planned unit cost per MSc is set at USD 11,000 but was reduced to USD 5,000 during implementation, increasing outreach to benefit more MSc students in more universities. The cost per PhD fellowship was budgeted at USD 50,000 per student. In practice, the cost per PhD varies across universities in the West Bank, Gaza and Jordan. The indicative budget is around USD 30,000 per PhD. With this reduction in actual cost per PhD, outreach was increased from three planned PhD fellowships to ten. There are cases where the cost per PhD exceeds the envisaged cost as depicted below. However, no documentation is provided to justify why this is the case. The savings of USD 20,000 from the planned cost per PhD student was used to procure and equip lab facilities for two universities in Gaza. Overall, the changes made during implementation indicate that the budgeted figures were overestimated and an assessment of whether they were reasonable did not take place during the design phase.

¹⁴ The unit cost in the budget is USD 15,000 planned for three workshops, one in each of Jordan, West Bank and Gaza.

Figure 2.2.4 Indicative cost per PhD fellowship in USD, 2018

Source: MEDRC budget data

Although constant efficiency improvements were made, it was too early to consider strategic alternatives. Particularly in the last year there has been attention given to cost control and ensuring good use of funds. However, alternatives to the trilateral and bilateral activities have not been explicitly considered. After just a few years of operation it would have been out of the scope of the project to do that and it would have basically meant designing a new or different project.

There probably isn't an alternative to the trilateral events (taking them out of the region was reluctant necessity). Some have argued that MEDRC has been slow to think creatively about how to bring parts of the trilateral back to the region. It could have been possible to delegate the bilateral activities to professional scholarship granting organisations. Although this might have led to efficiency improvements it would have weakened one of the main reasons for the bilateral activities which is to build up the goodwill and confidence in MEDRC so that it is well placed to support peace initiatives when and if that becomes possible.

2.3 EFFECTIVENESS

2.3.1 Question 4 – project management

Project management	Indicators
<p>4 Project management - Was the project flexible, well managed and well-reported on?</p> <p>4.1 Was the project structure adequate to support effective implementation?</p> <p>4.2 Was the project structure adequate to support effective implementation of gender equality?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Monitoring and reporting was timely and high quality (consistent, factual, prioritized) Early identification of constraints in reaching objectives and constructive solutions put forward Adjustments made during implementation to maintain relevance Sufficient human resources with clear roles and responsibilities Factors that supported gender equality Factors that hindered gender equality
<p>Summary of main findings</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The project is well-documented and reported upon but technical reporting does not go beyond the level of outputs and financial reporting does not include the cash balance at hand to inform about the liquidity needs of the project. Constraints facing implementation were identified and adjustments were made ensuring flexibility and continued relevance of activities to core parties in a difficult and volatile political context. 	

- The actual human resource structure is not clearly reflected in the project's human resource plan and budget but has been adequate for the implementation of the project.
- MEDRC has shown willingness and taken action to promote gender equality but the meaningful participation of women remains limited primarily due to the gender specificity of the sector in a context where gender roles are pre-defined.
- Agreements are not made systematically with all partner universities and those involving the procurement of equipment do not articulate issues linked to the transfer of legal ownership and financial responsibility for future maintenance and sustainability.

The project is well-documented and reported upon but technical reporting does not go beyond the level of outputs and financial reporting does not include the cash balance at hand to inform about liquidity needs of the project. Technical reporting is of good quality. It provides relevant details on the progress of activities and outputs and attaches documentation in annexes. Challenges faced during implementation and ways to overcome them are noted where relevant. However, the logframe of the project is activity and output-focused, which partly explains why reporting is also in line with that. The framework does not have indicators but sets targets that function as quantitative output indicators (e.g. number of planned workshops, number of planned participants) including targets for the representation of women in activities. Another reason for output-oriented reporting is MEDRC's experience with reporting on projects financed by political aid, rather than development aid, the latter being more demanding in terms of reporting on outcomes. Sida is the first and primary key donor that is a development agency. Therefore, reporting and monitoring of the project has been more extensive than what MEDRC is used to, requiring more staff time than initially foreseen.

The project has a M&E system consisting of tracking sheets that monitor and report on activities and targets. Data is collected by MEDRC during events and through data provided by core party counterparts and the target group (e.g. PhD/MSc progress reports as a milestone for further disbursements). MEDRC is aware of the risk of double counting of, for instance, participants who attend more than one event. According to MEDRC, it registers and reports unique cases when calculating the cumulative numbers of participants reached. Evaluation sheets are used after trilateral and strategic training sessions to collect feedback from participants, which is good practice. However, little data is collected to inform about increased knowledge and technical capacity as well as changes that emerged in terms of contribution to building enabling conditions for coordination and/or cooperation among core parties on water issues in line with the theory of change and logframe¹⁵. As monitoring and reporting does not capture results at outcome level, it does not inform about and document results achieved beyond outputs.

¹⁵ One question for strategic training sessions that could inform the ToC relates to whether the content of the course can be used in the participant's job. However, it does not indicate whether the participant had prior knowledge to that content or whether new knowledge that can be used on the job was gained.

With regard to financial reporting, the activity-based budget (see EQ3) allows monitoring disbursements of key outputs vis à vis the forecasted budget targets for the year. However, it does not include the carry-over balance from the previous year as part of the cash balance at the beginning of given year. This means that financial reporting does not inform about how much cash was disbursed against available cash at hand and the need for Sida to transfer funds in line with the agreed plan in order to avoid repayment of disbursed funds and accrued interest at the end of the project. There have been delays in the submission of audit reports due to a project management oversight in the first year of reporting. Action was subsequently taken to ensure timely delivery of audits, but delays have continued due to exogenous factors linked to the context in Oman namely the challenge of mobilising auditors in the first quarter of the year despite prior commitment.

Constraints facing implementation were identified and adjustments were made ensuring flexibility and continued relevance of activities to core parties in a difficult and volatile political context. MEDRC operates in a challenging context particularly in relation to its trilateral activities that requires commitment and equal participation of the three core parties. It recognises the need to adapt and respond to its context of operation which is highly dependent on political developments in the region. Using the competences of its newly recruited team within conflict, peace and mediation, MEDRC has since 2017 adopted an approach that prioritises consultations with and/or visits to each of the core parties separately, in addition to joint meetings that take place in the context of trilateral coordination and executive committee meetings. This has allowed each core party to voice their preferences and concerns separately (e.g. themes or location of the workshop, relevant stakeholders to invite), identify constraints in good time and explore solutions that core parties are in agreement with within the overall challenges of the political context. According to MEDRC, this process-oriented preparatory work represents a large share of the time spent on the organisation of trilateral workshops in view of ensuring commitment and relevance to core parties. It has helped mitigate the stop-start nature of MEDRC's work, which had previously stalled project implementation.

In terms of bilateral activities, MEDRC identified challenges and made adjustments to the management of its research fellowship programme to make it more transparent and systematic. This primarily relates to the application and selection processes of candidates (e.g. applications are now directly sent to MEDRC, scored evaluation sheets are used, an international panel also evaluates PhD applications) as well as the grant amount, which for instance in Palestine used to be set by water authorities for each individual applicant but is now standardised for all students. While these changes were initially received with some resistance, consulted stakeholders recognise today that it has improved the application process. MEDRC also changed the modality for the organisation of alumni network meetings to make the process more empowering for students where MEDRC plays a supporting role and students, through a student committee, take the lead on the organisation of the alumni water forums. It also ensured a better utilisation of the PhD budget to support universities with lab equipment. These adjustments were made in view of making project activities more relevant but also more cost-effective working with the same budget to reach more people, for instance for increasing the number of MSc and PhDs and the number of participants in water forum meetings (see EQ5). Similarly, matrix from strategic technical workshops primarily in relation to challenges faced

regarding the commitment of participants to systematically attend a series of training sessions are being considered.

Agreements are not made systematically with all partner universities and those involving the procurement of equipment do not articulate issues linked to the transfer of legal ownership and financial responsibility for future maintenance and sustainability. The fellowship components is technically open to all students in Palestine and Jordan. Currently, it extends to a total of ten universities, four in Jordan and the West Bank respectively and two in Gaza. There are currently Memorandums of Understanding (MoUs) with three universities that recently expired. The scope of collaboration is therefore not clearly and systematically framed and communicated with these universities even though universities, together with water authorities, are involved in the selection of applicants and the approval of progress reports of individual students. While it is favourable to frame such collaboration in an agreement, this is so far acceptable as no funding is disbursed to universities. Tuitions are directly paid out to students as part of their grant. Individual contracts with funded students are signed and clearly set the terms of the scholarship including the budget and payment schedule of the grant. Given that the project is funded by development aid, the issue of funding individuals is to be confirmed against Sida's guidelines for support to research projects or projects including research components.

A joint agreement was signed with two partner universities in Gaza regarding the procurement of lab equipment under the PhD fellowship component, making use of savings on the actual cost of PhDs. The sustainability and maintenance of lab facilities is mentioned in the agreement, which is good practice. However, issues linked to legal ownership and financial responsibility are not addressed. It is unclear whether the equipment is registered as part of the universities' assets, whether there is a guarantee for operational defects and how maintenance will be financed. This is particularly relevant for ensuring sustainability, making sure that funds can be allocated for the current and future maintenance of the equipment in the event no external funding is available.

The actual human resource structure is not clearly reflected in the project's human resource plan and budget but has been adequate for the implementation of the project. As noted in section 2.2.2, the project is supported by the centre director, a project manager, a project officer and administrative staff including finance and operations. The proposal presents MEDRC's key staff but does not indicate their roles with respect to the project. The ToR of staff to be hired are also not presented. The evaluation team understands that the role of the centre director is limited to around one day per month to support trilateral activities primarily through dialogue and high-level visits (see EQ3). Finance is responsible for making all payments linked to the project (e.g. hotels, travel agent, students, suppliers), bookkeeping and financial reporting including the annual audit but may be insufficiently resourced with around two days per month allocated to the project. Operations check compliance with UN per diem rates and rules given that key activities involve travelling of MEDRC staff, core party representatives and other participants. The programme manager is the head of development cooperation at MEDRC and is responsible for trilateral activities, overall oversight, technical reporting and donor contact. The project officer position is shared by more than one staff and deals

with bilateral activities. At the time of the evaluation, two project officers were present. Other staff were occasionally brought in to fill out gaps and support with logistics. Roles and responsibilities of programme staff are assigned by type of project activity (e.g. trilateral workshops, research fellowships). Each person is responsible for the implementation and monitoring of his/her activities including contact with core party counterparts, procurement of goods and services (e.g. venues, tickets), budget oversight, requests for payments, contract management, logistics and other project management related tasks. The actual allocation of resources with two project officers, one responsible for bilateral activities and one supporting trilateral activities, is seen to be adequate for the implementation and follow-up of project activities.

