

Helge Godø

**Review of the research cooperation between Christian
Michelsen Institute (CMI) and the Muwatin - Palestine
Institute for the Study of Democracy (Muwatin)**

NIFU skriftserie nr. 14/99

NIFU – Norwegian Institute for Studies in
Research and Higher Education
Hegdehaugsveien 31
N-0352 Oslo, Norway

ISSN 0808-4572

Preface

In December 1998, NIFU – Norwegian Institute for the Study of Research and Higher Education, in Oslo – was asked by the Royal Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs to undertake an assessment and review of a research cooperation funded by the ministry, the cooperation of the two research institutes Christian Michelsen Institute (CMI) and Muwatin - the Palestine Institute for the Study of Democracy (Muwatin, for short). This cooperation had been funded by the Royal Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) in the period 1995-1998. The MFA wanted an independent assessment prior to making a decision to extend its funding of the cooperative agreement.

In January and February 1999, NIFU undertook this review. The assessment was undertaken by Dr. Helge Godø of NIFU. According to the contract with MFA, NIFU submitted a final draft of this report to the MFA on 2 March 1999. The present report has made some minor adjustments to this, reflecting comments made by CMI and Muwatin to the final draft of 2 March 1999.

For NIFU, undertaking this contract has been an interesting and stimulating assignment, for which we want to express our gratitude to the people of Muwatin, CMI and the Royal Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, who contributed to this.

Petter Aasen
Director

Egil Kallerud
Director of research

Contents

1	Introduction	7
1.1	Background and purpose of the review	7
1.2	Brief description of the CMI-Muwatin research cooperation	7
1.3	Sources of information, methods and approach of this review	8
1.4	Structure of the report.....	9
2	The CMI-Muwatin cooperation in terms of research strategy	11
2.1	Background of the CMI-Muwatin research cooperation.....	11
2.2	Preparation, planning, approvals and design of the research	12
2.3	Relationship to national research priorities	13
2.4	The role of users in the CMI-Muwatin cooperation.....	15
2.5	Assessment of the CMI-Muwatin cooperation in terms of research strategy	16
3	Operational aspects of the CMI-Muwatin cooperation	19
3.1	Organization and manpower	19
3.2	Project management	20
3.3	Division of labour between CMI and Muwatin.....	23
3.4	Cooperation with other donors	23
3.5	Assessment of operational aspects	24
4	Relevance of the CMI-Muwatin cooperation.....	27
4.1	Needs and priorities of Muwatin	27
4.2	Needs and priorities of the Palestine	28
4.3	Factors influencing the projects' implementation and performance	29
4.4	External impacts of Muwatin's activities	30
4.5	Equality in the partnership CMI-Muwatin	30
4.6	Assessment of relevance	31
5	Impact of the CMI-Muwatin cooperation.....	33
5.1	Institutional research capacity of Muwatin	33
5.2	Scientific, economic and social significance of Muwatin's activities.....	34
5.3	Communication of research results to relevant target groups	34
5.4	Assessment of impacts	37
6	Sustainability and future prospects	39
6.1	Renewal of the CMI-Muwatin cooperation agreement for 1998-2000.....	39
6.2	Significant factors for improving research capacity at Muwatin in the projects..	41
6.3	Cost-effectiveness of the projects.....	41
6.4	Sustainability in terms of institutional and research capacity	42

6.4.1	Procedures ensuring availability of local inputs in order to maintain research capacity.....	42
6.4.2	"Critical mass" in terms of manpower and sustainability.....	43
6.4.3	Capability to maintain an research infrastructure.....	43
6.5	Assessment of sustainability and factors critical for future prospects.....	43
7	Conclusion.....	45
7.1	Summary of assessment.....	45
7.2	Recommendations.....	48
7.2.1	General.....	48
7.2.2	Adjustment of scope and priorities.....	48
	Appendix 1: Terms of reference for the review.....	49
	Appendix 2: Sources of information used in the review.....	51
	Appendix 3: Itinerary and list of informants.....	55

1 Introduction

1.1 Background and purpose of the review

The overall objective of this review is to assess the performance of the cooperation between the two research institutes Christian Michelsen Institute (CMI) and Muwatin - the Palestine Institute for the Study of Democracy (Muwatin, for short) - a cooperation which has been funded by the Royal Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) in the period 1995-1998. CMI is located in Bergen, Norway and Muwatin is located in Ramallah, on the West Bank of the Palestine. The focus of this review is to assess performance of this cooperation in a number of dimensions in terms of meeting the objectives which were set in the cooperation, such as

- to provide knowledge for CMI, Muwatin and the MFA in the field of support to strengthen Muwatin's institutional research capacity,
- to contribute to competence building in democracy studies at Muwatin and CMI,
- to contribute to the basis for consideration concerning the scope and extent of the programme in 1999 and 2000, and
- to provide accountability in connection with the programme.

In January and February 1999, NIFU - Norwegian Institute for the Study of Research and Higher Education of Oslo, Norway undertook this review, based on a contract with the MFA. Being an independent research foundation, NIFU has no ties to either CMI or Muwatin.

The terms of reference for this review are enclosed in appendix 1.

1.2 Brief description of the CMI-Muwatin research cooperation

Muwatin was officially founded in January 1992, based on an idea developed by a small group of academics at the Bir Zeit University of Ramallah some years earlier, during the Palestine Intifada. Being an independent research institute, its main objective is to contribute to the process of democratic transformation in Palestine society, and more generally, in Arab societies. In 1995, CMI and Muwatin entered into a formal three year cooperation on a research program funded by the Royal Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The initial support from the MFA was set at

NOK 3.436.000. The grant covered institutional support, project and travel support to Muwatin, and research coordination and cooperation support to CMI. The overall objective of the support was to strengthen Muwatin's institutional and research capacity and to contribute to competence building in democratic studies at Muwatin and CMI. Initially, the agreement on cooperation covered the period of 1995 to 1997, however the MFA agreed to prolong the cooperation for 1998, in 1998.

1.3 Sources of information, methods and approach of this review

The main sources of information for this review has been:

- documents from the MFA, CMI and Muwatin, such as research proposals, work plans, annual reports, accounts, etc. which deal specifically with the CMI-Muwatin cooperation,
- general policy documents and publications,
- research reports, articles and books (mainly in English) from the CMI-Muwatin cooperation,
- interviews and direct communication with the people working in the CMI-Muwatin cooperation, which included a visit to CMI in Bergen and to Muwatin in Ramallah.

Appendix 2 is a list of the sources of information (documents) used, however, specific reference to these will be made as footnotes in the text. Appendix 3 provides an itinerary and list of informants.

The focus of the data collection and analysis was set on the research strategy and research management of the CMI-Muwatin cooperation because this was considered most relevant and fertile for the questions covered by the review, such as impacts, relevance, attainment of goals, and future prospects and sustainability.

The scope of this review has limitations which must be made clear: This is no academic peer review, i.e the review is not a comprehensive assessment of the scientific quality and originality of the research undertaken by CMI or Muwatin. Furthermore, due to lack of knowledge of Arabic, a large amount of information was inaccessible to this review. Finally, due to time limitations, the scope of this review is also limited, as this was undertaken within a period of only two months, by one person.

1.4 Structure of the report

The report consist of seven chapters, of which this is the first. The other chapters are:

- Chapter 2 - which will focus on research strategic aspect of the CMI-Muwatin cooperation,
- Chapter 3 - in which the main focus is on research management aspects, organization, manpower and relationship to other donors,
- Chapter 4 - in which the CMI-Muwatin cooperation is assessed in terms of relevance,
- Chapter 5 - assessment of impacts of the CMI-Muwatin cooperation
- Chapter 6 - focusing on sustainability and future prospects of the CMI-Muwatin cooperation, and finally,
- Chapter 7 - the conclusion, with recommendations.

2 The CMI-Muwatin cooperation in terms of research strategy

2.1 Background of the CMI-Muwatin research cooperation

The research cooperation between CMI and Muwatin was formally inaugurated in September 1995, by an agreement¹ signed in Ramallah by Gunnar Sørebo, representing CMI and George Giacaman and May Jayyusi representing Muwatin. One year prior to this, the Royal Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) had commissioned CMI to undertake a survey of Palestine research within human and social sciences², with the aim of identifying possible mechanisms for institutional support and competence building. As a result of this, CMI applied for three years (1995-1997) of funding from the MFA, which materialized in the agreement with Muwatin. The agreement stipulated a budget consisting of a core grant of NOK 2.135.000 to Muwatin and funding of NOK 1.310.000 to CMI, to enable cooperation with Muwatin³. The agreement also stipulated its objective as:

- to promote institutional development at Muwatin,
- to strengthen research capabilities at Muwatin,
- to promote competence building in democracy, human rights and peace-studies at Muwatin and CMI, as well as in broader relevant circles in the Palestinian areas and in Norway.

