

ANNEX 2

EU conflict sensitivity resource pack

This Resource Pack aims to serve as a tool kit for Delegation and Headquarter staff, primarily from DG DEVCO, FPI, DG NEAR, DG ECHO and EEAS (including those engaging in CSDP missions). Others such as DG Trade may also find it useful, alongside new resources on conflict sensitivity being developed by the European Investment Bank (forthcoming).

The Resource Pack does not provide detailed guidance for every EU institution, every type of intervention, or all cross-cutting issues. The Pack lays out key questions that staff can ask themselves (or discuss with colleagues and partners) in relation to specific programming areas and implementation modalities. It is not a checklist: staff are not required to find answers to each question in order to progress with an intervention. Instead, the questions are intended to encourage staff to consider the potential impacts of their presence and work on conflict dynamics in any given context, and to take actions to ensure these impacts are positive.

Conflict-sensitivity considerations need to influence **what** is prioritised as well as **how** interventions are undertaken, based on the conflict analysis and strategic focus of the interventions.

The Agenda for Change proposes 11 priority areas for EU intervention, although the EU works in many more. These thematic areas are grouped together below and specific guidance is provided for each, as follows:

- a brief description of how each area links to conflict dynamics;
- some guiding questions for conflict-sensitive engagement; and reference to relevant thematic conflict sensitivity resources, where these exist. Gender is also covered in this section although it is a cross-cutting issue as well as a specific area of intervention.

Module 1: Democracy, human rights, the rule of law and security sector reform

Political systems can be drivers of conflict if the government is perceived as illegitimate because it is unaccountable or it only represents the interests of one part of the population. The way elections are conducted and how parliaments and political parties function can also determine whether a political system fuels conflict or helps resolve conflict constructively. The problem can be further compounded if there is weak access to justice — or the perception that this is the case — and security forces that are not responsive to the population but protect a specific group's interests. If not well designed, support to security sector reform or the rule of law can also lead to an increase in abuses, e.g. the police could be trained to be more effective at handling weapons and then use this skill to commit violence against political opponents; repressive tendencies may be reinforced with perceived legitimacy and 'approval' provided by international partnership; and championing one part of the security sector may stimulate violent competition with other units.

If designed and implemented effectively, supporting democratisation, human rights protection, the rule of law and security sector reform can all be powerful responses to address conflict causes. However, all such interventions will necessarily challenge the status quo, thereby threatening the interests of particular groups while trying to ensure others gain access to services or decision-making they were previously excluded from. Interventions may also lead to a change in the distribution of power among different groups in the country and possibly between different individual leaders, which in turn could lead to conflict or even violence. Being conflict sensitive does not mean allowing injustice or inequality to persist out of fear that it may cause confrontation between those who are monopolising power and those who are excluded from it. Instead, being conflict sensitive means that when challenging an unjust status quo (which itself can cause conflict), care is taken to support non-violent processes, protect beneficiaries from violence while supporting them in the change process and for those most at risk of violence to dictate the pace of change. The interventions also need to be part of a package that ensures civilian oversight and accountability, especially of security services, to limit the potential for violence and abuse.

Guiding questions for conflict-sensitive intervention

1. Is the government considered legitimate by all sections of the population? Do people trust the justice system and security providers? In what ways do problems with the political system and security and justice provision contribute to conflict dynamics in the context? Which of these dynamics will your interventions address?
2. Who are the key stakeholders benefiting from the status quo? Who would lose and who would gain from a change in the status quo? Who of these stakeholders will your interventions engage with — strengthen and weaken? Who are the agents for positive change and how can they be supported?
3. Could any of the planned interventions unintentionally lead to violence against the population or sections of the population? Could they unintentionally uphold an illegitimate government or security forces? Or give legitimacy to unrepresentative civil society groups?
4. What conflict dynamics exist around election processes and what are the implications for the EU's engagement, e.g. through election observation missions?
5. What could you do to help protect those challenging the status quo from violence? Could you use political dialogue in country; alliances with other donors; specific relationships with government agencies or local government; international political processes, bodies or instruments?

