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Swiss Federal Department of Foreign Affairs FDFA  
**Directorate of International Law DIL**

# International Law

**The FDFA supports projects  
that promote international law**

## Foreword

Respect for international law and the strengthening of legal relations between states are the basis for a stable, just and peaceful international order.

The United Nations' Charter assigns to the General Assembly the fundamental mandate of "encouraging the progressive development of international law and its codification" (art. 13). For Switzerland, this mandate is a crucial element of its foreign policy, which expresses itself notably in the protection of human rights and international humanitarian law, as well as in the promotion of democracy and of the rule of law. In its relations with the community of states and in its activities in international organizations, Switzerland firmly upholds the supremacy of law over force.

However, there has to be mentioned that the issue of the development of international law does not attract the attention that it deserves from the media and from top policy makers. This is why the Federal Department of Foreign Affairs has for many years financed activities and programs run by NGOs, research centers, universities and other civil society actors in Switzerland and abroad which help to remedy this situation.

If you are planning to organize a specific project, a colloquium or a seminar on the promotion and respect for international law, the Directorate for International Law may provide financial support.

This brochure provides information on the objectives, bases and criteria for financial support, as well as on the concrete procedure for submitting an application for support.

DIRECTORATE FOR INTERNATIONAL LAW  
Director-General

Corinne Cicéron Bühler

## Objectives of Swiss foreign policy

A commitment to the development and strengthening of international law is an integral element of Swiss foreign policy. This commitment is based on the conviction that ultimately, long-term peace and security can only be guaranteed within an international community in which states respect human rights in their domestic policy and do not resort to force to resolve international problems. The question of the actual respect for international law and of mechanisms capable of ensuring it has become unavoidable.

The development of a coherent, effective and credible policy to achieve these objectives presupposes, not least, active support for non-governmental organizations, research centers, universities and other civil society actors involved directly or indirectly in promoting these rights and values. These actors play an increasingly important role in the development and the respect of international law.

## Priority areas

In 1988 the Federal Council decided to support actions to promote human rights and international law in line with Switzerland's foreign policy interests. A credit for **actions to promote respect for international law**, which has amounted to approximately CHF 1,500,000 since 1 January 2016, is available for this purpose. The Directorate of International Law (DIL) is responsible for managing this credit, which can be used to support specific projects in the following priority areas:

- International law
- International humanitarian law and human rights
- International criminal jurisdiction
- Promotion of awareness and understanding of international law ("outreach")
- Counterterrorism
- Rule of law at the international level

The DIL grants subsidies based on the fundamental idea that within the framework of its peace and security policy, it is very much in Switzerland's interest to develop and apply the norms of international law as well as corresponding control mechanisms. Moreover, our country attaches particular importance to the development and practical implementation of international humanitarian law. As the signatory and depositary state of the four Geneva Conventions and the two Additional Protocols, Switzerland has a particular responsibility in this area.

## Criteria for granting subsidies and beneficiaries

The actions for which support is requested (financial contribution or guarantee in the event of a deficit) must comply with the following general criteria:

- The action proposed must conform to Swiss foreign policy objectives in the areas of human rights and of international law (cf. the Foreign Policy Strategy 2016-2019, available at the following internet address: <http://www.eda.admin.ch>)
- The planned action must address specific and/or current problems.
- The objective of the action must be to promote the codification of international law or to promote greater respect for it. It must not, for example, be a purely theoretical piece of research.
- The beneficiary of the subsidy must present a sound financing plan for his/her action.
- The costs of the action must be in reasonable proportion to the expected results.
- It must not be possible for another instrument of Swiss foreign policy (in particular a credit or a program of action by another federal service) to attain the desired goal more effectively.

The projects subsidized must combine a sound scientific basis with the capacity to reach a wide audience (for example seminars or continuing education courses).

Once the project has been implemented, the applicant must present a final report and/or accounts.

The subsidies are intended primarily for organizations active in the promotion of development of international law and in raising awareness of the principles on which it is based.

As well as contributing to the financing of external projects, the credits also make it possible to finance projects initiated within the federal administration.

## Address to which applications should be submitted

Applications for subsidies should be addressed to:

Federal Department of Foreign Affairs  
Directorate of International Law  
Federal Palace north  
CH-3003 Bern

Fax: +41 (0)58 464 90 73  
Email: [dv@eda.admin.ch](mailto:dv@eda.admin.ch)

## Checklist for applications for subsidies

Please make sure when submitting your application that your file is complete and that it contains all the documents and information listed below:

- ❑ Detailed project description:
  - ❑ content and objective of the project
  - ❑ participants and target audience
  - ❑ place and period in which the project is to be implemented
- ❑ Estimate of project cost and of financing (naming other providers of funds and sponsors)
- ❑ For private providers of funds: description of the structure of the organization, accounts and business report for the previous year, budget for the current year