Furthermore, the agreement specified in general terms:

- the activities and division of labour between Muwatin and CMI,
- the structure and mechanisms for cooperation between Muwatin and CMI,
- disbursement of funds and distribution of costs,
- reporting and work plans, including audited accounts.

¹ cf. *Agreement on cooperation between Christian Michelsen Institute (CMI) and Muwatin Palestine Institute for the Study of Democracy.*

² cf report by D J Lønning, *Evaluering av sentrale palestinske forskningsinstitusjonar innanfor instituttsektoren i Jerusalem og på Vestbredden*, n.d. (possibly December 1994)

³ Cf. table 2.1 below, which will show how the costs evolved during the period of cooperation.

Within the framework of this agreement, the cooperation between CMI and Muwatin had a gradual start in 1995. Table 2.1 below gives an overview of the costs of the CMI-Muwatin cooperation, which is interesting, because these reflect the level of activity in the cooperation. As shown, the cooperation was extended into 1998, altogether covering a period of approximately three years.

Table 2.1: *The CMI-Muwatin cooperation - Costs according to accounts, in NOK*

<i>Year</i>	<i>1995</i>	<i>1996</i>	<i>1997</i>	<i>1998*</i>	<i>Total</i>	<i>%</i>
Muwatin	385.220	875.252	876.055	1.225.250	3.361.777	62
CMI**	409.971	459.701	538.577	690.000	2.098.249	38
Total cost	795.191	1.334.953	1.414.632	1.915.250	5.460.026	100
Funding from MFA***	682.000	1.377.000	1.377.000	1.915.250	5.351.250	98
Balance - carried by CMI	-113.191	42.047	-37.632	0	-108.776	2

* *The 1998 figures are tentative, not based on audited accounts*

** *According to CMI, these figures do not cover CMI's overhead expenses.*

*** *MFA=The Royal Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs*

2.2 Preparation, planning, approvals and design of the research

The agreement of 1995 stipulates for «..annual work plans and expense schedule [to be] mutually approved by the two parties»⁴. Accordingly, in the CMI-Muwatin cooperation, each of the institutes have written work plans and annual reports in the

⁴ Cf. § 4 in the CMI-Muwatin agreement.

period of the agreement. Furthermore, they have written proposals and work plans for an extension of the agreement, for the years 1998-2000⁵.

Research strategy is a fundamental factor for achieving quality and success in research and subsequent deployment of research results, i.e. planning and management of the research operation in terms of clearly defined aims and objectives (sense of mission). Needless to say, it is also important for obtaining funds from funding agencies. However, as the basic tenets of the cooperation were spelled out in the agreement, it seems reasonable to assume - as evident from the communication and interaction that took place late in 1994 and early 1995 - that there was a consensus as the aims and objectives of the research cooperation.

In analyzing the work plans and annual reports, numerous criteria may be used for assessing the CMI-Muwatin research strategy. Whereas operational aspects will be analyzed in the next chapter, the most relevant question to ask now is: To what extent was the design of the research cooperation adequate in terms of the aims and objectives of the cooperation (cf. § 2.3 in the agreement)? Generally, there are no metrics or exact methods available to assess this due to inherent incommensurabilities and qualitative aspects in the subject matters involved. However, in analyzing these documents in terms of research strategy, the following salient features were evident:

- clearly stated purpose of the cooperation,
- clearly delineated and specified research themes,
- explicit policy goals and/or identified target groups,
- adequate attention to building complementarities and infrastructure for undertaking the research and related activities,
- balance of long-term perspective with short-term considerations.

2.3 Relationship to national research priorities

In the present research agenda of Norway, as this is articulated by the Research Council of Norway in its research strategy⁶, explicit reference is made to the

⁵ Cf letters to MFA, letter of 11 March 1998, with the annual report of 1997 and the memorandum *CMI-Muwatin cooperation 1998-2000*; letter of 3 July 1997 enclosing an identical memorandum. In chapter 6, this will be analyzed.

⁶ Cf. *Research for the Future - Strategy for Norwegian research and the Research Council of Norway towards year 2000* (title translated from Norwegian: *Forskning for framtiden - Strategier for norsk forskning og for Norges forskningsråd fram mot år 2000*), Oslo, 1996, p. 65.

importance of the type of research undertaken in the CMI-Muwatin cooperation⁷. Thus, it states that «..we need more knowledge about countries in the South, improved insight in development strategies and their impact on economy and environment. In addition, we need more knowledge about the struggle against poverty and for development of democracies.»⁸ The purpose of this is for national research to contribute to the goal of «..cultural understanding, quality of life, democracy and welfare.»⁹ The Research Council of Norway recommends a general strengthening of development research in Norway, based on international research cooperation with institutes, groups and individuals, both in the North and South.

Similar priorities are reflected in the research agenda of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA), as this is articulated in its budget proposal to the Storting (Norwegian Parliament)¹⁰. Having a «sectorial responsibility» for applied/mission-oriented research within areas relevant for foreign policy and development aid, the MFA has funded CMI for many years. In the 1999 budget proposal, the MFA recommends increased funding to CMI as a recognition of a favourable evaluation of CMI, presented early in 1998. Commissioned by the Research Council of Norway, this evaluation was undertaken by a committee of independent peers.¹¹ In its recommendations, it states that «...CMI should maintain its profile as an applied research institute focusing on development problems in the South». However, it also observes «..some need to develop a clearer, and, to some extent, more specialized professional profile».¹²

In sum, the CMI-Muwatin research cooperation has compatibility with general research priorities in Norway. This is amplified by an increased general interest in the Middle East region and in Islamic societies, politics and culture. Thus one may

⁷ However, neither CMI nor Muwatin is mentioned in this document - no other research organizations are identified or named either.

⁸ Op. cit, p. 65 - translated by the author from Norwegian.

⁹ Op. cit, p.64.

¹⁰ Cf. *Budget proposal for 1999*, from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (St. prp. nr. 1 (1998-99) - Utenriksdepartementet), p. 130-131.

¹¹ The Research Council of Norway, *Christian Michelsen Institute - An Evaluation*, Oslo, January 1998.

¹² Op.cit, p. v.

reasonably claim a long-term national interest in this area - and the CMI-Muwatin cooperation may be considered to be one contribution to this aim. In a Palestine perspective, this review has failed to find official documents¹³ from relevant authorities articulating research priorities in the area covered by the CMI-Muwatin cooperation. Nevertheless, one may reasonably claim that the CMI-Muwatin cooperation serves broad, legitimate interests in Palestine society because of Muwatin's close alignment with the NGO-movement, its role in Palestine public discourse and its advocacy for building a democratic, civil society in the Palestine. This point will be elaborated further in chapters 4, 5 and 6.

2.4 The role of users in the CMI-Muwatin cooperation

Users, defined as recipients of research results and related activities of the CMI-Muwatin cooperation, consist of numerous, heterogenous groups, organizations and individuals. Some of these are closely related to the CMI-Muwatin cooperation - others, more peripheral and passive, even if they are important as recipients.¹⁴ In Norway, the primary user is the MFA, who has also funded the CMI-Muwatin cooperation. MFA's main interest in the CMI-Muwatin cooperation has been two-fold: To strengthen the research capability of Muwatin and to support CMI and Muwatin's efforts in research on democracy development. According to MFA, this is relevant and important in Norway's development aid to the Palestine areas.¹⁵ The contract governing MFA's support to the CMI-Muwatin cooperation¹⁶ does not specify any role for the MFA in the operation, such as representation on a steering committee, procedures for approval of projects, etc. However, annual reports with audited accounts and work plans for the following year were sent to the MFA throughout the period. In addition, MFA has been given briefings by CMI, at CMI-MFA meetings which are held regularly once a year. Within MFA, the activities of CMI-Muwatin are monitored by two civil servants in MFA's office for international aid. Thus one may characterize MFA as a goal-oriented user who has given CMI and

¹³ In the limited time available to the review, no separate inquiries were made to investigate this. The lack of knowledge of Arabic was also a disadvantage for this.

¹⁴ Cf. chapter 5.3 for analysis of impacts on recipients.

¹⁵ Cf. MFA internal memorandum, dated 8 June 1998, p. 2.

¹⁶ Cf. *Agreement between the Royal Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Christian Michelsen Institute regarding research cooperation with Muwatin Palestine Institute for the Study of Democracy*, dated 11 December 1995.

Muwatin autonomy in terms of operational aspects in the research and related activities, while monitoring the progress of work through ordinary channels of communications established between CMI and MFA.

Apart for MFA, the academic community in CMI's network, of which the University of Bergen is prominent, constitutes a different set of users. For these, CMI's publications and activities undertaken by CMI-researchers (lectures, counseling, participation in seminars, etc) are of interest. According to the 1998 evaluation of CMI, this relationship to external, academic users was considered satisfactory.