Key resources

- Haider, H., [Conflict sensitivity: topic guide](#), GSDRC, University of Birmingham, Birmingham, UK, 2014; Section 3.4
- Collaborative for Development Action, [Human rights and do no harm: guidance note](#), Cambridge, MA, 2013
- Goldwyn, R., [Making the case for conflict sensitivity in security and justice sector reform programming](#), Care International, 2013
- Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development Development Assistance Committee (OECD-DAC), [Handbook on security system reform — supporting security and justice](#), OECD Publishing, Paris, 2008

Module 2: Gender equality and the empowerment of women

Gender is a cross-cutting issue as well as an area of intervention and should be integrated across interventions. Gender identities are at the heart of a society's values and influence attitudes and behaviours of men and women in conflict situations. For example, men are often expected to protect their families, using violence if necessary, while women are expected to support them. A deeper understanding of gender identities is an essential part of conflict analysis.

Conflict and violence also impact differently on men, women, boys and girls. Initiatives to provide medical treatment, counselling and protection are all part of responses in conflict-affected countries. Abuses against men and women could in turn fuel further violence and are therefore also important to address.

Challenging gender norms and empowering women or men, according to the context, can be met with resistance. This does not mean such work should be avoided, but rather that the potential for resistance and risk to partners, beneficiaries or EU staff as a result, should be anticipated and factored into programme planning and design. Conflict-sensitive gender-focused interventions should therefore think through these risks and take steps to mitigate them, and in particular support women's involvement in addressing conflict issues and undertaking peacebuilding.

Guiding questions for conflict-sensitive intervention

1. What impact do gender identities have on the conflict dynamics? Are men and women behaving in certain ways (enlisting, encouraging violence or promoting peace) in part due to their gender identities? How can positive gender identities be supported to address conflict and promote peace?
2. How is conflict and violence impacting men, women, boys and girls? What support is available to prevent violence and to assist survivors?
3. Who will feel threatened and who will be empowered by your interventions? How can you adapt your interventions to help those who feel threatened to participate in and gain from your interventions? For instance, could a programme to empower women economically also involve men in their community to get their support?
4. What risks may emerge for beneficiaries, partners and staff as a result of working on gender issues and the empowerment of women? Can you mitigate these risks by for instance engaging with a broader network of partners; asking a respected public figure to champion the initiative; engage with the security sector at the same time?
5. How will you engage with community/religious leaders to support your work?
6. How will seek feedback from women and girls? How will you create an environment safe enough for them to report abuse?

Key resources

- Haider, H., [Conflict sensitivity: topic guide](#), GSDRC, University of Birmingham, Birmingham, UK, 2014; Section 2.4
- Barandun, P., and Joos, Y., [Gender- and conflict-sensitive program management](#), Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation, Bern, 2004

Module 3: Governance, public sector management, local authorities, civil society and accountability

Governance issues can be powerful conflict drivers — not only in countries in crisis, but also in countries seemingly at peace but with underlying divisions. When providing support in this area, the EU therefore needs to understand in what ways the nature of the state and the way it interacts with its citizens can fuel conflict (or resolve conflict non-violently) in the target country. The way resources are allocated across the country and perceptions of whether this is a fair distribution can be a driver of conflict too. Corruption and nepotism can undermine public sector management in ways that foment dissatisfaction of particular groups — especially since patronage networks are often based on affiliations such as ethnicity, religion or provenance from a particular geographical area.

While an active civil society can help address issues of poor governance, it is also crucial to understand how such groups are positioned within society and to whom they are — or appear to be — affiliated. Supporting groups from only one area or identity group can discredit an intervention and aggravate perceptions of bias or exclusion.

Work on public finance systems at national or local level can make a big contribution to better governance in terms of managing public expenditure and delivering services. However, such work is rarely purely about technical assistance and usually happens within a political environment where underlying divisions are at play. Understanding the politics and potential for conflict to erupt around resource management at the national or local level is therefore core to conflict-sensitive public sector management. Conflict-sensitive actions in this area of work need to consider how the interventions may change power relationships between different groups, the conflict potential of challenging these relationships and opportunities for improved state-society relations.

Guiding questions for conflict-sensitive intervention

1. Which groups or individuals will lose and which will gain power, influence or resources as a result of your intervention? How could this influence conflict dynamics or the potential for conflict?
2. What are the positions and influence of central government, local authority actors and civil society actors with regards to conflict drivers? Is there a risk that your intervention may exacerbate negative behaviours by these actors? Or could your intervention support positive — peace-promoting — behaviours by these actors?
3. What is the impact of corruption or lack of government service delivery on public attitudes towards the state or particular groups associated with the state? Could such perceptions lead to conflict or violence?
4. What is the nature of civil society in this context? Are they linked to armed groups, particular elites or broader social change movements? Which groups are potential partners for positive change and which may contribute to conflict and violence?