MEDRC has shown willingness to promote gender equality but the meaningful participation of women remains limited primarily due to the gender specificity of the sector in a context where gender roles are pre-defined. Prompted by Sida's focus on gender equality, MEDRC has increasingly become aware of the importance of addressing gender imbalances in its activities. It has shown willingness to learn and embrace this priority. This has been a key facilitating factor for pursuing gender-sensitive planning, implementation, monitoring and reporting (see EQ5). A key hindrance to the participation of women in core activities is attributed to the specificity of the water sector within core parties. High-level officials that are relevant for trilateral workshops and technical experts that are relevant for strategic workshops are mainly men. With a few exceptions, the current gender balance within the sector has made it difficult to identify relevant female participants in management or technical positions that can partake meaningfully in MEDRC's activities. As confirmed by feedback from consulted stakeholders, a dilemma emerges in terms of striking the right balance between promoting the participation of women and ensuring the relevance of participants. Supporting female students in relevant fields, which has increased since 2016 according to MEDRC's M&E data, is one step towards building a critical mass of female experts within the sector. However, this is a longer term strategy that would take time before gender imbalances in the sector are redressed and other root causes for promoting women's participation are addressed in the region.

2.3.2 Question 5 – project outcomes

Question - Project outcomes	Indicators
<p>5 To what extent has the project contributed to intended outcomes? If so, why? If not, why not? (#8)</p> <p>Outcome 1 (political cooperation); outcome 2 (capacity); outcome 3 (technical cooperation)</p> <p>5.1 Number of women and men who participated in the respective programmes?</p> <p>5.2 What Effect did the programme have on the PhD and Master students funded by Sida?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participants of the trilateral events perceive and can argue that project contributed to: regional cooperation ; capacity; technical coordination/cooperation • Participants of the bilateral events perceive and can argue that project contributed to: regional cooperation ; capacity; technical coordination/cooperation • Reporting provides evidence of project contribution to the 3 outcomes • Sex disaggregated data is gathered and used to correct and manage the project (i.e. it influenced at least some decisions) • Measures of gender equality such as i) equal participation and ii) equal influence on decision making are positive • Admission procedures and practice for PhD and Master programme was transparent and efficient

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Capacity was built both individually and institutionally (including critical mass) – evidence that the training has been used in practice.
<p>Summary of main findings</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Trilateral workshops offer a unique space for core parties to meet, gain new knowledge and establish/re-establish contact but they have not led to a change in relations among core parties and driven transboundary cooperation and coordination on water issues. Strategic technical training workshop provided new knowledge and capacities but results achieved at the individual and institutional levels are not systematically monitored and documented. The project improved the efficiency and transparency of its MSc and PhD fellowships and developed/revived PhDs programmes in Palestine as a means to build local capacities within water management related issues but there is no system in place to capture results beyond outputs once these are completed in line with the project's theory of change. Gender equality is prioritised and action was taken to promote the participation of women in trilateral and bilateral activities including sex-disaggregated data to monitor and take corrective action but results achieved for women are not monitored and documented beyond outputs. 	

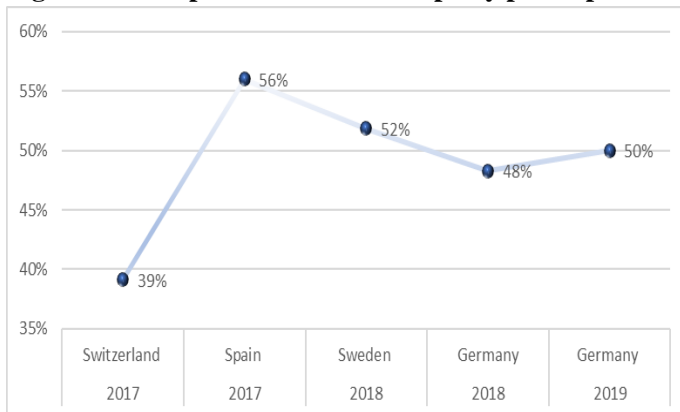
The assessment of project outcomes covers trilateral and bilateral activities including gender considerations:

- Trilateral activities comprise trilateral workshops and study tours for core parties in view of building confidence and capacities and promoting technical cooperation and coordination on water issues. The stop-start work modality and the principle of equal participation of core parties is a risk to timely implementation as they may lead to cancellations and/or delays if not all parties are onboard. However, they concurrently ensure responsiveness to the context of core parties. In practice, the stop-start nature and equal participation principle did not affect the implementation of trilateral workshops¹⁶. Study tour(s) however were repeatedly postponed and did not yet take place. For this reason, they will not be addressed in the report.
- Bilateral activities are meant to rectify the capacity imbalance among core parties by strengthening local technical capacities in Jordan and Palestine as ODA eligible countries. They include strategic training in-country and at MEDRC in Oman, and research fellowships to MSc and PhD students.

Trilateral workshops offer a unique space for core parties to meet, gain new knowledge and establish/re-establish contact but they have not led to a change in relations among core parties and driven transboundary cooperation and coordination on water issues. As the only surviving structure and despite the lack of progress of the peace process, MEDRC has been able to maintain the relevance of the trilateral track to core parties as noted earlier. Trilateral workshops are reported to offer a unique space for all three countries to meet around technical water related issues concerning the region¹⁷. So far, the project held five trilateral workshops with an increasing participation of core party representatives as depicted in the charts below.

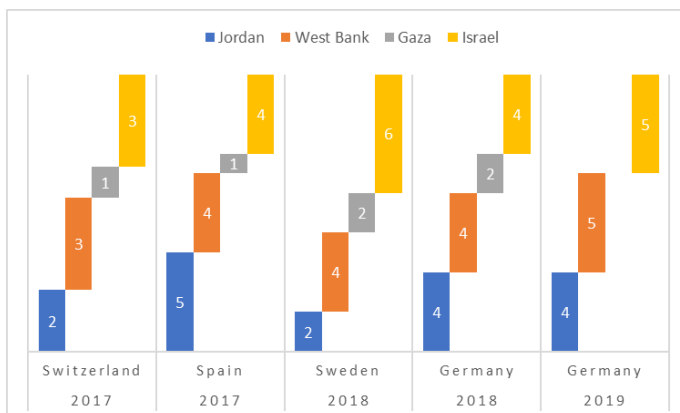
¹⁶ MEDRC plans to hold four trilateral workshops per year, half funded by Sida and half by the Dutch embassy.

¹⁷ Jordan and Israel meet under another track, namely the bilateral joint water committee which meets every six months. The joint water committee between Israel and Palestine (West Bank) has been on hold for some time.

Figure 2.3.1 Representation of core party participation in trilateral workshops, 2018-2019 (May)

Source: MEDRC participant lists, June 2019

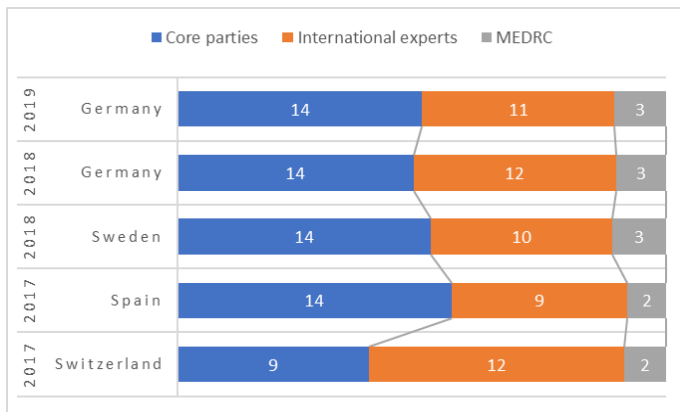
Within core parties, there has been stable commitment and participation, with at least one participant from Gaza¹⁸. Consultations with core party stakeholders indicate that trilateral encounters in an informal and international setting represent an important incentive for continued participation.

Figure 2.3.2 Number of core party participants in trilateral workshops, 2017-2019 (May)

Source: MEDRC participant lists, June 2019

The high number of international experts/speakers in trilateral workshops is striking, in some cases exceeding the number of core participants as shown in below.

¹⁸ In 2018 one representative from Gaza was invited but was not able to attend.

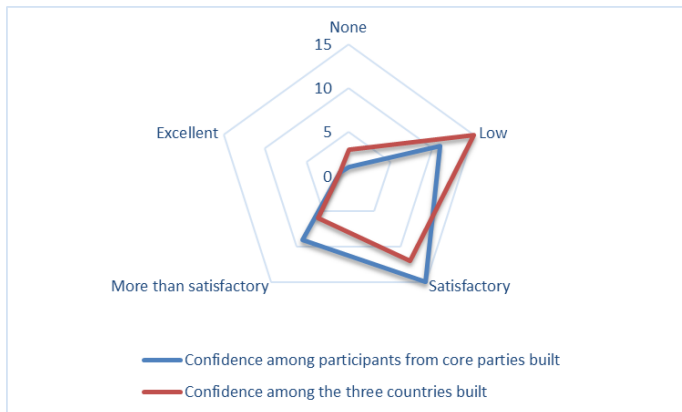
Figure 2.3.3 Number of trilateral participants by type of participant, 2007-2019 (May)

Source: MEDRC participant lists, June 2019

According to MEDRC, this is intentional. In practice, it showcases how MEDRC applies its conflict prevention and transformation competences. In addition to the substantial time spent on mediation-like work in the organisation of these workshops, the strategy is to diffuse potential tension by having a larger crowd than the targeted parties. This is seen to build a stronger basis for a more enabling environment for interaction. At the same time, these workshops provide an international platform for all core parties to meet in a less formal setting while at the same time gaining new knowledge in topics that were flagged as being of interest by core parties. Most surveyed trilateral participants (95%) report they have gained some knowledge with 84% having subsequently made use of that knowledge. There are however only a few concrete examples of how this knowledge was used¹⁹.

Trilateral workshops have helped establish new contacts and re-establish existing ones, which is a positive development when the peace process is in a stagnating state. According to the survey of trilateral participants, 57% of respondents did not know other participants before attending a trilateral workshop. By creating an opportunity to meet and network, these workshops facilitate ‘people to people’ interaction, which is seen as an enabling factor for confidence and relation-building. The survey shows that 68% of trilateral participants assess that trilateral workshops have contributed in varying degrees to building confidence among participants at the individual level. The perceived level of confidence built among the core parties is however lower but is seen as a pre-requisite for promoting technical cooperation among core parties with 92% of trilateral respondents noting it is a somewhat necessary, necessary or very necessary step.

¹⁹ An example is knowledge gained on green infrastructure, which has been integrated into adaptation measures in the national plan. Another example in Jordan where knowledge gained about flood modelling where utilized into better managing water shares between the farmers in Jordan Valley.

Figure 2.3.4 Response of trilateral participants on aspects of confidence building (n=37)

Source: Evaluation survey to trilateral participants, June 2019

Still, relation and confidence building require more systematic exposure, continuity and follow-up. Some consulted and surveyed stakeholders note the lack of continuity and follow-up as a weakness. While MEDRC can encourage and suggest potential participants, nominations are a national matter. This means that MEDRC does not have the ability to ensure continued engagement of selected participants. The survey confirms that the majority of participants attended one trilateral workshop with 70% of respondents having attended one trilateral workshop and only 8% having attended five workshops or more²⁰. The absence of follow-up on what happens after trilateral workshops in terms of relation-building links back to the output-focused monitoring of the project. There is no documentation that evidences progress and results on that aspect.

While trilateral workshops facilitate contacts for relation-building at the individual level, they do not drive technical cooperation/coordination on water issues among core parties at the institutional/country level. The strong link between water as a technical issue and the political aspects of water issues in the region is a key challenge for building relations and confidence as a basis for future cooperation/collaboration. According to consulted stakeholders, it cannot be addressed without the needed political support. In practice, this is concretised through bilateral agreements. Jordan and Israel both have a political interest in water management issues, they meet regularly in the joint water committee and have joint initiatives like the Red/Dead sea project that are driven by signed agreements and sustained cooperation at a high level. Examples of cooperation exist, most recently with Israel sharing the results of its weather modelling system for the rainy season with Jordanian counterparts that is determinant for distributing fresh water to Jordanian farmers.