In the Palestine, the picture is more complex because of Muwatin's extensive and at times intense interaction with external groups, individuals and organizations. This will be elaborated in the following chapters related to the impact of the CMI-Muwatin cooperation. However, in the interface between Muwatin and the outside world, the following categories of actors (who also are users) may be found:

- general public, opinion leaders and the media,
- authorities in the Palestine,
- members of the Palestine Legislative Council and political parties,
- Palestine NGOs - in particular the Palestine NGO Network,
- students at secondary schools,
- university students,
- academic community in the Palestine and the Middle East, which is also linked with CMI's network and other, international network of researchers.

Because of the terms in the MFA funding, Muwatin has enjoyed a high degree of autonomy. Simultaneously, Muwatin's explicit research and agenda of advocacy for democracy and civil society in the Palestine makes enrolling a large group of users mandatory. As will be shown, Muwatin has been successful in this effort, i.e. by means of the funding provided by the CMI-Muwatin cooperation, it has been able to mobilize a large number and range of users, which is essential for creating an impact in terms of this type of research.

2.5 Assessment of the CMI-Muwatin cooperation in terms of research strategy

In analyzing the CMI-Muwatin research cooperation in terms of research strategy, the aim and objective of the research and related activities are fundamental, as in all types of research programs. As evident, this has been clearly stated, in particular Muwatin

has an explicit sense of mission in its advocacy of creating a civil society in the Palestine based on democracy. In terms of research design aimed at implementation of the research strategy, these are considered adequate and satisfactory. However, the operational aspects related to how the research is undertaken will be analyzed in the following chapter. The CMI-Muwatin cooperation is clearly compatible with national research priorities. The role of users in the CMI-Muwatin cooperation is complex because large and heterogeneous groups, individuals and organizations/institutions are involved, both in Norway and in the Palestine. However, the autonomy granted by MFA, combined with the aim/objective of the CMI-Muwatin cooperation has been beneficial for the outcome, in particular for Muwatin's relationship to its users. This, in turn, has increased the prospects of attaining the aim/objective of the research strategy.

3 Operational aspects of the CMI-Muwatin cooperation

3.1 Organization and manpower

In general, one may characterize the CMI-Muwatin cooperation as a cooperation between two small organizations, of which Muwatin is far smaller. Due to their size, both organizations are flexible and only mildly hierarchical, with rapid, direct channels of communication and a high decision making capability. In the CMI-Muwatin cooperation, no separate project organization or entity was established, which in any case would have been unnecessary as the size and flexibility of both organizations made adequate accommodation of the activities in the cooperation feasible.

In terms of manpower, CMI's largest contribution has been through the work undertaken by D J Lønning, who was a Ph.D-fellow at CMI working on a thesis on perceptions of the Israeli-Palestine conflict. According to accounts, he worked for approximately 26 man-months within the framework of the CMI-Muwatin cooperation during 1995-97¹⁷, of which 5 months were stays in the Palestine and in Israel. Thus he has been the primary human link between CMI and Muwatin. CMI's administrative staff, library and director of research have also contributed to the CMI-Muwatin cooperation. However, D J Lønning's role in the CMI-Muwatin cooperation may explain why his publications are the most visible academic outcome from CMI.

At Muwatin¹⁸, the funds from MFA have been channeled into Muwatin's total budget, constituting approximately 50% of Muwatin's income in 1996-98, less so in 1995.

Muwatin's administration and management is small:

- a general director, dr G Giacaman (50% position),
- an executive director, Ms J Jayyusi (full time position),
- a secretary (50% position),

¹⁷ The accounts of 1998 were not available for the review, because these were not completed as of 1 March 1999.

¹⁸ Muwatin is registered as a non-profit NGO (a legal entity) with the Palestinian Authorities, having two licences - one for undertaking research and one for publishing the newsletter *Parliamentary Horizons*.

- a librarian (50% position).

In 1995, when the CMI-Muwatin cooperation began, Muwatin's research portfolio consisted of two, comparatively large research projects undertaken by researchers working on a full-time basis (J Hilal and M Buder). During the period of cooperation, Muwatin has changed its policy towards giving grants (usually in the range of US\$ 6.000) to a larger number of short-term projects. Thus, the research staff is comparatively large, reflecting Muwatin's project portfolio and mode of operation, as will be explained further below. Early in 1999, Muwatin's research project portfolio consisted of 11 projects, thus involving 11 researchers. However, most of these were affiliated to Muwatin on fixed term contracts, not as employees of Muwatin. In addition to the researchers, Muwatin employs two journalists on freelance contracts, primarily for the newsletter *Parliamentary Horizons*, but also for Muwatin's publication series aimed at school children. As explained in 2.4, Muwatin's large constituency of users and explicit aim of promoting democracy and civil society demands a visible profile, which is reflected in Muwatin's numerous activities, such as the large, annual conferences held in October, various open seminars, active participation in the Palestine NGO-network, etc. Both Muwatin's management and researchers participate actively in these.

3.2 Project management

In the CMI-Muwatin cooperation, each of the institutes work autonomously, following the basic principles and mechanisms which were outlined in the cooperation agreement from 1995. Thus, no formal organizational body (project management team, steering committee, etc) have been established for the cooperation; the research and related activities are undertaken as ordinary activities of each organization. As explained earlier, at CMI, a significant part of the research was carried out as D J Lønning's work on his Ph.D-thesis.¹⁹ In addition, D J Lønning acted as a liaison between Muwatin and CMI. Work on Pd.D.-thesis implies autonomy (academic freedom) and concentrated, individual focus in one particular area, in accordance with the scholastic standards of universities.

At Muwatin, the CMI-Muwatin cooperation implied an important source of funding, which was channeled into a broad range of activities, closely related to Muwatin's mode of operation and basic aim/objective. Muwatin's overall strategic direction is

¹⁹ According to CMI's annual report of 1997, ten Pd.D.-fellows worked at CMI that year.

formally set by its seven members board of trustees. Normally, the board convenes four times a year. Usually, the board meeting held each October subsequent to Muwatin's large autumn conferences decide on Muwatin's overall strategy, work plan and budget for the next year. At this board meeting, board members who reside overseas will participate, as they combine this with attending the October conference. Muwatin's chairman of the board of trustees, Dr. Azmi Bishara, is a prominent figure in the Israeli-Palestinian scene, as he is also a member of the Israeli Knesset. Muwatin's general director Dr. G Giacaman (the founder of Muwatin) is an ex-officio member of the board and the executive director, Ms. May Jayyusi, also participates on board meetings, as the secretary of the board, however, with a voice, but no vote. Bishara, Giacaman and Jayyusi communicate closely, often on a day-to-day basis, thus ensuring compatibility and common understanding between the board and the management.

Muwatin's activities are organized in five programs:

- Research
- Publication series
- Seminars
- Library
- Training workshops

Early in 1999, Muwatin's research program consisted of a portfolio of 11 projects within the following thematic areas, which are priority areas for the institute's research:

- the role of political parties in the Palestine
- the role of mass-based movements in the Palestine
- the role of Palestinian NGOs
- the Palestinian Legislative Council
- Palestinian political and business elite
- Palestinian political culture
- religion and democracy
- gender and democracy

According to Muwatin's management, projects are selected on a competitive basis: Muwatin invites researchers to submit proposals for projects addressing one of the thematic areas above. This invitation is advertized in the media (widely read local newspapers) in November each year. According to Muwatin's 1998 annual report, 23 proposals were sent in at the end of this year, following the announcement. The proposals are reviewed and selected by a committee at Muwatin with the following

members: Muwatin's general director, executive director and two, independent external referees. Following this, the selected researcher (project) is offered a contract with Muwatin, with the following stipulations:

- specification of deliverable (usually a manuscript or a report)
- duration/completion of project: 8 months
- remuneration: US\$ 6.000, of which 40% is paid when the contract is signed, 40% in the middle of the project period if progress is satisfactory - and the final 20% on handover of deliverable.
- after 4 months, the researcher is requested to write a short progress report and to make a presentation of the project at one of Muwatin's seminars.

Taking into account Muwatin's primary aim and objective and its research strategy, its present portfolio policy of supporting comparatively numerous, short-term projects may be considered optimal, providing Muwatin with a flexibility adapted to its policy aims. By this, Muwatin is able to present research results that address issues important in public debates (often creating public debates) and ongoing political processes. Furthermore, it provides Muwatin with access to intellectual resources that are underutilized, particularly in the Palestine university system. Thus, experienced, talented scholars and researchers at the universities are given an opportunity to do research which otherwise may be difficult to undertake due to financial constraints. Simultaneously, Muwatin is provided with valuable research results at «marginal» costs. The disadvantage of this portfolio policy is clearly that of long-term, demanding projects which may provide innovative results are not funded. This is probably also unfavourable to young, unestablished researchers or researchers who want to explore novel aspects within Muwatin's thematic areas. However, the review was not able to analyze these aspects empirically, as this would have required careful data collection and analysis, e.g. of all the applications submitted to Muwatin.