Key resources

- [Note No 7](#) on engaging with national counterparts in situations of conflict and fragility
- Life & Peace Institute, [Pilfering the peace: The nexus between corruption and peacebuilding](#), *New Routes* Vol. 14: 3–4, 2009
- Gilpin, R., [Beyond economics: subsidy and stability in Sudan](#), USIP International Network for Economics and Conflict, 2013
- Howard, R., [Conflict sensitive journalism, a handbook](#), IMPACS and International Media Support, Denmark, 2004

Module 4: Climate change, natural resources, sustainable agriculture and energy

Natural resources remain core to the political economy and livelihoods systems of most countries. Management of and control over such resources cause conflict from the global to the community level. This includes use of land, water, forests, oil and gas — core to food production and providing energy. Conflicts can result over who has ownership or usage rights for such resources; who controls revenues from such resources; and whose health, livelihoods, culture or traditions are threatened by specific uses of such resources and the environmental degradation and pollution that may accompany these. Climate change is likely to impact negatively on many of these conflicts by making certain resources scarcer or too abundant (floods); changing the patterns of resource access, e.g. seasonal rain changes, or the nature of a habitat; and causing certain animal or plant species to come under threat.

Work in this area can therefore be important in terms of sustainable development, and to promote sustainable livelihoods, poverty reduction and resilience. But a conflict-sensitive approach is necessary to ensure interventions do not inadvertently aggravate resource competition at different levels but instead promote cooperative and transparent natural resource governance. This equally applies to interventions requiring use of natural resources, such as infrastructure development programmes.

Guiding questions for conflict-sensitive intervention

1. What are potential and actual tensions around natural resource management, land tenure, production and distribution of energy? How do your interventions take this into account?
2. What are the mechanisms and laws for resource ownership, sharing and use in the area of intervention? How will your intervention impact on these mechanisms?
3. Who makes decisions on natural resource use and management? Whose interests do they take into account in making these decisions? Who is excluded by such decisions and consultations and how are they likely to react?
4. What other areas of intervention (e.g. support to agri-business, infrastructure or industries) will require the use of natural resources? How will this affect pressures on local communities and any conflicts or competition related to natural resource use? Who will be displaced by the intervention and what impact will this have on their socio-economic opportunities and relationships with other groups?

Key resources

- Haider, H., [Conflict sensitivity: topic guide](#), GSDRC, University of Birmingham, Birmingham, UK, 2014; Sections 3.6 and 3.9
- Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, [Voluntary guidelines on the responsible governance of tenure of land, fisheries and forest in the context of national food security](#), Rome, 2012
- [Environmental peacebuilding: toolkits and guidance](#), collaborative initiative of Environmental Law Institute, United Nations Environment Programme, McGill University and University of Tokyo
- Goddard, N., and Lempke, M., [Do no harm in land tenure and property rights — designing and implementing conflict sensitive land programs](#), CDA, Cambridge, MA, 2013
- Jones, S., and Howarth, S., [Supporting infrastructure development in fragile and conflict-affected states: Learning from experience](#), Oxford Policy Management, Oxford, UK, 2012
- United States Institute of Peace, [Conflict-sensitive approach to infrastructure development](#), Washington, DC, 2008

Module 5: Supporting security-development links, stabilisation and peacebuilding

Development cannot occur without security while security provision is a core government service as well as a pre-requisite for sustainable development. In conflict-affected and crisis countries, it can be very complex to effectively prioritise development- and security-focused interventions, or stabilisation interventions, in support of a transition towards peace and stability. If development programmes are undertaken when instability is still very high, they run the risk of failing. Conversely, if development initiatives are undertaken too late, nothing will change in terms of the underlying structural drivers of instability (e.g. lack of economic development or service provision) and the risk for continued instability remains high. Security, development or stabilisation interventions therefore need to be conflict sensitive by prioritising and sequencing actions in a way that responds to the specific context.

Crisis management responses, stabilisation, peacebuilding and diplomatic interventions — including those undertaken under instruments like the Instrument contributing to Stability and Peace (IcSP) — have as primary objective to address conflict dynamics and promote peace. The way in which these interventions are supported or implemented can, however, still inadvertently undermine peacebuilding objectives. For instance, bringing together conflicting groups in a joint programme when they are not ready to engage with each other could worsen the relationship between them instead of improving it.