Trilateral cooperation/coordination remains an ambition. While consulted core party stakeholders do not expect MEDRC to be driving regional cooperation, most trilateral respondents (92%) believe that it is realistic to assume that MEDRC's trilateral events will improve or

²⁰ This is assumed to be trilateral workshops beyond the scope of the project.

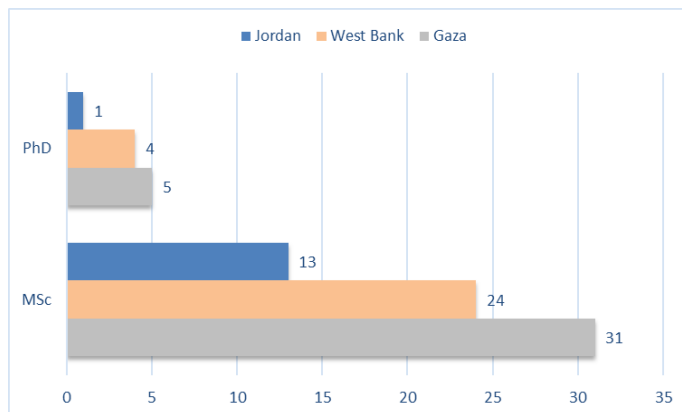
may contribute to improving technical cooperation and coordination among core parties. Even if the workshops are a technical training space and do not directly lead to increased cooperation/coordination, they are seen as important to *‘prepare people’s mind for the future’*.

MEDRC holds a unique potential with the neutral space it offers to core parties and its international dimension with diplomatic partnerships with ten member countries and Sweden as an observer.

Strategic technical training workshop provided new knowledge and capacities but results achieved at the individual and institutional levels are not systematically monitored and documented. The project supported six strategic technical training workshops in Jordan and Palestine as well as Oman. This includes a training workshop for PhD students on research methods in Gaza, which is not directly related to technical water issues. These technical workshops primarily target water authorities, municipalities and other relevant bodies with regard to operations and maintenance, pre-treatment and other related subjects. Survey results confirm the relevance of these training workshops to responding participants with 92% reporting they made use of the capacities gained from the workshop in varying degrees. Evaluation sheets are used following the training, which is good practice. There were only very few examples that could be found of how these capacities are used in practice and the extent to which individual capacities are institutionalised. While respondents find the training useful, its timeframe is seen to be limited given the intensity of the material presented with little time for applied practice. The training in Oman is part of a progressive series of training that requires the same person to participate over time. The project experienced that this continuity was not systematically ensured, something that undermines the potential for results to be achieved. MEDRC is aware of this and addressing the issue.

The project improved the efficiency and transparency of its MSc and PhD fellowships and developed/revived PhDs programmes in Palestine as a means to build local capacities within water management related issues but there is no system in place to capture results beyond outputs once these are completed in line with the project’s theory of change. MScs and PhD fellowships represent key bilateral activities of the project and mainly target the West Bank and Gaza but also Jordan. According to M&E data, the project granted 68 MSc²¹ and ten PhD scholarships (see figure 2.3.5).

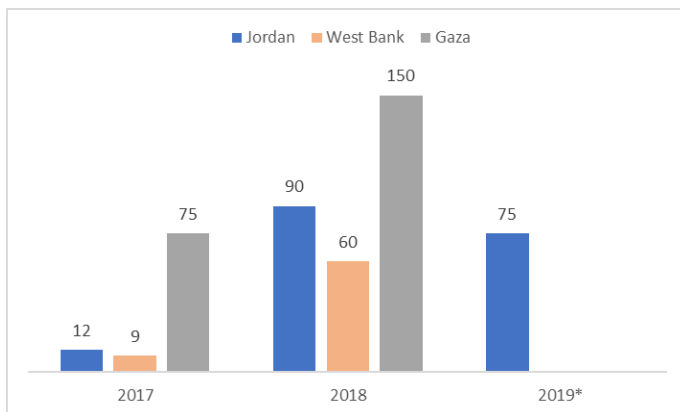
²¹ The narrative report notes 69 MScs. The report relied on M&E data sheets.

Figure 2.3.5 Distribution of the number of research fellowships by type and country, 2017-2018

Source: MEDRC data, June 2019

The application process was streamlined and made more transparent in 2017. Since then, electronic application forms have been directly submitted to MEDRC compared to paper forms sent to universities. The grant amounts are now more standardised. While water authorities reviewed applications prior to 2017, currently a selection panel that includes universities scores applications based on unified criteria and, according to MEDRC, an international panel is involved in the assessment of PhD applications. The assessment is done using a standardised evaluation grid. The final selection is made based on top scores. According to the student survey, 37% of fellow respondents believe they were selected because of their grades while 74% think it is because of the relevance of their topic of research. The calls for fellowships are disseminated through various means including local newspapers, MEDRC's website, the websites of partner universities in the West Bank, Gaza and Jordan and of water authorities. Student survey results indicate that most fellows (89%) heard about the scholarships from their universities. Some heard about it through water authorities (14%) or other students (11%). The selection of partner universities is done by water authorities. University partnerships are however not all governed by partnership agreements and those that exist have expired (see EQ4).

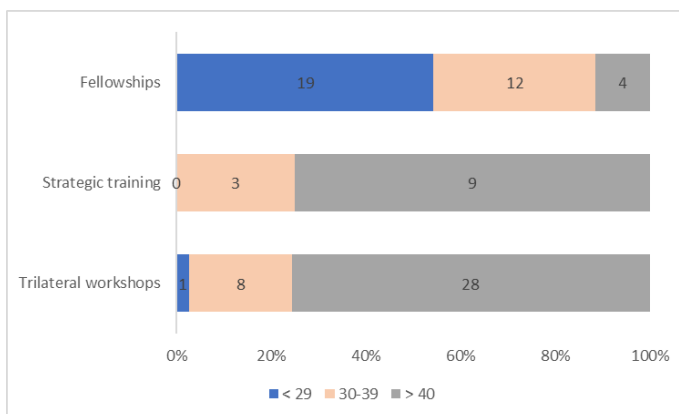
The relevance of the topic of proposed theses is determined by water authorities to ensure alignment with national priorities. They are also guided by topics of interest of student advisors. There is however no evidence that these are directly linked to topics of relevance to the labour market. The majority of student respondents (97%) however assessed that their research topic is likely to help solve water issues in their country. The project through the alumni water research forums managed to substantially increase and widen the scope of stakeholders present at these meetings overtime (see figures 2.3.6). This is in view of optimising exposure and networking opportunities for students upon presenting their research findings to stakeholders from government and the private sector. In 2017, these meetings only included students and academic staff.

Figure 2.3.6 Number of participants in alumni water research, 2016-2019 (May)

*Not yet held in West Bank and Gaza

Source: MEDRC estimated data, June 2019

Furthermore, MEDRC encourages wider exposure of fellows and their research. It invited ten fellows to present their research in Oman as part of the MEDRC research department Alumni lecture series, two of who were funded by Sida. A few surveyed fellows informed they attended international conferences. The project's support to research is seen to help strengthen research capacities in country. In general, support to fellowships is the main instrument by which the project supports youth²². Findings from the three surveys undertaken indicate that responding students/fellows were the youngest, while the age profile of trilateral and strategic training workshop respondents was generally above 40 years old (see figure 2.3.7).

Figure 2.3.7 Age distribution of respondents of fellowship, strategic training and trilateral workshop surveys

Source: Surveys to students, strategic training and trilateral workshop participants, June 2019

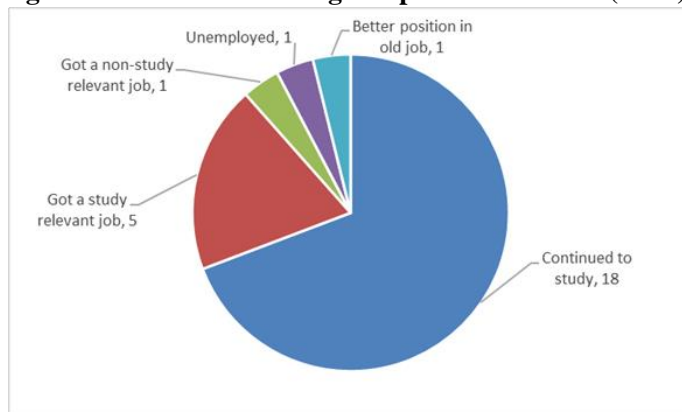
Consultations indicate that the bulk of MSCs are provided to students who are already enrolled, meaning that the project did not provide access to new opportunities to young persons who do not already have it, and in some cases the thesis topics are already set by the time the

²² For the purpose of the evaluation, we have considered persons below 29 years of age as young.

fellowship is granted. However, there are a few examples of results achieved particularly for women. An example is of a student who already had a job at the ministry of agriculture and was able to progress in her career following the completion of her MSc to reach a management positions that now allows her to participate in MEDRC's trilateral workshops. Another example is of a student who was hired on a project contract by water authorities after the completion of her thesis, given its relevance to national priorities. In Jordan, there were two other examples for students who were hired by a Jordanian NGO that works in Jordan Valley on issues related to the topics of those ex-students. Another example from Jordan is a student that was hired specifically for the techniques she learnt from her thesis.

At the time of the evaluation, eight MScs were completed (around 12% of Sida-funded MScs) while PhDs were still ongoing. There is systematic progress reporting during the period of the studies that ensures close follow-up with students, especially because progress reports are milestones for subsequent payments. Apart from informal contact with students, primarily through the alumni network meetings/water forums and student advisors, there is no system in place that tracks and documents results achieved at the level of students after they have completed their degree. This means that outcomes are not captured to feed back into the theory of change. Student survey results inform that all student respondents gained varying capacities within their field of studies (see figure 2.3.8). A good deal of respondents (69%) found that the fellowship helped them get a job or take a further step in their studies. The majority of student respondents who completed their degrees continued their studies (69%) while around 20% got a job that is relevant to their studies. One female student got a promotion to a managerial position within the ministry of agriculture.

Figure 2.3.8 Status following completion of studies (n=26)

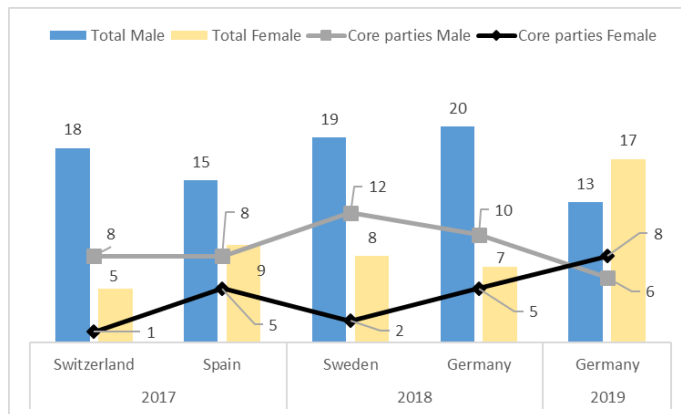


Source: Student survey, June 2019 (excluding 9 persons who are still studying)

Gender equality is prioritised and action was taken to promote the participation of women in trilateral and bilateral activities including sex-disaggregated data to monitor and take corrective action but results achieved for women are not monitored and

documented beyond outputs²³. MEDRC has strived to expand the outreach of the project to women even though this is not clearly communicated to the target group. A good deal of survey respondents did not know whether specific measures were taken to promote women's participation. Many surveyed and consulted stakeholders however confirmed that MEDRC encourages core parties to propose female participants. This has led to an increase in the number of women present in trilateral workshops over time including core party participants and speakers (see figure 2.3.9). Project staff strive to identify female experts within the water sector as speakers in workshops. This is an action taken to showcase female experts and break stereotypes about the perceived gender bias in the water sector. Furthermore, MEDRC has been gradually integrating gender aspects into the content of trilateral workshops with sessions directly dealing with gender aspects since 2019, two of which were funded by Sida, .