However optimal as a portfolio policy aligning Muwatin's research to its overall strategy, a comparison of the 1999 portfolio with the 1998 portfolio shows only one new project as of 1999. The rest (ten projects) were projects that should have been completed in 1998. Muwatin's 1998 annual report explains this as being caused by a delay in the institute's funding in 1998 from MFA - and no funding from the anticipated TAPRI-Muwatin cooperation. Because of these circumstances it is not reasonable to assess the success of Muwatin's present portfolio policy. Still, given the track records of the researchers working for Muwatin, there are probably few risks involved.

The other programs of Muwatin will be reviewed in chapter 5.

3.3 Division of labour between CMI and Muwatin

As explained earlier, the relationship between CMI and Muwatin is characterized by autonomy, with loose couplings. Comparing Muwatin with CMI in terms of academic quality is beyond the scope of this review. However, judging from the number of persons affiliated with Muwatin who hold Ph.Ds and degrees on MA-levels, it seems fair to assume that Muwatin is on par with CMI, if not superior. The advantage of this is that the relationship between CMI and Muwatin probably is symmetric in terms of academic competence. However, both institutes have mutual interests that materialized in a division of labour in the cooperation. CMI's close relationship to the MFA is important, primarily as a source of funding, but also as a channel for political influence because of Norway's role as a leading donor nation to the Palestine and its role in the Israeli-Palestine peace process. In addition, as an established institute, CMI has an extensive network in the international research community. In Muwatin's long-term visions for its research, it wants to establish a strong, influential network with other, Arabic institutes in the region, in order to strengthen its interests in the advocacy for democracy and civil society. A partnership with CMI is considered an asset for this.

For CMI, having Muwatin as a partner is also important as a source of funding (cf. table 2.1) and because this contributes to increasing their legitimacy and sense of mission. However, for CMI-researchers who want to undertake research in the Palestine, having a close relationship to Muwatin is an asset for numerous reasons. In particular, this may be advantageous to CMI's ambitions of building a competence base on the Middle East and Islamic culture.

3.4 Cooperation with other donors

When Muwatin was established in 1992, the German foundation *Heinrich Böll Stiftung* (formerly *Bundstift*) was instrumental in Muwatin's initial funding. Muwatin still receives funding from this source, however, there is apparently no contact between CMI/MFA and the Heinrich Böll Stiftung.

In 1997, when CMI presented a proposal to the MFA for an extension of the CMI-Muwatin cooperation for the years 1998-2000, this included the Tampere Peace Research Institute (TAPRI), affiliated with the University of Tampere in Finland, as a

new partner.²⁰ A more detailed proposal was presented later, early in 1998²¹, called *Transitions to democracy by Muwatin & CMI & TAPRI* - apparently written by TAPRI's Toumo Melasuo. According to this, CMI had invited TAPRI to join the CMI-Muwatin cooperation, because TAPRI, in its *TAPRI Mediterranean Studies Project*, had undertaken research on Palestine questions, similar to CMI. Also similar to CMI, TAPRI had applied Finland's Ministry of Foreign Affairs for funding, for a total amount of 2.781.015 (currency not stated). According to Muwatin, on 1 March 1999, Muwatin, CMI and TAPRI signed an agreement of cooperation²². By this, Muwatin was able to start the projects that were initially planned for 1998, based on the anticipated contract. This delay explains why many of the projects on the 1998 portfolio also were present on the 1999 portfolio.

3.5 Assessment of operational aspects

Generally, one may characterize the operational aspects of the CMI-Muwatin cooperation as being coherent, well managed and optimally adapted to the resources available. Both institutes are on par in terms of academic qualifications. CMI and Muwatin have autonomy and both organizations are comparatively small and flexible. A considerable part of CMI's resources in the cooperation was allocated to the Pd.D.-work of one CMI-researcher, however, parts of this work was undertaken in the Palestine and Israel - and at Muwatin. By this, an important link between CMI and Muwatin has existed throughout the duration of the CMI-Muwatin cooperation. Thus the climate of cooperation has been characterized as positive.

Muwatin's gradual shift of research portfolio policy towards funding an increasing number of short-term research projects may be considered optimal in terms of Muwatin's available resources, overall strategy and aim/objective. Furthermore, Muwatin's policy of inviting research proposals on an open, competitive basis and selecting projects based on quality and relevance for Muwatin, is generally sound for numerous reasons, not the least because this will secure Muwatin a variety of choice. In terms of project management, Muwatin's system is simple (which is generally advantageous), however, adequate for the type of research undertaken at Muwatin.

²⁰ Cf. letter from CMI to the MFA, dated 3 July 1997.

²¹ Cf. letter from CMI to the MFA, dated 3 February 1998.

²² Cf. comments from Muwatin to NIFU's final draft of 2 March 1999.

Simplicity is also advantageous for the researchers, because this will ensure optimal focus on their work. The delays in the 1998 projects may be reasonably explained by funding problems in 1998, i.e. factors outside Muwatin's control.

4 Relevance of the CMI-Muwatin cooperation

Some aspects related to the question of relevance were analyzed earlier in relation to national research priorities (cf. 2.2). However, in this chapter, the main focus is set on relevance in terms of a general Palestine perspective. Needless to say, this is an extremely complex issue of which there are no exact answers or uniform opinions. For the purpose of this review, the approach utilized is more limited: Given the information provided for this review, to what extent does the CMI-Muwatin cooperation cater to Muwatin's needs and the legitimate interests of the Palestine society which Muwatin wants to serve and shape? This question is important for MFA who has funded the CMI-Muwatin cooperation with an agenda of development aid.

4.1 Needs and priorities of Muwatin

The agenda and overall strategy of Muwatin is stated as: To contribute to the process of democratic transformation in the Palestine society in particular, and Arab society in general. This is elaborated as: «It seeks to achieve its aims through networking and activism, research and publications, preparation of educational material, and the dissemination to schools and the general public, training workshops, symposia, seminars, and conferences. Through such activities and venues, it untiringly raises critical issues of relevance to its objective, linking with Arab and international organizations, and since 1996, working with the Palestine Legislative Council on proposed legislation».²³ The basic questions relevant for this is, according to Muwatin: «What are the factors that weaken or strengthen democracy? Since democracy has never been given from above and comes when people struggle for it, how can one try to speed up the process, to secure it against inevitable impediments and counter-currents?»²⁴ Muwatin's perception of the key factors for the development of democracy in the Palestine are:

- *The Palestine Legislative Council*, because this is one of the few critical institutions that hold the promise of establishing and strengthening a democratic political order. This is mainly targeted in cooperation with other Palestinian NGOs, engaging members of the Palestine Legislative Council on various matters

²³ Memorandum with title *Muwatin The Palestinian Institute for the Study of Democracy*, (n.d.), handed over to the review 8 February 1999, p 1.

²⁴ Op.cit., p.1.

of policy and legislation. Muwatin's newsletter *Parliamentary Horizons* is specially designed for this.

- *A functioning political party system*, because without these it is difficult to develop a stable and genuine democracy or pluralist system of governance. As the existing party system is weak, Muwatin sees a mission in reaching «..potential and real activists who are likely to be the people involved in party-building, and has sought to provide intellectual assistance and critical resources to them, in the belief that such engagement could have a real impact for the transition to democratic life.»²⁵ Many of Muwatin's conferences and symposia are designed for this.

As the two points above are the most important priorities of Muwatin's work, the research areas in Muwatin's research program (cf. 3.2 earlier) may be considered as being closely aligned with these. Thus, Muwatin's needs are activities and research that support these areas - and the resources needed for fueling these.

4.2 Needs and priorities of the Palestine

Within the focus of this review, the relevant question to ask is what kind of research is needed in Palestine society, in order to promote democracy and the building of a civil society? Needless to say, this has to be quality research with a foundation in Palestine culture and its Islamic traditions. Furthermore, one would assume that a cross-disciplinary approach is most fertile, because the research results needed have to be innovative, being able to address questions posed by Palestinian public discourse, not by the academia. (However, these may turn out to be interesting for the academia as well.) It also needs credibility, both in terms of the results and the context from which these are produced. Thus, the advocacy which research may contribute to needs a type of «purity», i.e. absence of hidden agendas or special protagonism. According to the CMI-survey undertaken in 1994, many of the research institutes that operate in the Palestine and in Israel have identities aligning them to special interests or political agendas. In the review, a similar impression was obtained. However, Muwatin has a reputation of being independent, which fulfill the criteria set above. In addition, there is a need for a national arena in which opposing groups and interest may convene in order to create a constructive dialogue, without being associated with ulterior motives. In most societies, such public spaces exist, in which issues of public interest may be debated and presented. In modern societies, the media often has such

²⁵ Op.cit., p.2.

a function, however, other arenas may function in concert with these. Still for any society with a populace wanting democracy, having an independent, critical institute like Muwatin should be considered an asset.

4.3 Factors influencing the projects' implementation and performance

Numerous factors are critical for Muwatin's prospects for achieving its goals. However, the most fundamental, as in all advocacy, is a genuine conviction of the aims and objectives of one's mission. Without this conviction, it is not possible to maintain the long-term effort required for this type of work. A genuine conviction is also fundamental for creating trust and credibility in the environment. A salient feature of Muwatin's profile is a conviction and commitment to the advocacy of democracy and the creation of a Palestine civil society.