Interventions focusing on Countering Violent Extremism (CVE) commonly aim to tackle incentives or grievances causing people to commit or support violence in the name of a particular ideology or belief, or to address underlying sources of vulnerability that provide an environment for extremist groups to become established. Yet some evaluations have shown that CVE programmes can make matters worse by not targeting the right people, or targeting them in a way that aggravates their sense of marginalisation and vulnerability (Khalil and Zeuthen, 2014). Counter-terrorism related interventions will be more effective when they are conflict sensitive.

For all these interventions, it is therefore important to identify and track the specific conflict drivers, and to monitor the intervention impacts so that the overall actions best respond to the specificities of the context. For the EU, this is particularly important when many instruments are used in the same context, e.g. development, humanitarian assistance, FPI, CSDP and other political measures. Care needs to be taken that all the instruments work on the same assumptions of what would promote peace and address conflict drivers in the short-, medium and long term, so that politically-driven, security, economic and development- or humanitarian-focused interventions do not work at cross-purposes.

Guiding questions for conflict-sensitive intervention

1. To what extent are the core functions and resources of the state contested by different groups? How could your interventions help find solutions for peaceful management of state-society relationships? How may your interventions inadvertently contribute to conflict causes or undermine relationships core to stability in the context?
2. Have you thought through how both the content (objectives) and the process (who you engage with, in what way) of your crisis management, crisis response, stabilisation and CVE work could help address conflict drivers? How are you learning lessons about whether your theories of change in this work are correct? How are you redesigning your programmes to reflect such lessons?
3. Are you clear about whether your programme is addressing conflict causes and drivers directly, or whether you have different aims in mind? Are you monitoring whether these actions do indeed have a peacebuilding impact?
4. How is the presence of particularly military actors as part of crisis responses affecting the context and impacting on the population? Are there codes of conduct and accountability mechanisms in place to prevent or investigate abuses?

Key resources

- [Note No 4](#) on promoting resilience in situations of conflict and fragility
- Haider, H., [Conflict sensitivity: topic guide](#), GSDRC, University of Birmingham, Birmingham, UK, 2014; Section 3.3
- Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, [Conflict and fragility. do no harm, international support for statebuilding](#), Paris, 2010
- Goddard, N., [Do no harm and peacebuilding: five lessons](#), CDA, Cambridge, MA, 2009; CDA, [Peacebuilding and do no harm: guidance note](#), Cambridge, MA, 2011
- U.S. Agency for International Development, [Development assistance and counter-extremism: a guide to programming](#), Washington, DC, 2009
- Council of the European Union, [Concept on strengthening EU mediation and dialogue capacities](#), Brussels, 2009

Module 6: Social protection, health, education and jobs

Provision of basic services is seriously undermined in contexts of violence, and more generally in contexts where people do not have equitable access to opportunities. Unequal service delivery can feed into dynamics of exclusion and marginalisation, and thus contribute to the potential for conflict. In contexts of fragility, the needs of populations are often much more than what can be addressed in a few years of external assistance. Decisions about where to focus such assistance may therefore further contribute to some areas of the country or some population groups becoming better off than others.

Conflict-sensitive service provision should avoid reinforcing patterns of exclusion and should seek to base decisions on criteria that can be defended as fair, and communicated clearly to both governments and recipient populations. In areas of protracted crisis, humanitarian actors may also be involved in providing services, and it is important to be clear about who qualifies for which type of assistance (e.g. humanitarian vs development) and the impact of selection on conflict dynamics and relationships¹. Social service provision can also create important opportunities for collaboration if well designed, e.g. communities sharing a school or clinic, thereby learning to work together. Employment initiatives for young people can also be an important contribution from a conflict sensitivity perspective, potentially reducing the risk of young men in particular getting drawn into violence.

Guiding questions for conflict-sensitive intervention

1. To what extent do your priority interventions target areas or sectors from which parts of the population are currently excluded? Are you thinking about the needs of men, women, boys and girls? And of vulnerable groups like disabled people or child-headed households? Would your intervention help address this exclusion and are you able to clearly communicate the basis for your prioritisation? Do your interventions risk being captured by particular groups or actors?
2. How will humanitarian and development actors collaborate in ensuring that those most in need benefit from services provided, while at the same time not reinforcing patterns of exclusion and fuelling conflictual competition and animosity between groups (e.g. between refugees/IDPs and host populations)?
3. What measures do you have in place to ensure that any contracts associated with service provision do not benefit the patronage networks of key government officials, fuel corruption or strengthen the financial power of an oppressive regime?
4. What measures are you taking to ensure that local conflict resolution mechanisms are strengthened as part of the set-up for the sustainable management of services? Are all sections of the community able to participate in these mechanisms, including women?