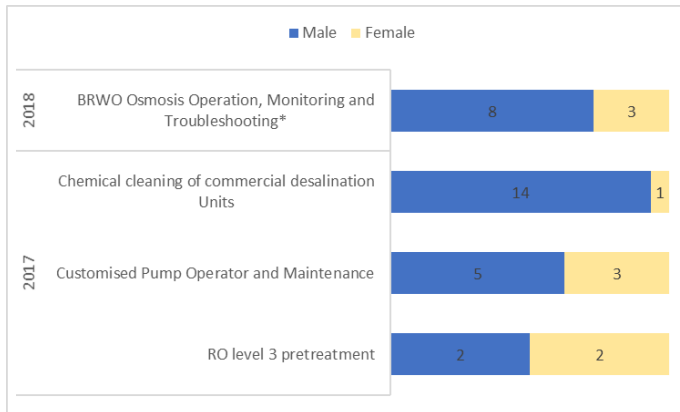
Figure 2.3.9 Number of male and female participants in trilateral workshops, 2017-2019 (May)



Source: MEDRC data, June 2019

A key challenge are bilateral technical training workshops where it has been difficult to identify women in relevant technical positions for the training. The difference in the level of female participation transpires at the level of the surveys where women represent 43% of trilateral workshop respondents compared to 16% of strategic workshop respondents (see figure 2.3.10).

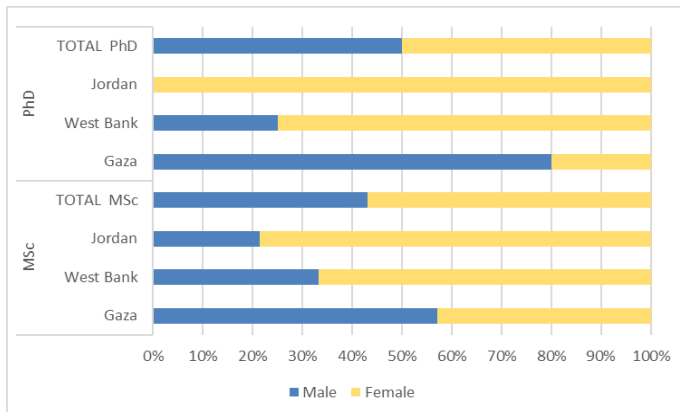
²³ EQ4 deals with enabling/constraining factors for promoting gender equality. This section focuses on action taken and results.

Figure 2.3.10 Estimated number of female participants in strategic technical workshops, 2017-2018

*Based on MEDRC narrative report, 2018

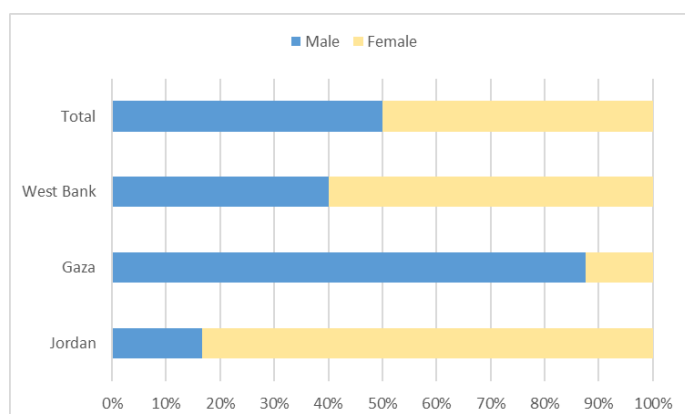
Source: MEDRC list of participants, June 2019 (excluding the Gaza research method training)

Research fellowships is one of the project components where the representation of female students is high. M&E data is not disaggregated by donor and is generated for all MSc, the majority of which are funded by Sida (68 out of 86 MSc degrees). Overall, 57% of MSc scholarships went to female students and half of the ten PhD students are women. At the country level, the gender balance varies (see figure 2.3.11). This is particularly visible in Gaza, where the opportunities given to women are not strongly taken advantage of by potential female students.

Figure 2.3.11 Number of MSc and PhD students by sex and country including Sida funding, 2017-2018

Source: MEDRC data and student lists, June 2019

Gender considerations are also taken into account in the selection of students for the student committees responsible for organising the alumni water forums. These are positions that students apply for, which means they are dependent on the existing gender profile of the pool of students. Overall, the composition of the committee which comprises between six to ten members is gender balanced. However, at the country level, gender representation varies. Reflecting findings above, the student committee in Gaza has the lowest representation of female students while Jordan has the highest (figure 2.3.12).

Figure 2.3.12 Number of student committee members by sex, total and by country, 2017-2018

Source: MEDRC data, June 2019

In terms of M&E, the project developed gender tracking sheets in its M&E routine to monitor its ‘gender performance’ in relation to the number of women reached in trilateral workshops and some bilateral activities²⁴. The gender tracking sheet for fellowships provides cumulative numbers as well as numbers per year of women reached. This provides a good overview of outreach to female target groups and allows for corrective measures to ensure gender balance to the extent possible. However, as noted under EQ4, M&E data is focused on output data, i.e. the number of women represented in activities. There is no mechanism in place to follow-up, capture and document results beyond outputs including changes in the quality of women’s participation, for instance in terms of influence and decision making and results achieved for women as a result of their participation in project activities. Individual cases where MEDRC contributed to results for women can be found, but they are not systematically documented and reported upon. Furthermore, given that gender equality is a relatively new priority for MEDRC, the project did not yet reach the maturity to explore the perspectives of actual and potential female participants who are relevant to the type of activities undertaken by the project to allow for a more gender-responsive approach.

2.4 SUSTAINABILITY

2.4.1 Question 6 - sustainability

Question - sustainability	Indicators
6 What are the chances that benefits generated by the project will continue after project closure?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The cooperation between the parties has been institutionalised out-side of project sponsored events

²⁴ Data on the outreach to female participants in bilateral strategic workshops is not included in the tracking sheets made available to the evaluation team.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A model organisation for regional and transboundary challenges is emerging (or likely to)
Summary of main findings <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Where capacity has been developed and is put into use there is a long term and sustainable value created. • There was not strong evidence of the project leading to cooperation between parties being institutionalised outside of project sponsored events nor in the circumstances is this realistic in the short term. • MEDRC's training and research operations within desalinisation are self-sustaining and offer good prospects for sustainability. • Within the development cooperation sphere there are no medium term prospects for financial sustainability although the strategic plan (2017-2021) aims at reducing dependency. • MEDRC has been putting in place a programme of continuous organisational improvements which should increase its fund raising capacity, however results monitoring remains a weak area • The risk matrix in the project proposal has been updated and developed and indicates that the greatest risks are in the political context and in the withdrawal of funding. • MEDRC recently adopted a third goal of developing a model organisation for regional and transboundary challenges which could potentially lead to replication of the approach. 	

Where capacity has been developed and is put into use there is a long term and sustainable value created. Although MEDRC does not keep a systematic record of the post education and training activities of those supported, some evidence was made available of former students who were now in highly relevant employment. The benefits of the training and education are thus being sustained and even enhanced with time especially as individuals are promoted and have greater influence.

There was not strong evidence of the project leading to cooperation between parties being institutionalised outside of project sponsored events nor in the circumstances is this realistic in the short term. The overall environment of the peace process has not allowed a replication of trilateral cooperation outside of the projects sponsored events. The trilateral events are not yet ready for being sustained which is an argument for continuing to support them if they are considered to bring benefits or be likely to bring benefits in the future. The recently re-energised alumina events are bringing the students from Jordan and Palestine together and although this is valuable and tends to enhance and sustain some of the benefits of the bilateral programme, it only indirectly contributes to cooperation between the three parties of Israel, Jordan and Palestine (by narrowing the capacity gap).

MEDRC's training and research operations within desalinisation are self-sustaining and offer good prospects for sustainability. MEDRC's core programmes of training and research (mostly closely connected to desalinisation) are self-financing and contribute to the general overheads of the organisation. Whilst these activities are not linked directly to the Sida financed project they do indicate that at least part of MEDRC is viable in the long term and not dependent on donations. They also provide an example of how other parts of MEDRC's technical mission to find water solutions in the Middle East and to bridge the capacity gap between Israel, Jordan and Palestine could become more sustainable in the longer term future (10 years).

Within the development cooperation sphere there are no medium term prospects for financial sustainability although the strategic plan (2017-2021) aims at reducing

dependency. The strategic plans sets out an aim to keep core-funding requirements to within USD 0.5 million per year with an income of USD 1.75 million per year from commercially provided research and training and development cooperation of USD 2.75 million by 2021. The development cooperation activities funded by Sida and others are not income raising and would require external support for the foreseeable future.

MEDRC has been putting in place a programme of continuous organisational improvements which should increase its fund raising capacity, however results monitoring remains a weak area. Since 2014, MEDRC has implemented significant and continuous improvements in accountability, governance and systems to ensure efficient use of resources, as further detailed in question 3. This is likely to increase its fund raising capacity especially among foreign donors. However, improvements in results monitoring would be needed to attract significant funding from development cooperation agencies which are under pressure to present results and value for money.

The risk matrix in the project proposal has been updated and developed and indicates that the greatest risks are in the political context and in the withdrawal of funding. The investment that has been made in MEDRC over the years and also through the Sida project will not be sustained if MEDRC collapses, either because the core parties withdraw due to the political context or external funding significantly diminishes. MEDRC's risk analysis places these risks as high and as requiring active risk mitigation. The mitigation envisaged includes: improving communication structures with government agencies; increasing the widening of funding diversity; ensuring the independence of the organisation; strict controls around communications and partnerships. Given its resilience to date and the scarcity of other channels of communication between the core parties it seems unlikely that MEDRC, even if its level of activities vary, will cease to exist in the near future.

MEDRC recently adopted a third goal of developing a model organisation for regional and transboundary challenges which could potentially lead to replication of the approach. By reducing the core funding requirements to USD 0.5 million per year, MEDRC hopes to reduce dependency on donation and also present an affordable and low cost model for addressing regional and transboundary challenges through a dual environmental and peace building lens. If this happens, then the Sida project support will have assisted in a process where the benefits of the MEDRC approach will be replicated and applied beyond the region – in the sense of replicating the concept (or model) of a small diplomatic organisation contributing to peace by focussing on a common transboundary natural resource issue as means of reducing tension over competition for that resource and as an example of the potential of peaceful resolution of difficult issues.