Another fundamental, critical factor for success is «human capital», i.e. the knowledge, talent, creativity, social intelligence, relevant skills, etc needed. As pointed out earlier, Muwatin's academic qualifications are good. Furthermore, the people who work for Muwatin, its management and board of trustees are respected, having a reputation of integrity and independence in Palestine politics. This may explain why Muwatin has a profile of credibility, as will be elaborated in the next section. However, Muwatin's human capital is an asset. Still, as pointed out by Muwatin's management, due to the Palestine diaspora, many talented Palestinians who live outside the Palestine constitute an «untapped» potential for increasing Muwatin's (and Palestine society's) human capital.

Provided the two factors above, a third crucial factor is funding. This question is closely related to the aspect of «critical mass» (size of Muwatin and level of activities), which is complex. However, as will be elaborated in chapter 6, it would be beneficial for Muwatin's long-term strategy and research planning if some stable, long-term funding was made available to Muwatin, in particular to its research program, as this is vulnerable to short-term fluctuations in funding.

Equally important as funding is, of course, networks and channels of influence. Muwatin's approach to this is systematic and efficient, as evident in their programs (cf. 3.2) and the way these are organized and implemented. In addition to this, Muwatin plays an active role in the Palestine NGO Network. Muwatin was a founding member of this organization and is a member of its steering group. In 1998, Muwatin hosted the secretariat of this organization (this rotates on an annual basis). The Palestine NGO Network is active as a lobbyist towards the Palestine Authorities

and in particular, the Palestine Legislative Council. At present, creating a legal regime for the future Palestine state in accordance with human rights and democratic principles has priority. In this work, being able to provide research based policy inputs to policy makers and law makers is important, and the type of research undertaken by Muwatin has relevance.

4.4 External impacts of Muwatin's activities

Generally, impacts from research are difficult to measure, even more so for policy-oriented social and cultural science based research, such as undertaken by Muwatin. Precise measurements would require data collection and analysis far beyond the range of this review. However, there is sufficient evidence to state that Muwatin's work is influential and creates impacts which reflect favourably on Muwatin:

- 12 titles from Muwatin's publication program are used as curricula at Palestine universities,
- general wide readership of other publications, such as Raja Bahlul's *Women and Democracy in Liberal Feminist Thought* (in Arabic), which has created debates in wide circles,
- high participation at Muwatin's annual conferences - and extensive, interested Palestine media coverage of these,
- widespread use of Muwatin's books from the *Elements of Democracy* - series, in secondary schools, in their political science curricula,
- high attendance at Muwatin's seminars, amplified by Muwatin's ability to attract famous international scholars and intellectuals, such as Etienne Balibar, Jacques Derrida, Noam Chomsky, Milton Fisk - and in 1998, John Comaroff,
- high level of activity in the Palestine NGO Network, which has had success in influencing legislative processes in the Palestine Legislative Council.

4.5 Equality in the partnership CMI-Muwatin

In the data collection for this review, there were no expressions or hints of dissatisfaction with the CMI-Muwatin relationship in any of the documents examined or people interviewed. Still, the question of equality deserves attention because of the structural configuration of the CMI-Muwatin relationship. In this, CMI has a position as an intermediary because of its close ties to the donor, the MFA. Simultaneously, it is feasible to imagine that Muwatin - provided funding - would be perfectly capable of operating without cooperation with CMI. On the other hand,

with an ordinary Norwegian Pd.D.-scholarship, a substantial part of the work undertaken by CMI would have been feasible, without the Muwatin cooperation. As observed earlier, the CMI-Muwatin cooperation is characterized by autonomy. This in itself is an indicator of parity, as each of the two partners are capable of undertaking activities independently. Thus, in assessing equality, one approach would be to consider if the 38/62 ration of funding (cf. table 2.1) between CMI and Muwatin is fair. In the TAPRI-Muwatin cooperation, the equivalent ratio is 64/36, i.e. the inverse compared to the ration in the CMI-Muwatin cooperation. It seems reasonable to claim that the CMI-Muwatin cooperation is undertaken on terms that are comparatively more favourable to Muwatin, this, however, probably to the benefit of both.

4.6 Assessment of relevance

Generally, there is a complementarity between the aim and objective of the CMI-Muwatin cooperation and the process of democratic transformation which is now taking place in the Palestine. The role and aim/objective of Muwatin is essential in this. As elaborated, a salient feature in Muwatin's profile is a conviction and commitment to the advocacy of democracy and the creation of a Palestine civil society. Muwatin has a human capital of good academic quality and integrity, supporting its image of being an independent institute. This is important for the credibility, confidence and attention Palestine society will give to Muwatin. Muwatin's active role in the Palestine NGO Network is also an asset for its advocacy. Even if impacts of research are generally difficult to measure, there is evidence which reflect favourably on Muwatin's performance and influence. Furthermore, the impacts of Muwatin's work is the result of the institute's own efforts, as the relationship to CMI is characterized by autonomy. Thus, the partnership with CMI may be characterized as balanced and fair, as a symbiosis which is mutually beneficial. In this perspective, the CMI-Muwatin cooperation has is relevant.

5 Impact of the CMI-Muwatin cooperation

5.1 Institutional research capacity of Muwatin

During the period of the CMI-Muwatin cooperation, Muwatin has increased its research capability by means of:

- a new PABX,
- increase of telecommunication capacity,
- acquiring IT equipment giving access to the Internet and other online databases,
- acquiring userfriendly software for the library catalogue database, making it possible to connect this to the network,
- leasing additional office space (the next door apartment) in order to make space for the library, seminar room, study room and an office for researchers,
- acquiring bookshelves for the library and furniture for the study room.

Perhaps most important, Muwatin now has a library of more than 3.000 titles (half of these in Arabic, the rest mostly English) focused on Muwatin's areas of research interest. According to Muwatin's management, this collection, which will increase substantially in 1999, is unique in the West Bank. Thus, it is becoming an asset in itself, however, combined with the library database, this is also a powerful research tool, not only for Muwatin, but for the academic community in general on the West Bank.

As will be elaborated below, Muwatin's publication program consists of five series, each with a separate profile and targeted in terms of audience. In addition, Muwatin publishes the bimonthly newsletter *Parliamentary Horizons*, which targets the Palestine Legislative Council. This, combined with Muwatin's conferences, seminars and activities in the Palestine NGO Network (cf. 4.4) are indicators of institutional capacity. However, this is also a result of Muwatin's managerial efficiency and dedication (i.e. the human capital aspect). Thus, in terms of institutional research capacity, this is satisfactory and should have a potential of providing a higher level of activities if funding is made available.

5.2 Scientific, economic and social significance of Muwatin's activities

As explained earlier (cf. 4.4), there is evidence which reflect favourably on Muwatin's ability to create impacts, even if these are difficult to measure exactly. However, in terms of Muwatin's significance, this aspect should be analyzed in a broader, more long-term perspective, taking into consideration Muwatin's aim and objective, and present potential.

In a broad, long-term perspective, the type of advocacy Muwatin undertakes for promotion of democracy and civil society is significant for Palestine's future prospects as a society. Particularly, this is important for creating a favourable climate for internal, domestic peace and economic prosperity. As national economic systems are increasingly becoming part of a globalized, post-industrial system, a nation's ability to attract investments and talent, and to develop its own resources, will depend on the quality of its social and political system. Of course, Palestine's future will depend on how the Israeli-Palestine relationship will evolve. However, Palestine's strength and cohesion will undoubtedly increase if the transition to democracy and creation of a Palestine civil society materializes.

In this perspective, Muwatin's activities are important, even if the transformation to a democratic, civil society is a complex and slow process involving a large number of individuals and organizations - in which Muwatin's contribution will be one of many. However, for the Palestine to have an independent research institute such as Muwatin, with a high level of academic quality and integrity being able to contribute with its research results to the public debates and political processes, is significant.

5.3 Communication of research results to relevant target groups

In the CMI-Muwatin cooperation, there one may distinguish five categories of recipients of the research results:

- the funding organization, the MFA, and the political authorities in Norway,
- the academic community, both national and international, doing policy-related research on the Middle East,
- the international community of policy makers, policy analysts and opinion leaders,
- the Palestine public, political and cultural movements, such as the NGOs,
- the Palestine political system.

In the division of labour between CMI and Muwatin, the first category (MFA and Norwegian political authorities) is mainly taken care of by CMI through its normal channels of communication and interaction, as described earlier, cf 2.3.²⁶ For numerous obvious reasons, the last two categories are taken care of by Muwatin, which will be elaborated below, because this has great importance. In the second category, the academic community, communication of results is formally undertaken by presenting papers at conferences, publishing articles in research journal, books, etc, usually in English. However, personal communication in academic networks is also important. The seminars, conferences and exchange visits of researchers undertaken in the CMI-Muwatin cooperation has promoted this. One tool for measuring the significance of science-related activities is bibliometric. However, in the review, undertaking a bibliometric analysis was considered inaccurate because a large part of the publications from Muwatin are in Arabic, thus not accessible for this type of analysis. However, some publications, notably the book *After Oslo - New Realities, New Problems*, edited by G Giacaman and D J Lønning (Pluto Press, 1998) has been successful.