Key resources

- [Box 1.2.1](#) and [1.2.2](#) in Part I
- Haider, H., [Conflict sensitivity: topic guide](#), GSDRC, University of Birmingham, Birmingham, UK, 2014; Section 3.5
- McCandless, E., [Peace dividends: contributions of administrative and social services to peacebuilding](#), United Nations Peacebuilding Support Office, New York, 2012

⁽²⁾ This was for instance an issue in the 2007 tsunami assistance in Sri Lanka, where some beneficiaries of tsunami-related assistance were living next to communities displaced by Sri Lanka's civil war, but not affected by the tsunami. This strained relationships between communities and fuelled perceptions of the international community making political choices in its assistance.

- Slater, R., Mallett, R., and Carpenter, S., [Social protection and basic services in fragile and conflict-affected situations](#), Secure Livelihoods Research Consortium, London, 2012
- Inter-Agency Network for Education in Emergencies, [INEE conflict sensitive education note](#), New York, 2013
- World Health Organisation, [Health as a bridge for peace](#), Geneva

Module 7: Business environment, regional integration, world markets and infrastructure

Lack of economic opportunity, unemployment and the inequitable distribution of resources have been consistently identified as key issues that can contribute to conflict. A focus on promoting favourable business environments, regional integration and the establishment of world markets that work for the poorest and most marginalised members of society can therefore have significant positive impacts for peace and development. However such interventions can also exacerbate conflict by promoting unbalanced growth and reinforcing patterns of exclusion, e.g. some oil-producing countries have experienced skewed economic growth and elite resource capture. Companies can become co-opted into war economies or political resource networks as a compromise for them to continue doing business. Companies therefore also need to be conflict sensitive in their operations.

The Agenda for Change identifies attracting and retaining private domestic and foreign investment and improving infrastructure as key priorities for EU action. Such investment can help build peace by widening the tax base (allowing the state to become more effective and responsive, and helping to develop a social contract between the state and society), creating jobs and economic opportunities for local people, and improving access to state provision of basic services. However, large-scale investments can also spark or exacerbate conflict in number of ways: by displacing communities to make way for business activities (e.g. a mine) or major infrastructure (such as dams or roads); by reinforcing actual or real patterns of exclusion (e.g. by only employing members of a single ethnic group or supporters of a political party); by companies employing abusive security guards; or by contributing to corruption and undermining governance (e.g. propping up illegitimate regimes and preventing reform).

Conflict-sensitive interventions in business and infrastructure therefore need to carefully assess who will ultimately benefit and in what ways, and how these changes in economic opportunities, access to services or access to natural resources can fuel conflict or strengthen peaceful relationships. Contractors could be required to show due diligence in terms of how they work and their relationships with communities while other implementing partners could be required to report on their conflict impact.

Guiding questions for conflict-sensitive intervention

1. What might be the environmental, social and economic impacts of increased investment/infrastructure development in the area? How will any negative impacts (such as restricted access to land or resources) be managed or compensated for?
2. Which groups are likely to benefit the most? Which groups are likely to benefit the least? What impact might this have on relations between these groups? What impact might this have on relationships between other groups? What impact might this have on how the EU/local and international business is perceived?
3. How much employment is likely to be created? What sorts of jobs will be created (e.g. skilled/unskilled, low/high paid, permanent/temporary etc.)? How much competition is there likely to be for these jobs? Will all groups be able to access these jobs? Are certain groups likely to be excluded from accessing jobs?
4. What anti-corruption measures have been put in place? What steps will you take to ensure that the benefits of increased investment and private sector development are not captured by elite groups and provide benefits to the broader population?
5. How have local people been included in the design and implementation of the projects? How have they been consulted about potential investments? How much influence do they have over the ways in which investment decisions are taken?

6. Are companies engaging with international initiatives such as the UN Global Compact? How do they engage with communities affected by their work? With government officials? With suppliers? Are they measuring their impacts on conflict dynamics and trying to ensure conflict-sensitive operations?