3 Conclusions and recommendations

3.1 CONCLUSIONS

The findings across the evaluation questions lead to 7 main conclusions as summarised below:

1. The objectives of MEDRC and the project are relevant but highly dependent on the external context and the overall peace process.
2. The project was built on a long running engagement in the region that followed political rather than development cooperation principles.
3. Although it has taken time to adapt to the demands of development cooperation there have been significant operational improvements.
4. The cost efficiency of the project has been improving significantly.
5. The project has promoted gender equality at activity level but outcomes have been more challenging to monitor and achieve.
6. Trilateral events potentially contributed to improving technical cooperation through increasing readiness and confidence.
7. Bilateral activities are appreciated and have become more efficient although they are still fragmented and not well enough linked to other ongoing processes.
8. Capacity related benefits at individual level will be largely sustained after project closure but achievement of the overall objectives will require continuous support.

Conclusion 1 - The objectives of MEDRC and the project are relevant but highly dependent on the external context and the overall peace process. MEDRC was set up with the purpose “*to contribute to the peace process in the Middle East and to the raising of the standard of living of the people of the Middle East and elsewhere by improving the technical processes involved in water desalination*” (Establishment Agreement, 1996). These dual objectives are still highly relevant and even more so in the deteriorating environment for peace. In this environment, MEDRC offers one of few remaining channels for communication between Israel, Jordan and Palestine. By providing support to regional activities during difficult periods, the project contributes to the first peace related objective by increasing the goodwill towards MEDRC. This in turn will enable it to play a more active role in peace building - as and when the overall peace process improves. As regards the second objective of a technical nature, it is noteworthy that MEDRC already promotes water desalination through research and training departments on a commercial basis that does not require project support. MEDRC has recently widened its technical scope to being the principal catalyst in the search for fresh water. This is a broader remit and whilst highly relevant is not easy to achieve. The field in this area is crowded and MEDRC has yet to develop the platform and skills base to make a

strong contribution. But this does not mean it cannot as it has considerable comparative advantages which are perhaps, in recognition of the technical strength of other organisations, best mobilised in partnership rather than competing with existing actors.

Conclusion 2 - The project was built on a long running engagement in the region that followed political rather than development cooperation principles. The project with its support to trilateral and bilateral activities is a continuation of and follows the approach adopted by a long running engagement by the Netherlands that started in 2011. In this way the project has benefitted from feedback and interaction with the stakeholders over a longer period during which a number of adjustments have been made. The project supported by the Netherlands was financed through the Dutch foreign ministry as political cooperation whereas the Swedish finance came under development cooperation. This meant that the project design, reporting and decision making was more detailed and demanding than the earlier and ongoing project funded by the Netherlands. In particular, the development cooperation funding required a greater focus on results compared to the political cooperation support which focussed more on processes and the continuity of engagement. As a result it has not been easy for MEDRC to meet the development cooperation expectations of Sida.

Conclusion 3 - Although it has taken time to adapt to the demands of development cooperation there have been significant operational improvements. MEDRC was founded on the basis of endowments from its member states and it has also been financed through core support. It was only in 2012 that a much needed re-organisation led to a higher degree of external accountability. The support from Sida is the first and so far the only financing from development cooperation. Thus the demands in terms of project preparation, log frames, result frameworks and reporting typical of development cooperation were new. Building on the re-organisation of 2012 and stimulated by the demands of the Sida financed project, MEDRC has steadily improved its project management and reporting. And, although not yet able to fully report on results it has developed strong and professional routines in a relatively short period. MEDRC recognises that this heightened level of accountability will serve its longer term purpose well and give confidence to potential new donors. However, it has meant that Sida has had to spend a disproportional amount of resources on monitoring the project given the volume of disbursement and its other regional activities.

Conclusion 4 – The cost efficiency of the project has been improving significantly. The project has an activity-based budget and annual targets and is well managed but disbursements are not as high as planned. MEDRC is aware of its key costs, tries to manage them and has cost control systems in place that ensure budget compliance but no mechanism to verify whether proposed costs are reasonable. MEDRC has procurement guidelines in place, considers alternatives and prioritises cost-effectiveness but procurement procedures of its counterparts are not assessed as this requirement was not made clear at the onset of the project. Costs per key outputs are in line with the approved budget and are generally reasonable considering the relational and capacity benefits they are foreseen to bring, although in some cases costs are not fully justified. Although constant efficiency improvements were made, it was too early to consider strategic alternatives

Conclusion 5 - The project has promoted gender equality at activity level but outcomes have been more challenging to monitor and achieve. Responding to Sida's focus on gender equality, MEDRC has increasingly become aware of the importance of addressing gender imbalances in its

activities. It has shown willingness to learn and embrace this priority. This has been a key facilitating factor for pursuing gender-sensitive planning, implementation, monitoring and reporting. The stakeholders interviewed and surveyed confirmed that MEDRC actively encourages core parties to propose female participants. This has led to an increase in the number of female students and women present in trilateral workshops over time including core party participants and speakers. Project staff also strived to identify female experts within the water sector as speakers in workshops. These actions help to showcase female experts and break stereotypes about the perceived gender bias in the water sector. Furthermore, MEDRC sought to integrate gender aspects in the content of recent trilateral workshops. The number of female students in relevant fields which has increased since 2016 is one step towards building a critical mass of female experts within the sector. However, this and the female participation at trilateral events is part of a longer term strategy that will take time before gender imbalances in the sector and other root causes for promoting women's participation are addressed in the region.

Conclusion 6 - Trilateral events offered a unique meeting space, increased confidence and contributed to a readiness for technical cooperation in the future. The core parties found the trilateral events highly relevant and noted that they contributed to relationship building. The events set up a pragmatic mechanism which it is then up to the core parties to use. In this sense it is necessarily optimistic, dependent on the environment for peace and the response of the core parties. Awaiting a more positive environment for the peace process, the main role of the trilateral program and MEDRC as a whole is to keep a pipeline of communication and interaction open. In this way the trilateral activities increased the readiness to engage in technical cooperation in the future rather than directly leading to technical cooperation at present. The design-related features such as the stop-start that affect the trilateral activities appear well- conceived even if limiting. But they are underpinned by the judgement of MEDRC guided by the council rather than reflected in a coherent stakeholder and political economy analysis. Outsiders are obliged to take the arguments, developed with MEDRC over recent years, at face value rather than being able to examine their intellectual foundation. Although the arguments and implicit theory of change appear sound, they are not easy to test.

Conclusion 7 - Bilateral activities are appreciated and have become more efficient although they are still fragmented and not well enough linked to other ongoing processes. The masters and PhD studies as well as the strategic technical training workshops provided new knowledge and capacities. But the results achieved at the individual and institutional levels were not systematically monitored and documented. The technical workshops primarily target water authorities, municipalities and other relevant bodies with regard to operations and maintenance, pre-treatment and other related subjects. Survey results confirm the relevance of these training workshops to responding participants with over 90% reporting they made use of the capacities gained from the workshop in varying degrees. However, the topics are quite scattered with little evidence of cumulative skills being developed that address high priority issues and have the potential to create a critical mass of expertise. Nevertheless, for both the training and further education interventions, the selection of participants and the cost efficiency of the training has improved significantly over the years and the current practice addresses many of the issues raised in earlier evaluations. There is not a strong link between the students enrolled in master courses and PhDs and the employment market. Capacity is mainly built at the individual level. The project did not create the links necessary to systematically

support the further education of younger technical employees of the water administrations which are reported to have developed significant capacity gaps over the last 20 years.

Conclusion 8 - Capacity related benefits at individual level will be largely sustained after project closure but achievement of the overall objectives will require continuous support. Where individual capacity has been developed and is put into use there is a long term and sustainable value created. Although MEDRC does not keep a systematic record of the post education and training activities, some evidence was made available of former students who were now in highly relevant employment. The benefits of the training and educations are thus being sustained and even enhanced with time especially where individuals are promoted and have greater influence. However, as the capacity development does not build up institutional capacity or link to other efforts that do this, the institutional capacity gap between the core parties is likely to remain and even increase after project closure. The wider mission of MEDRC is a continuous one and will need to be sustained through external financing either as core support or as project support. The mission of MEDRC is to create efficiencies so that core support needs are reduced to USD 0.5 million per year whilst ensuring that commercial activities and project based donor funding makes up the shortfall in a total annual budget of approximately USD 4 million per year. These aims are outlined in the MEDRC strategic plan (2015) and are well on the way to being realised. The new objective presented in the strategic plan of developing a model organisation that could be used to enhance peace through the lens of co-operation on a shared natural resource brings the potential of scale and replicability.

3.2 RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendation 1: Undertake and update a stakeholder and political economy analysis to guide advancement of MEDRC objectives in the changing context.

Rationale: MEDRC's strategy is guided by an implicit stakeholder and political economy analysis which has allowed it to re-orientate its approach since 2012, especially around trilateral initiatives. The implicit nature of this analysis increases MEDRC's dependence on the tacit knowledge and skills of key staff. It also makes it more difficult for MEDRC to explain and position itself in the rapidly changing context and to recognise and take advantage of new opportunities. Whereas there are often good reasons for not pursuing opportunities linked to closer collaboration with other water initiatives it is not easy for outsiders to appreciate why. The judgement can appear static when not grounded in an analysis that can be updated, revised and subject to scrutiny.

This recommendation could be implemented through the following actions:

- Identify, review and test the implicit assumptions that guide MEDRC's approach
- Map the stakeholders and initiatives that operate in the same "water solutions and peace through water" space as MEDRC
- Review, in the light of the above, the advantages and disadvantages of closer coordination with other initiatives and linking with concrete projects

This recommendation should be implemented by: MEDRC

Recommendation 2: Develop a systematic capacity development intervention to guide the bilateral education and training so it contributes to institutional as well as individual capacity.

Rationale: The bilateral programme is important in reducing the capacity gap in the region. It has been demand responsive and has been able to react to opportunities as they arise. But its effect has also been scattered. The programme is small and not well enough linked to wider capacity development efforts where it can contribute to institutional capacity development and to developing a critical mass of capacity.

This recommendation could be implemented through the following actions:

- Structure two thirds of the training interventions around key topics to allow a cumulative capacity to be developed, allowing a third of the interventions to respond to new or bottom up demands
- Exploring the potential for providing a structured fellowship programme aimed at staff of relevant water authorities

This recommendation should be implemented by: MEDRC

Recommendation 3: Continue to strengthen and professionalise project management of the development cooperation

Rationale: MEDRC has over a relatively short period significantly improved its project management of development cooperation projects and also enhanced its activities on gender equality. Nevertheless there are still opportunities to strengthen the results framework, reporting and elements of contract management.

This recommendation could be implemented through the following actions:

- Align the theory of change and results frameworks to allow easier monitoring and reporting at outcome level (including gender)
- Integrate post-activity follow up to capture and document results as well as lessons learnt
- Strengthen project management and compliance with Sida guidelines on grant support for NGOs and research (specifically related to the Sida project)

This recommendation should be implemented by: MEDRC

Recommendation 4: Sweden should initiate preparation for a second phase of support and explore options for how best to channel that support.

Rationale: It is important that MEDRC's trilateral and bilateral activities continue in order to strengthen and bring continuity to one of the few remaining channels of communication between Israel, Jordan and Palestine. The project contributes to the Swedish regional strategy and also supports the gender equality aims of Swedish development cooperation. Swedish support enhances MEDRC through diversifying its funding and by expressing solidarity with its aims. However, it is also recognised that the current project arrangement places a disproportional burden of monitoring on regional Sida resources.