The third category of recipients, the international community of policy makers, policy analysts and opinion leaders, has a large overlap with the second category. However, this category is important due to the international involvement in the Palestine «question». However, to measure communication of CMI-Muwatin results to this group is demanding and has not been attempted. Still, there is reason to believe that the results of the CMI-Muwatin cooperation have been communicated to this category of recipients, mainly due to the conferences and seminars held at Muwatin. Muwatin's success in attracting famous intellectuals and scholars (Noam Chomsky, Jacques Derrida, etc) supports this.

The main thrust of communication has been directed to the Palestine, in order to target the fourth and fifth category of recipients. As indicated earlier, Muwatin has a comprehensive communication strategy, using a broad range of media for this purpose. The core in this is the publication program, which consist of five series (mostly in Arabic) of publications, each designed for targeted audiences and/or types of content:

²⁶ In the *CMI - An Evaluation*, p. 61, it is stated that «...there is some room for improvement, especially regarding dissemination of information and contacts». It has not been possible to confirm if this comment also applies to the CMI-Muwatin cooperation.

- *Research and Studies* - series, publishes research reports at a theoretical, academic level. By early 1999, there were nine titles in this series, of which four are on university curricula.²⁷
- *Occasional papers* - series, similar in type to the first, but shorter papers addressing specific, limited issues. As of early 1999: Two titles.
- *Critical intervention* - series, publishes papers presented at Muwatin's seminars on topics relevant for the ongoing public debates on democracy. Six titles by early 1999 - four of these are university curricula.
- *Foundations of Democracy* - series publishes «readers» aimed at university students and the educated public. By early 1999, seven titles have been published, four more are scheduled - three of the titles are university curricula.
- *Elements of Democracy* - series publishes booklets aimed at secondary school students. Twelve titles have been published so far; one title is used in university curricula.

In addition to these, Muwatin publishes the bimonthly newsletter *Parliamentary Horizons*, as explained earlier. The *Parliamentary Horizons* (usually 8 pages, A4 format) is printed in 600 copies and distributed to the members of the Palestine Legislative Council and their staff, political parties, etc. The newsletter carries brief and focused articles on current political issues in the Palestine Legislative Council. Muwatin considers this to be an important, efficient input to political processes. For this reason Muwatin gives the newsletter priority.

Taking into account Muwatin's size, resources and comparatively short life - the volume and variety is truly impressive. As stated earlier, the fact that twelve titles are university curricula is an indicator of quality and relevance - and this reflects favourably on Muwatin.

As described earlier, Muwatin arranges a large conference each year in October and numerous seminars and symposia throughout the year. The attendance and media attention given to these indicate dissemination to the Palestine public discourse, which undoubtedly is to Muwatin's advantage in terms of achieving efficient communication of its advocacy. As with the publication program, these activities also reflect favourably on Muwatin, and by this, also on the CMI-Muwatin cooperation.

²⁷ G Giacaman and D J Lønning's book *After Oslo - New Realities, Old Problems*, (in English) is in this series.

5.4 Assessment of impacts

Taking all the aspects analyzed in this chapter into consideration, one may claim that the CMI-Muwatin cooperation has been successful in terms of creating impacts. In large parts, this reflects favourably on Muwatin, however, Muwatin has also received the largest amount of resources and has a special role in the division of labour between CMI and Muwatin. In reaching this conclusion, the analysis has focused on Muwatin's institutional research capacity, which is now satisfactory and should have a potential of supporting a higher level of activity, provided funding for these. In terms of Muwatin's significance, Muwatin undoubtedly is an asset in the advocacy for a Palestinian process towards democracy and civil society. Even if Muwatin is only one of many actors with this type of advocacy in the Palestine, Muwatin's role in this is important because of its independence and because of its abilities and achievements in communication of research results to relevant target groups.

6 Sustainability and future prospects

6.1 Renewal of the CMI-Muwatin cooperation agreement for 1998-2000

In July 1997²⁸, CMI sent an application to MFA, with a proposal for renewing the CMI-Muwatin cooperation agreement for another three years period (being 1997, this explains the 1998-2000 period). In the proposal, eight themes were presented, with brief descriptions:

- the new rôle of political parties
- the rôle of mass based movements
- the rôle of NGOs
- the Palestine Legislative Council
- the political and business elites
- political culture
- religion and democracy
- external political influence

According to the proposal, these themes would constitute the focus of specific projects "... in the form of research, or in the form of conferences, symposia, workshops .."²⁹. In addition, the application asked for funding for purchase of books to Muwatin's library, with the goal of increasing its size to 10.000 titles. It also asked for funding for Muwatin to "... continue infrastructural development including personnel training with the assistance of CMI.»³⁰ In the proposal, it is claimed that the goals is to "... solidify Muwatin's position"³¹, and that the proposed cooperative agreement with CMI is "...essential for the achievement of those aims, .."³². In an adjoining memorandum, *CMI's role*, CMI claims that during the first CMI-Muwatin cooperation period (1995-1997), it has become "one of the most vibrant environment

²⁸ Cf. Letter of 3 July 1997, from CMI to MFA.

²⁹ Cf. Letter of 3 July 1997, p. 13.

³⁰ Cf. Letter of 3 July 1997, p. 15.

³¹ Cf. Letter of 3 July 1997, p. 10.

³² Cf. Letter of 3 July 1997, p. 11.

for such [i.e. Middle East] research in Norway..".³³ In the proposed renewal of the agreement for 1998-2000, CMI makes offers in three areas:

- *Institutional "twinning"*, which apparently means a mixture of managerial aid and training from CMI to Muwatin, combined with availability of CMI's academic research staff to Muwatin.
- *CMI as a resource centre on the Middle East*, together with TAPRI, which apparently means to strengthen CMI's own expertise, in order to create a capability for the «rapidly growing market for evaluations and consultancies in the Palestine area», and in order to become «academic watch-dogs».³⁴
- *Transitions to democracy: CMI's contribution*, in which the idea is that CMI will undertake "separate projects with a thematic link to Muwatin's research"³⁵ - at disaggregated levels. Within this framework, CMI wants to undertake research in two areas:
 - *Identities, oppression and political cultures in the Palestine*,
 - *NGOS, mass based movements and collective identities*.
- Finally, CMI wants to undertake comparative studies, together with a Tunisian research institutes and TAPRI.

The proposals ask for an annual funding of NOK 1.225.250 to Muwatin and NOK 690.000 to CMI, which amounts to NOK 1.915.250 a year, and NOK 5.745.750 for a three years period. The ratio Muwatin/CMI is 64/36, i.e. in the same range as that of the 1995-97 cooperative agreement.

In analyzing these proposals for a renewal of the CMI-Muwatin cooperative agreement, it seems relevant to focus on the sustainability of the CMI-Muwatin cooperation - and its future prospects. As elaborated earlier (cf. 2.2), a research focus on the Middle East and its transitions to democracy clearly has priority on the national research agenda, thus being easy to justify on a general level. However, for the funding organization, the MFA, who may have many options for achieving this overall goal, the question of the sustainability and future prospects of the CMI - Muwatin cooperation is a relevant, primary consideration.

³³ Cf. Letter of 3 July 1997, p. 17

³⁴ Cf. Letter of 3 July 1997, p. 21

³⁵ Cf. Letter of 3 July 1997, p. 22

6.2 Significant factors for improving research capacity at Muwatin in the projects

Muwatin's institutional research capacity is, as explained earlier (cf. 5.1), satisfactory and should have a potential of supporting a higher level of activities, provided funding for these. Thus funding, and stability (predictability) of funding, will be fundamental for improving Muwatin's research capacity. As shown in chapter 3.2, Muwatin's portfolio policy is to support numerous, short-term research projects. This was considered optimal, however, some concern was expressed because Muwatin does not support long-term, resource demanding research. However, this question is complex, involving a broad range of considerations related to research strategy, availability of necessary talent (human capital), portfolio considerations, cooperation with other institutes, etc. Muwatin's management is aware of these factors. If funds are available, they want to allocate these to doctoral and/or post-doctoral scholarships, which may be one way of securing research requiring long term commitment. Another strategy is to enter into various forms of research cooperation, based on the CMI-Muwatin cooperation-model.

6.3 Cost-effectiveness of the projects

In assessing cost-effectiveness of research, it is fertile to distinguish between to different categories of outputs from research:

- *the "deliverables" from the research*, i.e. reports, publications, conferences, investments in infrastructure, library, etc, work undertaken in projects, collection of research material, proportion of overhead costs to project costs, etc.,
- *impacts of the research* in terms of achieving the aim/objective, i.e. contribution to transition to democracy and development of a Palestinian civil society.

Whereas the first category (deliverables) may, with some difficulties and uncertainties, be subject to metrics, the second category is extremely difficult to measure even in technological R&D. In the review, no attempts were made to measure exactly the cost effectiveness of the projects, as this was beyond the resources available to the review. However, considering the total budget (the inputs) of the CMI-Muwatin cooperation (cf. table 2.1) and taking into consideration that Muwatin's share of this constitutes a considerable share of its total budget, the output ("deliverables"), as shown in chapters 3 and 5, is satisfactory, especially for Muwatin. This judgement is based on a general comparison of cost-effectiveness of research in Europe, both in technology and non-technology research.

The second category of outputs, cost-effectiveness related to impacts, is extremely difficult to measure for many reasons, of which the temporal aspect is most difficult. However, the likelihood of creating these types of outputs are minimal if the first category of output (deliverables) are absent, or inefficient. As Muwatin's performance in terms of deliverables is satisfactory, one may at least claim that Muwatin's potential for creating the desired impacts are present. This is supported by Muwatin's broad range of activities in advocacy of democracy and civil society which so far has had a positive impact. Thus it seems reasonable to assume cost-effectiveness in terms of impacts, even if this, as all ex-ante assumption in research, are subject to risks and uncertainties.

6.4 Sustainability in terms of institutional and research capacity

As funding has been analyzed earlier (cf. 6.2 above), the analysis below will focus on non-economic aspects related to research capacity.

6.4.1 Procedures ensuring availability of local inputs in order to maintain research capacity

Muwatin's portfolio policy of inviting research proposals on a competitive basis has many advantages. For this reason, it was considered optimal. For numerous reasons, in a long-term perspective, Muwatin should develop a policy to secure continuity for research that is resource demanding. Muwatin's management is aware of this and the limits of its present portfolio policy, which has some aspects of "cream skimming". One approach suggested by Muwatin is to develop a database with information on talented people with relevant academic qualifications, especially Palestinians living abroad due to the diaspora. Muwatin should be encouraged to develop this idea and a strategy for how to utilize the database if this materializes³⁶. As Palestine universities establish social science Ph. D programs, Muwatin should secure a rôle in this. This could also attract Ph. D students from other countries in the Middle East, which would facilitate intra-regional research cooperation.

Muwatin's management wants to establish a research network with other research institutes in the region. This type of cooperation has many merits in terms of research

³⁶ According to Muwatin, in the comments to NIFU's final draft of 2 March 1999, this project has been adopted by APPRI – Association of Palestine Policy Research Institutes (of which Muwatin is a founding member), because this type of database building was considered to be an appropriate task for APPRI.

potentials, however, it may also be instrumental in attracting local talent (human capital), if Muwatin is able to secure a central node in this network.

6.4.2 "Critical mass" in terms of manpower and sustainability

The metaphor of "critical mass" in research organization is based on notion that an organization should consist of a minimum number of researchers, homogeneity of research interests and area of work. According to this thinking, if the internal diversity is too large and/or the number of people working in an area is too small, then this may constitute a research climate that is unattractive and inefficient. Researcher often prefer to work at institutes where there are many others with similar background in disciplines, similar research interests, etc. - this also for social reasons. In this kind perspective, it is obvious that Muwatin, with its explicit aim and objective will attract researchers who are interested in the research themes of the institute. In terms of research disciplines, Muwatin is cross-disciplinary, recruiting researchers with various social science and liberal arts backgrounds. For Muwatin, this variety is advantageous, because it increases the institutes capability of addressing research themes from a multitude of approaches. The question of size, however, is more elusive. In its present portfolio policy, Muwatin funds 11 projects. Compared to earlier years, this increase is obviously advantageous, not only for Muwatin, but also for the researchers, who now constitute a "community". Thus, Muwatin should attempt to keep its research staff at this level, as a minimum. However, it should also be careful in terms of expansion, because at some point the institute may become too large. The transition from a small, flexible, dedicated organization to a bureaucratic R&D machine is often innocuous.

6.4.3 Capability to maintain an research infrastructure

Today, Muwatin appears to be self-reliant in maintaining and developing its research infrastructure. There is good reason to believe that they will be perfectly capable of doing this in the future, given funding, because Muwatin possesses the necessary talent and dedication for this.

6.5 Assessment of sustainability and factors critical for future prospects

The most critical factor for Muwatin's future prospects is securing the kind of funding that will enable the institute to continue its role of being an independent research institute with its advocacy of democracy and civil society. At present, Muwatin has a portfolio policy of supporting numerous short-term research projects that are closely

linked to Muwatin's other activities. This was considered optimal for the present situation. In terms of cost-effectiveness, this also was considered satisfactory, mainly because the output from Muwatin ("deliverables") in relation to the financial inputs, indicate a good performance. Muwatin's future prospects as a research institute are not only in terms of funding. Muwatin should put some effort into finding ways and means to attract and nurture new, young research talent. For this reason Muwatin should develop its ideas of creating a "talent database" and networking with other research institutes in the region. As a "critical mass" consideration, Muwatin should attempt to maintain its portfolio at its present level - and to maintain its cross-disciplinary profile. Expansion of Muwatin's size may be desirable, however, this should be undertaken with care and patience. In terms of research infrastructure capacity, Muwatin's present capacity should be able to support increased research activities, provided funding is available for these.

CMI's role in the renewal of the CMI-Muwatin cooperation should be adjusted and more focused. Considering Muwatin's institutional capacity and capabilities, it is difficult to understand the need of continued assistance and training, as the idea of "institutional twinning" apparently implies. Although a continued cooperation with Muwatin undoubtedly may contribute to CMI's ambition of becoming a "resource centre on the Middle East" (which is compatible with Norway's research priorities), CMI should be encouraged to develop this ambition in a more specific plan. This plan should also include measures to increase CMI's Arabic language capability, which would in itself become an asset of CMI.

In terms of CMI's contribution to "Transitions to democracy" by means of separate research projects which CMI claim have thematic links to Muwatin, the two project proposals presented may represent potentially promising quality research. However, as these aspects and other relevant aspects in research are not made transparent in the proposal, it seem reasonable, either to ask CMI for a more specific plan - or taking into consideration that these proposals were written nearly two years ago - ask for new plans (not only thematic ideas) that are more up to date with Muwatin's present situation and plans for the next years. These plans should also specify CMI's interface with Muwatin's action oriented research profile. However, as the autonomy between CMI and Muwatin will be maintained, a decision to continue funding the CMI-Muwatin cooperation could be done by considering the two institutes as separate, subject to two different sets of decision making time tables.

7 Conclusion

7.1 Summary of assessment

In this review, numerous aspects of the CMI-Muwatin cooperation has been analyzed and assessed, of which the following points are salient, and thus may serve as a summary:

- The most fundament premise for the CMI-Muwatin cooperation is Muwatin's explicit sense of mission in its advocacy of creating a civil society in the Palestine based on democracy. In terms of research design aimed at implementation of the research strategy based on this aim/objective, the CMI-Muwatin cooperation may be considered adequate and satisfactory.
- The CMI-Muwatin cooperation is clearly compatible with national research priorities.
- The role of users in the CMI-Muwatin cooperation is complex because large and heterogeneous groups, individuals and organizations/institutions are involved, both in Norway and in the Palestine. However, the autonomy granted by MFA, combined with the aim/objective of the CMI-Muwatin cooperation has been beneficial for the outcome, in particular for Muwatin's relationship to its users. This, in turn, has increased the prospects of attaining the aim/objective of the research strategy.
- Generally, one may characterize the operational aspects of the CMI-Muwatin cooperation as being coherent, well managed and optimally adapted to the resources available. Both institutes are on par in terms of academic qualifications. CMI and Muwatin have autonomy and both organizations are comparatively small and flexible.
- The climate of cooperation between CMI and Muwatin is characterized as positive. A considerable part of CMI's resources in the cooperation was allocated to the Pd.D.-work of one CMI-researcher, however, parts of this work was undertaken in the Palestine and Israel - and at Muwatin.
- Muwatin's gradual shift of research portfolio policy towards funding an increasing number of short-term research projects may be considered optimal in terms of

Muwatin's available resources, overall strategy and aim/objective. In terms of project management, Muwatin's system is simple and adequate for the type of research undertaken at Muwatin. The delays in the 1998 projects may be reasonably explained by funding problems in 1998, i.e. factors outside Muwatin's control.