This recommendation could be implemented by considering the options for the future (see table below for potential options and pros and cons)

3 CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Option	Pros	Cons
1. Similar project arrangement but out-source monitoring	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Could reduce the residual monitoring and management support to be proportional with other projects 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Would require identification and contacting of regional consultancy resources able to carry out the monitoring
2. Core support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Similar to other donors • Reduces monitoring burden 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Difficult to establish • May increase monitoring needs in the short term
3. Delegate cooperation to another donor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduces transaction costs for MEDRC and Sida • Ensures harmonised approach and economy of scale 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Only the Netherlands available so far and their support is political
4. Channel funds through existing regional body	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduces transaction costs for Sida • A potential organisation is the Union for the Mediterranean 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Potentially cumbersome
5. Fund through Swedish political cooperation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aligned to other donors and the higher objectives of MEDRC 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Funds are limited • The new processes would bring delay and uncertainty

This recommendation should be implemented by: Sida

Annex A – TOR



Terms of Reference for the project Evaluation: Fostering Regional Cooperation on Transboundary Water Management in Palestine, Jordan and Israel implemented by MEDRC.

Date: 13 February 2019

1. Evaluation object and scope

The evaluation object is to evaluate the Sida funded project *Fostering Regional Cooperation on Transboundary Water Management: Building Capacity and Confidence between Palestine, Jordan and Israel* implemented by the Middle East Desalination and Research Centre (MEDRC). The ongoing contribution with MEDRC is the first Sida support to the partner. The implementation started in 2016 and the main activity period is ending in 2019, although a non-cost extension for a limited part of the programme will continue until the end of 2020 (PhD students' fees).

MEDRC is a unique International Organisation mandated to find solutions to fresh water scarcity in Palestine, Jordan and Israel. The organisation was established in 1996 as part of the Middle East Peace Process and is the only still functioning institution from the process. MEDRC conducts research, training, development cooperation and transboundary water projects. The Headquarters (HQ) is in Muscat in the Sultanate of Oman, where it operates as a research facility including desalination plants, laboratories, lecture halls, administrative offices as well as a team of three staff members in the Development Cooperation section. MEDRC is governed by an Executive Council (EC) with members from Oman (chair), United States of America (vice chair), Korea, Japan, Palestine, Jordan, Israel, Qatar, Spain, and the Netherlands. Sweden is an observer to the EC. All trilateral activities between the core parties (Palestine, Jordan and Israel) works on a stop-start-nature meaning that no activities are taking place unless all three parties requests equal participation.

The Sida funds of 18.8 million SEK are disbursed from the Regional Middle East and North Africa Strategy (2016 – 2020) to MEDRC's Development Cooperation Section. The other current donor to the Development Cooperation of MEDRC is the Netherlands, whereas other donors have showed a interest to also join, such as Qatar and Germany. The long-term anticipated impacts of the Sida project are to; (i) assist in the Middle East Peace Process through mainly technically cooperation; (ii) research results on fresh water scarcity; and (iii) create a model organization for regional and transboundary challenges. The theory of change departs from the fact that the region is one of the most water scarce places on earth which is also heavily affected by lack of regional cooperation. Overuse and pollution of water resources as well as lack of infrastructure are other components contributing to increased water scarcity. By creating and building on technical knowledge on water scarcity and its solutions in the region MEDRC aims at becoming a convening institution for arranging trilateral technical workshops and study tours (between the core parties). Another part of the project is building the academic skills of Palestinians and Jordanians students in the field of water engineering through Master and PhD fellowship programmes. The expected outcomes of the project are to (i) enhance coordination on water sector issues between the core parties; (ii) fostering of regional cooperation on transboundary water

management between Palestine, Jordan and Israel; (iii) create forum for coordination and dialogue regarding water cooperation; and (iv) institutional ties built and strengthened at regional level.

The evaluation is expected to cover the whole implementation of the Sida funded project up until June 2019, with a forward-looking approach. This would entail to assess the results of the Sida funded project and provide recommendations on what shape and design a Sida support to MEDRC in the future could look like to fill the gaps from other donors as well as to be as relevant as possible to the priorities of Swedish Development Aid.

For further information, the project proposal is attached as Annex D.

The scope of the evaluation and theory of change of the project shall be further elaborated by the evaluator in the inception report.

2. Evaluation rationale

As per the agreement between Sida and MEDRC an evaluation of the project is decided to take place in year 2019.

3. Evaluation purpose: Intended use and intended user

The purposes of the evaluation are:

- (i) to help Sida and MEDRC to assess progress of the on-going project;
- (ii) to serve as an input to the decision on whether the partnership shall continue and if so, how a possible new phase would be designed to serve the requirements of Swedish Development Cooperation.

The primary intended user of the evaluation is Sida represented by the Swedish Embassy in Amman managing the regional MENA-strategy.

The evaluation is to be designed, conducted and reported to meet the needs of the intended users and tenderers shall elaborate in the tender how this will be ensured during the evaluation process. Other stakeholders that should be kept informed about the evaluation include the partner organisation MEDRC and the members of MEDRC's Executive Council.

During the inception phase, the evaluator and the users will agree on who will be responsible for keeping the various stakeholders informed about the evaluation.

4. Evaluation criteria and questions

The objective of this evaluation is to:

- evaluate the *relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability* and *gender equality* of the project Fostering Regional Cooperation on transboundary water management and formulate recommendations as an input to upcoming discussions concerning the preparation of a new MEDRC programme or project with possible support from Sida.

The evaluation questions are:

Relevance

- Was project design appropriate (for example, in terms of components, financial allocations, institutional arrangements etc) to meet the contribution's outcomes?
- Was the project adjusted during implementation to any changes in context to retain continued relevance?
- Were project objectives realistic; did the project remain relevant over the period of time required for implementation?
- Did the project benefit from available knowledge (for example the experiences of similar projects in the area/region) during its design and implementation?
- What are the main factors that contribute to a positive or less positive assessment of relevance?

Efficiency

- Can the costs for the project be justified by its results?
- Was the project implemented in the most efficient way compared to alternatives?

Effectiveness

- To which extent have the project contributed to intended outcomes? If so, why? If not, why not?

Sustainability

- What are the chances that benefits generated by the project will continue after project closure?

Gender equality

- Was the project implementation structure adequate to support effective implementation of gender equality?
- How many women and men participated in the respective programmes?

Descriptive questions:

- What effect did the programme have on the PhD and Master students funded by Sida?
- How did students get into the PhD and Master programme funded by Sida?
- How useful did the participants of the bilateral and trilateral activities find their participation?

Questions are expected to be developed in the tender by the tenderer and further developed during the inception phase of the evaluation.

5. Evaluation approach and methods for data collection and analysis

It is expected that the evaluator describes and justifies an appropriate evaluation approach/methodology and methods for data collection in the tender. The evaluation design, methodology and methods for data collection and analysis are expected to be fully developed and presented in the inception report. A gender responsive methodology, methods and tools and data analysis techniques should be used. A clear distinction is to be made between evaluation approach/methodology and methods. The evaluator should also identify limitations and constraints with the chosen approach and method and to the extent possible, present mitigation measures to address them.

Sida's approach to evaluation is utilization-focused, which means the evaluator should facilitate the *entire evaluation process* with careful consideration of how everything that is done will affect the use of the evaluation. It is therefore expected that the evaluators, in their tender, present i) how intended users are to participate in and contribute to the evaluation process and ii) methodology and methods for data collection that create space for reflection, discussion and learning between the intended users of the evaluation.

Evaluators should take into consideration appropriate measures for collecting data in cases where sensitive or confidential issues are addressed, and avoid presenting information that may be harmful to some stakeholder groups.

6. Organisation of evaluation management

This evaluation is commissioned by the Swedish Embassy in Amman. The intended user is Sida represented by the Swedish Embassy in Amman. As the evaluation will serve as an input to the decision on whether MEDRC shall receive continued funding or not, the intended user is the commissioner. The evaluated partner has reviewed and commented on the ToR and will be provided with an opportunity to comment on the inception report as well as the final report, but will not be involved in the management of the evaluation. Hence the commissioner will evaluate tenders, approve the inception report and the final report of the evaluation. The start-up meeting and the debriefing/validation workshop will be held with the commissioner only.

7. Evaluation quality

All Sida's evaluations shall conform to OECD/DAC's Quality Standards for Development Evaluation¹. The evaluators shall use the Sida OECD/DAC Glossary of Key Terms in Evaluation². The evaluators shall specify how quality assurance will be handled by them during the evaluation process.

8. Time schedule and deliverables

It is expected that a time and work plan is presented in the tender and further detailed in the inception report. The evaluation shall be carried out 26 March– 31 August 2019. The timing of any field visits, surveys and interviews need to be settled by the evaluator in dialogue with the main stakeholders during the inception phase. It is advisable to schedule the field visits and interviews around Ramadan and the upcoming Eid in early June.

The table below lists key deliverables for the evaluation process. Deadlines for final inception report and final report must be kept in the tender, but alternative deadlines for other deliverables may be suggested by the consultant and negotiated during the inception phase.

Deliverables	Participants	Deadlines
1. Start-up meeting	Swedish Embassy in Amman	26 March 2019

¹ DAC Quality Standards for development Evaluation, OECD, 2010.

² Glossary of Key Terms in Evaluation and Results Based Management, Sida in cooperation with OECD/DAC, 2014.

2. Draft inception report followed by inception meeting		22 April 2019
3. Final inception report	Swedish Embassy in Amman	30 April 2019
4. Comments from intended users to evaluators	MEDRC	25 April 2019
5. Data collection, analysis and report writing	Evaluators	1 May 2019 – 26 June 2019
6. Debriefing/validation workshop (meeting)	Swedish Embassy in Amman	1 July 2019
7. Draft evaluation report	Swedish Embassy in Amman	1 August 2019
8. Comments from intended users to evaluators	MEDRC	19 August 2019
9. Final evaluation report		2 September 2019

The inception report will form the basis for the continued evaluation process and shall be approved by Sida before the evaluation proceeds to implementation. The inception report should be written in English and cover evaluability issues and interpretations of evaluation questions, present the evaluation approach/methodology, methods for data collection and analysis as well as the full evaluation design. A clear distinction between the evaluation approach/methodology and methods for data collection shall be made. A specific time and work plan, including number of hours/working days for each team member, for the remainder of the evaluation should be presented. The time plan shall allow space for reflection and learning between the intended users of the evaluation.

The final report shall be written in English and be professionally proof read. The final report should have clear structure and follow the report format in the Sida Decentralised Evaluation Report Template for decentralised evaluations (see Annex C). The executive summary should be maximum 3 pages. The evaluation approach/methodology and methods for data collection used shall be clearly described and explained in detail and a clear distinction between the two shall be made. All limitations to the methodology and methods shall be made explicit and the consequences of these limitations discussed. Findings shall flow logically from the data, showing a clear line of evidence to support the conclusions. Conclusions should be substantiated by findings and analysis. Recommendations and lessons learned should flow logically from conclusions. Recommendations should be specific, directed to relevant stakeholders and categorised as a short-term, medium-term and long-term. The report should be no more than 35 pages excluding annexes (including Terms of Reference and Inception Report). The evaluator shall adhere to the Sida OECD/DAC Glossary of Key Terms in Evaluation³.