- In terms of relevance, there is a complementarity between the aim and objective of the CMI-Muwatin cooperation and the process of democratic transformation which is now taking place in the Palestine. A salient feature in Muwatin's profile is a conviction and commitment to the advocacy of democracy and the creation of a Palestine civil society.
- Muwatin has a human capital of good academic quality and integrity, supporting its image of being an independent institute. Muwatin's active role in the Palestine NGO Network is also an asset for its advocacy.
- There is evidence which reflect favourably on Muwatin's performance and influence. Furthermore, the impacts of Muwatin's work is the result of the institute's own efforts, as the relationship to CMI is characterized by autonomy. Thus, the partnership with CMI may be characterized as balanced and fair, as a symbiosis which is mutually beneficial.
- The CMI-Muwatin cooperation has been successful in terms of creating impacts. In large parts, this reflects favourably on Muwatin, however, this also reflects Muwatin's role in the division of labour between CMI and Muwatin.
- Muwatin's institutional research capacity is now satisfactory and should have a potential of supporting a higher level of activity, provided funding for these.
- In terms of Muwatin's significance, Muwatin undoubtedly is an asset in the advocacy for a Palestinian process towards democracy and civil society.

The review has also analyzed sustainability and factors critical for future prospects. In this, the following considerations were made:

- The most critical factor for Muwatin's future prospects is securing the kind of funding that will enable the institute to continue its role of being an independent research institute with its advocacy of democracy and civil society.

- At present, Muwatin has a portfolio policy of supporting numerous short-term research projects that are closely linked to Muwatin's other activities. This was considered optimal for the present situation. In terms of cost-effectiveness, this also was considered satisfactory, mainly because the output from Muwatin ("deliverables") in relation to the financial inputs, indicate a good performance.
- Muwatin's future prospects as a research institute are also related to human capital issues. Muwatin should put some effort into finding ways and means to attract and nurture new, young research talent. For this reason Muwatin should develop its ideas of creating a "talent database" and networking with other research institutes in the region.
- As a "critical mass" consideration, Muwatin should attempt to maintain the portfolio at its present level - and to maintain its cross-disciplinary profile.
- CMI's role in the renewal of the CMI-Muwatin cooperation should be adjusted and more focused. Considering Muwatin's institutional capacity and capabilities, it is difficult to understand the need of continued assistance and training, as the idea of "institutional twinning" apparently implies.
- CMI should be encouraged to develop a more specific plan³⁷. This plan should also include measures to increase CMI's Arabic language capability, which would in itself become an asset of CMI in its ambitions of becoming a resource centre on Middle East research.
- In terms of CMI's contribution to "Transitions to democracy", CMI should also make more specific plans for this and the interface with Muwatin's action oriented research profile. However, as the autonomy between CMI and Muwatin will be maintained, a decision to continue funding the CMI-Muwatin cooperation could be done by considering the two institutes as separate, subject to two different sets of decision making time tables.

³⁷ According to comments made by CMI (cf. letter dated 20 April 1999), on NIFU's 2 March 1999 final draft, CMI had made specific plans, with a special research focus on corruption and democratization issues - and higher priority to building a knowledge base on Middle East and skills in Arabic language. On 9 April 1999, CMI and Muwatin hosted a conference in Ramallah on corruption, attracting 70 participants.

7.2 Recommendations

Because the focus of this review has been limited, no comparison was made with other institutes that operate in similar fields or modes as the CMI-Muwatin cooperation (apart for the TAPRI-case). In reading the recommendations below, this limitation should be kept in mind.

7.2.1 General

The CMI-Muwatin cooperation may be considered as an efficient/adequate mechanism for MFA's initial goals with institutional support and competence building, promoting development of democracy and a civil society in the Palestine. However, Muwatin should now be considered capable of taking an independent role in this work, if such policy goals are still present. Simultaneously, there is a need in Norway for building and maintaining knowledge of - and networks in - the Middle East, as evident in national research strategies. Both factors justify a renewal of the CMI-Muwatin cooperation.

7.2.2 Adjustment of scope and priorities

In the assessment, some attention was given to Muwatin's long-term research strategy. Muwatin should be encouraged to develop plans for this, and if necessary, to take initiatives for cooperation with other research institutes in the Middle East.

CMI - on the other hand - should focus on developing more specific plans for its future research in areas relevant for the CMI-Muwatin cooperation, as explained earlier. Increasing CMI's Arabic language capability should be considered in this.

The funding asked for in the renewal of the CMI-Muwatin cooperation seems reasonable and should provide means for the activities in the plan. However, Muwatin should be encouraged to search for new sources of funding for its long-term research, as this is vulnerable and should have a longer perspective than the period of a renewal of the CMI-Muwatin cooperation.

Appendix 1: Terms of reference for the review

Appendix 2: Sources of information used in the review

Documents from the Royal Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs:

Agreement between the Royal Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Christian Michelsen Institute regarding research cooperation with Muwatin Palestine Institute for the Study of Democracy, dated 11 December 1995.

MFA internal memorandum on the CMI-Muwatin cooperation, dated 8 June 1998

Documents from CMI:

Letter of 15 April 1994 to MFA, with application for funding on R&D regarding Israel/Palestine

Agreement on cooperation between Christian Michelsen Institute (CMI) and Muwatin Palestine Institute for the Study of Democracy. (n.d. - probably September 1995)

Evaluering av sentrale palestinske forskningsinstitusjonar innanfor instituttsektoren i Jerusalem og på Vestbredden, n.d. (possibly December 1994) - report by D J Lønning

Work Plan 1995-1996 as part of the CMI-Muwatin institutional cooperation

CMI-Muwatin cooperation: Annual report 1996

Letter to MFA of 11 March 1998, with the annual report of 1997 and the memorandum *CMI-Muwatin cooperation 1998-2000*.

Letter to MFA of 3 July 1997 enclosing the memorandum *CMI-Muwatin cooperation 1998-2000*.

Letter to MFA of 3 February 1998, enclosing a copy of the research proposal «Transitions to Democracy by Muwatin & CMI & TAPRI»

Status report of 12 January 1999 regarding the Muwatin project

Documents from Muwatin:

Memorandum with title *Muwatin The Palestinian Institute for the Study of Democracy*, (n.d.), handed over to the review 8 February 1999.

List of publications, (n.d.), handed over to the review 8 February 1999.

Work Plan: 1995-1996

Muwatin Annual Report 1997

Muwatin Annual Report 1998

Muwatin Research Grants for 1999

Report on Cooperation Project Between Bunstift e. V. and Muwatin-PISD 1992-93

Statement of purpose and Summary of Proposed Activities and Projects of the Core Program 1994-95 (one document)

Fax sent to CMI, 20 November 1994, with proposals for four projects

Other documents:

Memorandum issued by the Palestine NGO Network, 29 April 1998

Published material:

The Research Council of Norway, *Research for the Future - Strategy for Norwegian research and the Research Council of Norway towards year 2000* (title translated from Norwegian: *Forskning for framtiden - Strategier for norsk forskning og for Norges forskningsråd fram mot år 2000*), Oslo, 1996.

[Ministry of Foreign Affairs], *Budget proposal for 1999*, (St. prp. nr. 1 (1998-99) - Utenriksdepartementet).

The Research Council of Norway, *Christian Michelsen Institute - An Evaluation*, Oslo, January 1998.

G. Giacaman, *The role of Palestinian NGO's in the Development of Palestine Civil Society*, paper presented 25 March 1995

G Giacaman and D J Lønning (eds.), *After Oslo - New Realities, Old Problems*, London, Pluto Press, 1998.

D. J. Lønning, *Bridge over troubled water - Inter-ethnic dialogue in Israel-Palestine*, Bergen, Norse Publications, 1995.

Christian Michelsen Institute, *Annual report 1997*, Bergen 1998.

D. J. Lønning, «Created by the Enemy: Enemy Images as Nation Builders in Israel», copy of a chapter in a book (title not given).

Perspectives on the PNGO Network - Newsletter, quarterly editions, 1997-98.

Documents of the Palestinian Non-Governmental Organizatin Network, 2nd edition, Ramallah, February 1998.

Palestine NGO Network, *Bi-annual report 1995-96*, December 1997

Appendix 3: Itinerary and list of informants

The review was undertaken in January and February 1999.

In this work, visits were made:

21 January 1999 to CMI in Bergen,

8-15 February to Jerusalem and Ramallah, in order to visit Muwatin and other organizations there, and in order to collect and analyze data relevant for the review.

At CMI, the following were consulted and interviewed:

- Gunnar Sørebo, director of research
- Dag J Lønning, research scientist
- Inge Amundsen, research scientist
- Steinar Hegre, head of administration
- Kirsti Hagen Andersen, chief librarian

At Muwatin, the following were consulted and interviewed, some at numerous occasions:

- May Jayyusi, executive director
- George Giacaman, general director and member of Muwatin's board of trustees
- Azmi Bishara, chairman of Muwatin's board of trustees,
- Raja Bahlul, research scientist
- Mudar Qassis, research scientist

In addition, a visit was made to the Palestine NGO Network secretariate of the West Bank in Ramallah, and interviews were made with:

- Izzat Abdul-Hadi, executive director of Bisan
- Rana Bishara, coordinator of the Palestine NGO Network.

In addition to these, consultations have been made with Tom Hustad of the MFA.