The evaluator shall, upon approval of the final report, insert the report into the Sida Decentralised Evaluation Report for decentralised evaluations and submit it to Nordic Morning (in pdf-format) for publication and release in the Sida publication data base. The order is placed by sending the approved report to sida@nordicmorning.com, always with a copy to the responsible Sida Programme Officer as

³ Glossary of Key Terms in Evaluation and Results Based Management, Sida in cooperation with OECD/DAC, 2014

well as Sida's Evaluation Unit (evaluation@sida.se). Write "Sida decentralised evaluations" in the email subject field. The following information must always be included in the order to Nordic Morning:

1. The name of the consulting company.
2. The full evaluation title.
3. The invoice reference "ZZ980601".
4. Type of allocation "sakanslag".
5. Type of order "digital publicering/publikationsdatabas".

9. Evaluation Team Qualification

In addition to the qualifications already stated in the framework agreement for evaluation services, the evaluation team shall include the following competencies:

- Arabic translation facilities for field visit interviews and Arabic reports;
- Advanced knowledge of the Middle East Peace process;
- Advanced knowledge on transboundary water issues in Palestine, Jordan and Israel;
- Advanced knowledge on gender equality in the Middle East.

A CV for each team member shall be included in the call-off response. It should contain a full description of relevant qualifications and professional work experience.

It is important that the competencies of the individual team members are complimentary. It is highly recommended that local consultants are included in the team if appropriate.

The evaluators must be independent from the evaluation object and evaluated activities, and have no stake in the outcome of the evaluation.

10. Resources

The maximum budget amount available for the evaluation is 600 000 SEK.

The contact person at Sida/Swedish Embassy is Katrin Aidnell, Regional Programme Manager, Swedish Embassy in Amman. The contact person should be consulted if any problems arise during the evaluation process.

Relevant Sida documentation will be provided by Katrin Aidnell, Regional Programme Manager, Swedish Embassy in Amman. Relevant documentation should be prepared well in advance.

Contact details to intended users (cooperation partners, Swedish Embassies, other donors etc.) will be provided by Katrin Aidnell, Regional Programme Manager, Swedish Embassy in Amman.

The evaluator will be required to arrange the logistics for example booking interviews, arrange travel and accommodation including any necessary security arrangements.

10. Annexes

Annex A: List of key documentation

Annex B – People consulted

	Name	organisation
MEDRC	Ciaran O Cuinn	MEDRC
	Kirsten Winterman	MEDRC
	Brendan Smith	MEDRC
	Edmund Walton	MEDRC
	Trish Piennar	MEDRC
	Nada Abi Farah	MEDRC
Others/Sida/MFA/donors	Katrin Aidnell	Programme Manager, Embassy of Sweden in Amman
	Anders Jägerskog	Previous Programme Manager, Embassy of Sweden in Amman
	Hideaki Yamamoto	Japanese Embassy, Oman
	Mark Zellenrath	Ministry of Foreign affairs, The Netherlands
	Laetitia van Asch	The Kingdom of the Netherlands, Embassy
	Katri Phojoilainen	Sida HQ, FORSK
	Inger Lundgren	Sida HQ, FORSK
Jordan	Anna Hammargren	Swedish Ministry of Foreign Affairs
	Ali Al-Suhah	Ministry of Water and Irrigation
	Mohammad al-Dwairi	Ministry of Water and Irrigation
	Khalil al-Absi	Jordan Valley Authority
	Zeneb Abu Zaid	Ministry of Water and Irrigation/Jordan Valley Authority
	Akram Rabadi	Jordan Valley Authority
	Khaldoun Shatanawi	University of Jordan
	Mohammed Assaf	German Jordan University
	Haneen Darwish	Jordan University of Science and Technology
Israel	Tasneem Tawalbeh	University of Jordan
	Miki Zaide	The Governmental Authority for Water and Sewage
	David Katz	Department of Geography and Environmental Studies University of Haifa
	Oded Fixler	Ministry of Regional Cooperation
	Eitan Surkis	Ministry of foreign affairs
	Alon Etkin	Ministry of regional Cooperation
	Clive Lipchin	Arava Institute
	Adam Schalimtzek	Israel Ministry of Environmental Protection
	Amir Erez	Israel Ministry of Environmental Protection
	Meital Fresher	Israel Ministry of Environmental protection
	Tamar Zohar	Israel Ministry of Environmental protection
Palestine	Liat Lazimi	Ministry of foreign affairs
	Omar Awadallah	Palestine Ministry of Foreign Affairs
	Deeb Abdelghafour	Palestine Water Authority
	Rebhi al-Sheikh	Palestine Water Authority
	Hazem Kittani	Palestine Water Authority
	Shehdeh Jodeh	University of An Najah
	Ziyad Fuqaha	Palestine Water Authority
	Ibtsesam Abuhaija	Ministry of Agriculture
	Alaaeldin Shanan	Alquds University
	Salah Al Sady	Azhar University Gaza
	Afnan Hammad	Student at University of An Najah
	Alaa Hammad	Birzeit University student
	Marwan Al Bardawill	Palestine Water Authority
	Ridwan Abu Krayim	CMWU-Middle Gaza
	Mahmoud Al Hams	CMWU-Middle Gaza

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Annex D – Methodology

The following 5 approaches were adopted and combined:

- Analysis of the theory of change and verification of the evaluation questions
- Surveys
- Desk study and interviews with stakeholders (using structured interview guides presented in the inception report)
- Use of earlier evaluations
- Country visits and participants interview/results seminars

The team used a mix of mostly qualitative but also quantitative data collection tools.

DESK STUDY

A desk study was conducted prior to the inception period and this continued into the post inception period. The desk study was complemented by interviews and questionnaires, which helped to fill the gaps that was revealed during the desk study. See Annex C for a list of documents reviewed and analysed. The desk study ensured that interview/questionnaire topics and questions was limited to areas that could not be answered satisfactorily through the desk study or only those where more confirmation/updating was needed.

In the inception phase an evaluation matrix, where indicators were identified for each evaluation question, was developed.

SELECTION OF BENEFICIARIES FOR ANALYSIS

The guiding principles for selection of persons to include in interviews and questionnaire were to get a balance between: i) representativeness; ii) insight; iii) economy of data generation and collection. The criteria for selection of people to interview and/or send questionnaire to was:

- Cover both recent and earlier participants/stakeholders
- Balance between men and women
- Balance between the three countries

The below groups of stakeholders were identified and included in the study. For the three surveys (tri-lateral, bi-lateral and fellows) a 100% sample was used. The selection of the number of people to be interviewed was based on an assessment of the significance of the different stakeholders to ensure triangulation of findings. The interviewees were randomly selected from a list provided by MEDRC taking into account the criteria mentioned above (gender/country) as well as some key informants selected by MEDRC e.g. all members of the executive council.

The following number of people was consulted. See a list of people consulted in Annex B.

Survey and interviewees										
	Tri-lateral partici- pants	Bi-lateral partici- pants	Fellows (MSc/PhDs) /alumni	Executive council	University incl. Students and participants	MEDRC	(Water) authorities incl. partici- pants	Sida	Others e.g. other donors	Total
Total no of people in the group	54	40	86	7	9		3			
Interviews con- ducted				7	11	6	16	4	3	47
Survey respond- ents	37	12	35							84

As seen in the above table the survey response rates differs between the three surveyed groups. The highest response rate is for the tri-lateral participants with 68 % responses (37/54), followed by the fellows with 40 % responses (35/86), and the lowest response rate is the bi-laterals with 30 % responses (12/40).

COUNTRY VISIT AND INTERVIEWS

An interview check list for key informants was developed during the inception phase. The one-on-one interviews with individuals and key informants was primarily conducted during field visit, though some was conducted remotely.

The interviews were conducted using a mix of forced-choice questions (mainly aiming at providing ratings in a range of opinions) and of open-ended questions aiming at collecting the perception of the informant on the benefits and experiences with the project. The team used semi-structured questions. Departing from a prepared set of questions, the evaluation team led the respondents talk about what was important to them. This approach, which sometimes allows the interviewees to bring in aspects or issues other than those planned by the evaluators, is very useful to add qualitative information to purely structured interviews.

A questionnaire e-survey was conducted among beneficiaries of the project, namely among the following three target groups:

1. Fellows (MSc and PhDs)
2. Tri-lateral meeting participants
3. Bi-lateral meeting participants

Some questions were overlapping, while others were specific to the target group e.g. selection criteria for the students. The aim of the survey was specially to triangulate findings regarding whether the project has contributed to the intended outcomes and how well the design and implementation of the project has been.

Interviews with a selected sample of students and bi/tri-lateral participants was carried out after the e-survey to better understand the results and shed more light on evaluation questions such as selection criteria for students included in fellowship programmes. Some of the questions was pre-tested on alumni's as one of the evaluation team members participated in an Alumni event in Amman on 25 April 2019.

Observation was used throughout the evaluation specifically during field visits.

Field visits to Oman and Jordan took place between 25 and 31 may while Palestine (West Bank) and Israel took place from 17 to 22 June. The field visit started in Oman with key stakeholder meetings with MEDRC after which the evaluation team visited Jordan where a briefing meeting was held with the Swedish Embassy. This was followed by concurrent meetings in Palestine and Israel with beneficiaries and core parties.

UTILITY

Utilization - The ToR note that “*the evaluation is to be designed, conducted and reported to meet the needs of the intended users and tenderers shall elaborate in the tender how this will be ensured during the evaluation process.*”. The intended users and their needs are tentatively outlined below

User	Needs	Evaluation design implications
Sida	Accountability on results Decision on new phase and if so, then insights into what should be retained and changed	Both a forward and backward looking focus is needed (backward to get clarity over results and the reasons for the results; forward to explore the justification and implications for any future support) An independent view to gain credibility
MEDRC	As above Insights on how operations can be more efficient and effective	As above Undertake focus discussion groups to brainstorm and internalise findings
Water related organisations in the region	How to make best use of the MEDRC outcomes What support or engagement is required in the future if a next phase is decided upon	Clear identification of who the users are (in terms of water related organisations) Consider a survey or even webinar to canvass views

LIMITATIONS

The limitations of the evaluation were related to the extent to which the data on outputs and outcomes was available and consistent. The chosen methodological approach detailed in this

report helped triangulating information in order to increase the reliability of the conclusions and the relevance of the recommendations that was formulated by the evaluation team.

Major limitations included:

- Availability and access of data. As there were no results framework/indicators or structured reporting on results the evaluation depends more on primary data (interviews/questionnaire). Hence the availability of stakeholders and their willingness to talk to the team became essential. This was only the case to a very limiting degree, as most stakeholders were willing to talk with the evaluation team. Previous evaluations only got limited questionnaire responses. The response rate in this evaluation differs significantly between the three surveyed groups. For the tri-lateral participants the rate is satisfactory with 68% responses, however, it is lower for the bi-lateral and students, as seen in the section above, but still higher than previous evaluations. There might be several reasons for this, one being that the survey was conducted during and just after the Ramadan, and another that some of the bi-lateral (and possible students) are not using e-mails regularly (mentioned by MEDRC). The implication for this evaluation is considered to be minimal, as a 100 % sample size was included and findings was triangulated with other sources of information.
- Considering that the project is still ongoing, the extent to which outputs have matured into outcomes, particularly with regard to Masters/PhD studies and capacity development efforts, was a limitation.

Annex E - Survey details

MEDRC survey for students

* 1. What is your sex?

☐ Male

☐ Female

* 2. In what year were you born? (enter 4-digit birth year; for example, 1976)

* 3. In what country do you live?

* 4. What degree has been financed by MEDRC?

☐ MSc

☐ PhD

☐ Both MSc and PhD

* 5. Number of alumni network events attended?

* 6. Have you attended other MEDRC events?

☐ No

☐ Yes, technical training workshops in my country

☐ Yes, technical training workshops in Oman

☐ Yes, study tours

* 7. How did you get to know about the fellowship?

☐ University/professor

☐ Government authorities

☐ Newspaper

☐ Other students

☐ Other (please specify)

* 8. Were there any special measures taken to encourage women applicants?

☐ Yes, please specify

☐ No

☐ Don't know

If yes, please specify

* 9. What do you think are the factors that made you were selected for the fellowship

☐ Grades

☐ Relevance of topic

☐ Being female

☐ Have worked with government authorities

☐ Familiar with the work of government authorities

☐ Other (please specify)

* 10. To what extent were the scholarship funds adequate to meet your research needs? on a scale of 1 to 5

None

Low

Satisfactory

More than satisfactory

Excellent

☐☐☐☐☐

* 11. Regarding the management of the scholarship please list 3 things that were good

* 12. Regarding the management of the scholarship list 3 things that can be improved

* 13. What new capacities have you gained from your study? Please list the capacities

* 14. To which extent have you made use of these capacities after your MSc/PhD study? on a scale of 1 to 5

None	Low	Satisfactory	More than satisfactory	Excellent	N/A
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

* 15. To what extent did the MSc/PhD help you get a job or take the next step in your studies? Please rate the helpfulness of the MSc/PhD on a scale of 1 to 5

None	Low	Satisfactory	More than satisfactory	Excellent
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

* 16. If you have completed your studies; What did you do after your MSc/PhD study?

- ☐ Continued to study ☐ Unemployed
- ☐ Got a study relevant job ☐ Haven't completed my studies
- ☐ Got a non-study relevant job
- ☐ Other (please specify)

17. Please specify employer in case of employment

* 18. Was the study material of the MSc/PhD study relevant for addressing the needs of the water sector in Jordan/Palestine?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Somewhat

If yes in what way (please explain and give examples)

* 19. Please rate the degree to which the results of your thesis helped (or is likely to help in the future) solve water needs in Jordan/Palestine a scale of 1 to 5. Please explain in what way

None	Low	Satisfactory	More than satisfactory	Excellent
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Please explain in what way

- * 20. How has the MSc/PhD study contributed to improving research on water issues in Palestine/Jordan?
Please explain and give examples

- * 21. How has your participation in the MSc/PhD study financed by MEDRC contributed to building a network of expertise on water issues in Palestine and Jordan? please explain and give examples

- * 22. Were there any special measures taken under your thesis writing or afterwards to support women fellowship holders?

☐ Yes

☐ No

☐ Don't know

☐ If yes, please specify

23. Please list any other remarks you have in relation to the relevance of the scholarship and results achieved or other issues that were not mentioned above

MEDRC survey for participants in technical workshops

* 1. What is your sex?

- ☐ Male
☐ Female

* 2. In what country do you live?

- ☐ Jordan
☐ Palestine (West Bank)
☐ Palestine (Gaza)
☐ Other country (please specify)

* 3. In what year were you born? (enter 4-digit birth year; for example, 1976)

* 4. What organisation do you work for?

* 5. What is your position in the organisation?

* 6. Number of MEDRC technical training workshops attended in your country?

* 7. Number of technical training workshops attended at MEDRC in Oman?

* 8. Number of MEDRC study tours attended?

* 9. Did you hear about MEDRC before you attended the technical workshop(s)?

- ☐ Yes
☐ No

* 10. Are you familiar with the mandate of MEDRC?

- ☐ Yes
☐ No

* 11. To what extent do you find technical workshops organised by MEDRC relevant for improving technical capacities in your country on water sector issues, management and policy to address water challenges in the region? on a scale of 1 to 5

None	Low	Satisfactory	More than satisfactory	Excellent
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

* 12. To what extent do you find the technical workshops organised by MEDRC to be relevant to the strategic priorities of your country (Jordan/Palestine) on water issues? on a scale of 1 to 5

None	Low	Satisfactory	More than satisfactory	Excellent
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

* 13. Do you find MEDRC to be complementary to other efforts in the region working to improve technical capacities on water issues in Palestine/Jordan?

- ☐ Yes
☐ No
☐ Somewhat
☐ Don't know

If yes, in what way way is it complementary? (please explain and give examples)

* 14. Do you find MEDRC to be duplicating other efforts in the region working to improve technical capacities on water issues in Palestine/Jordan?

- ☐ Yes
☐ No
☐ Somewhat
☐ Don't know

If yes, in what way way is it duplicating efforts? (please explain and give examples)

* 15. Do you find MEDRC to be complementary to other efforts in the region working to strengthen institutional ties on water issues between Palestine/Jordan?

- ☐ Yes
☐ No
☐ Somewhat
☐ Don't know

If yes, in what way way is it complementary? (please explain and give examples)

* 16. Do you find MEDRC to be duplicating other efforts in the region working to strengthen institutional ties between Palestine/Jordan?

- ☐ Yes
☐ No
☐ Somewhat
☐ Don't know

If yes, in what way way is it duplicating efforts? (please explain and give examples)

* 17. What new capacities have you gained from your participation in technical training workshops organised by MEDRC? Please list the capacities

* 18. To which extent did you make use of these capacities after your participation in the event(s)? on a scale of 1 to 5

None	Low	Satisfactory	More than satisfactory	Excellent	N/A
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

* 19. Did the technical training workshop(s) give you the opportunity to learn about the results of the research done by MEDRC research fellows?

- ☐ yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Some

* 20. If so, to what extent were the research results useful for your work?

None	Low	Satisfactory	More than satisfactory	Excellent	N/A
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

* 21. Did the technical workshop(s) give you the opportunity to meet participants from other countries?

- ☐ yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Some

If so, which country(ies) and in what context?

* 22. Were there any special measures taken in the technical workshops organised by MEDRC to support the participation of women in the events?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Don't know

If yes, please specify

MEDRC survey for participants in technical workshops

* 1. What is your sex?

- ☐ Male
- ☐ Female

* 2. In what country do you live?

- ☐ Jordan
- ☐ Palestine (West Bank)
- ☐ Palestine (Gaza)
- ☐ Other country (please specify)

* 3. In what year were you born? (enter 4-digit birth year; for example, 1976)

* 4. What organisation do you work for?

* 5. What is your position in the organisation?

* 6. Number of MEDRC technical training workshops attended in your country?

* 7. Number of technical training workshops attended at MEDRC in Oman?

* 8. Number of MEDRC study tours attended?

MEDRC survey for participants in trilateral events

* 1. What is your sex?

- ☐ Male
☐ Female

* 2. In what country do you live?

- ☐ Jordan
☐ Palestine
☐ Israel
☐ Other (please specify)

* 3. In what year were you born? (enter 4-digit birth year; for example, 1976)

* 4. What organisation do you work for?

* 5. What is your position in the organisation?

* 6. Number of MEDRC technical trilateral events attended?

* 7. Number of MEDRC technical training workshops attended in your country?

* 8. Number of technical training workshops attended at MEDRC in Oman?

* 9. Number of MEDRC study tours attended?

* 10. Did you hear about MEDRC before you attended the trilateral event(s)?

☐ Yes

☐ No

* 11. Are you familiar with the mandate of MEDRC?

☐ Yes

☐ No

* 12. To what extent do you find MEDRC relevant for promoting transboundary water challenges between Israel, Palestine and Jordan?

None	Low	Satisfactory	More than satisfactory	Excellent	N/A
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

* 13. Do you find MEDRC to be complementary to other efforts in the region promoting transboundary water management?

☐ Yes

☐ No

☐ Somewhat

☐ Don't know

If yes, in what way way is it complementary? (please explain and give examples)

* 14. Do you find MEDRC to be duplicating other efforts in the region promoting transboundary water management?

- ☐ Yes
☐ No
☐ Somewhat
☐ Don't know

If yes, in what way way is it duplicating efforts? (please explain and give examples)

* 15. To what extent do you find the trilateral events organised by MEDRC to be relevant to the strategic priorities of your country (Jordan/Palestine/Israel) on water issues?

None	Low	Satisfactory	More than satisfactory	Excellent
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

* 16. To what extent do you find the trilateral event(s) you attended relevant for building relations among Jordan/Palestine/Israel?

None	Low	Satisfactory	More than satisfactory	Excellent
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

* 17. To what extent do you find the trilateral event(s) you attended relevant for enhancing technical cooperation among Jordan/Palestine/Israel on water issues?

None	Low	Satisfactory	More than satisfactory	Excellent
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

* 18. Is it realistic to assume that these trilateral events will contribute to improving technical coordination among Jordan/Palestine/Israel on water issues?

- ☐ Yes
☐ No
☐ Maybe

* 19. What new capacities have you gained from your participation in trilateral events organised by MEDRC?
Please list the capacities

- * 20. To which extent did you make use of these capacities after your participation in the event(s)? on a scale of 1 to 5

None	Low	Satisfactory	More than satisfactory	Excellent
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

- * 21. Did you know participants from other core countries (Jordan/Palestine/Israel) before you attended the event(s) organised by MEDRC?

☐ yes

☐ No

If so, which country(ies) and in what context?

- * 22. To what extent do you think the trilateral event(s) organised by MEDRC contributed to building confidence among the participants from Israel, Jordan and Palestine?

None	Low	Satisfactory	More than satisfactory	Excellent
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

- * 23. To what extent has this led to building confidence among the three countries? On a scale from 1 to 5

None	Low	Satisfactory	More than satisfactory	Excellent
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

- * 24. To what degree do you think confidence building is necessary for promoting technical cooperation among Israel, Palestine and Jordan on water issues? On a scale from 1 to 5

Not necessary	low	Somehow necessary	necessary	Very necessary
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

- * 25. What do you think are the factors that are necessary for promoting technical cooperation among Israel, Palestine and Jordan on water issues?

- * 26. To what level do you think the trilateral events organised by MEDRC are likely to lead to increased regional cooperation between Israel, Jordan and Palestine on water issues in the region?

Not likely	low likelihood	Somehow likely	likely	very likely
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Please give examples

* 27. Were there any special measures taken in the trilateral event organised by MEDRC to support the participation of women in the events?

☐ Yes

☐ No

☐ Don't know

If yes, please specify

28. Please list any other remarks you have in relation to the relevance and results achieved by the trilateral events organised by MEDRC or other issues that were not mentioned above



Evaluation of: Fostering Regional Cooperation on Transboundary Water Management in Palestine, Jordan and Israel implemented by MEDRC

The main conclusions of the evaluation of the project were that: The objectives of MEDRC and the project are relevant but highly dependent on the external context and the overall peace process. The project has promoted gender equality at activity level but outcomes have been more challenging to monitor and achieve. The project potentially contributed to improving technical cooperation through increasing readiness and confidence. Although the capacity development was appreciated and has become more efficient, it is still fragmented and not well enough linked to other processes. Achievement of the overall objectives will require continuous support.

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