Key resources

- [Note No 9](#) on promoting inclusive and sustainable growth in situations of conflict and fragility
- [Donor Committee for Enterprise Development](#): website provides comprehensive guidance to assess, design, implement, monitor and evaluate private sector development programmes in conflict-affected contexts
- Enhancing conflict sensitivity of EIB operations: a guidance note on conflict-sensitive investment policies, European Investment Bank, forthcoming
- International Alert, [Conflict-sensitive business practice: guidance for extractive industries](#), London, 2007
- UN Global Compact, [Guidance on responsible business in conflict-affected & high-risk areas: a resource for companies & investors](#), New York, 2010
- Voluntary initiatives to promote increased corporate transparency and accountability, and maximise positive social impacts for local communities, e.g. the [Voluntary Principles on Security and Human Rights](#), EITI, UN Global Compact and the [Kimberly Process for the Certification of Diamonds](#)
- Graf, A., and Iff, A., [Conflict-sensitive business: review of instruments and guidelines](#), Swiss Peace Foundation, 2014

Module 8: Diplomatic measures: political dialogue, public diplomacy, sanctions, mediation and diplomatic demarches

The [Thematic Evaluation of EC Support to Conflict Prevention and Peace-building 2001-2010](#) emphasises that political tools and external assistance must complement each other in support of peaceful change. This can include different types of actions to help resolve crises in a non-violent way, like political dialogue, public diplomacy or diplomatic *démarches*, to more coercive measures like sanctions, or through EU-supported mediation to promote a peace agreement. These measures can therefore be direct interventions to resolve conflict or to influence key conflict actors towards non-violent conflict resolution.

Being conflict sensitive in such actions is essential, requiring a solid understanding of the conflict context and the motivations of key actors; a clear theory of change that articulates core assumptions about how the action will impact on conflict and peace dynamics; and a process for monitoring whether these assumptions are correct and learning lessons. For instance, decisions to impose sanctions or support mediation efforts need to be based on an understanding of the 'pressure points' for changing behaviour on the part of certain individuals and how sanctions or mediation efforts may be instrumentalised by conflict actors for their own agendas. It is also important to understand the levels of conflict and where efforts need to be directed, e.g. many conflicts have regional dimensions that cut across several states. Sanctions could also reinforce structural divisions in the country (e.g. by further excluding those who already have limited access to services), thereby potentially exacerbating conflict and instability.

For the EU, such measures could also be undertaken alongside other engagements, for instance by ECHO, DEVCO, FPI or crisis management bodies. Being conflict sensitive also means making sure that these different interventions are based on the same understanding of and positions towards the conflict, so that one does not undermine the other.

Guiding questions for conflict-sensitive intervention

1. What is the theory of change or underlying assumptions for your intervention in terms of how it is intended to resolve conflict and promote peace? Is this based on a conflict analysis, including an actor analysis? Is there a process in place to monitor whether these assumptions are true and to learn lessons for future interventions?
2. How will your *démarches*, mediation support, sanctions or other measures complement the existing work of other EU institutions and vice versa? Is it clear to all involved what the EU's overall position is towards the conflict dynamics? Is it clearly expressed by each instrument in a coherent manner? Are the institutional reporting lines conducive to collaboration?
3. What perceptions may be created of the EU in the country/region by engaging in these actions? What risks may result to EU partners? How could these be mitigated?

Key resources

- Council of the European Union, [Concept on strengthening EU mediation and dialogue capacities](#), Brussels, 2009
- Hellmüller, S., von Burg, C., and Zeller, M., [Can mediation do harm?](#), Swiss Peace Foundation, Bern, 2014
- Conciliation Resources, [Incentives, sanctions and conditionality](#), 2008
- Goodhand, J., [Conditioning peace? The scope and limitations of peace conditionalities in Afghanistan and Sri Lanka](#), Netherlands Institute of International Relations, 2006

Module 9: Conflict sensitivity in funding modalities and aid delivery mechanisms

The EU has a range of funding modalities for channelling funds for external action, including ways of channelling funds to partners, such as governments, civil society, private sector and other international institutions. From a conflict-sensitivity perspective, the selection of funding modalities matters. On the one hand, there is the imperative of ensuring that assistance is well-targeted, timely and flexible. On the other hand, there is also the risk that selecting the wrong funding modality may strengthen certain conflict actors or undermine the EU's objectives. The three main types of aid delivery mechanisms are discussed below and relevant resources provided at the end of the section.

Project/programme funding

The EU provides project- or programme-focused funding to civil society, private sector partners, government at national and sub-national level, and other international institutions (e.g. UN agencies). Each of these could be an actor actively fomenting conflict, or seeking peace. The decision to provide this type of funding has a number of implications from a conflict-sensitivity perspective and should be considered very early on in the design phase in order to build in sufficient time and flexibility into planned actions. The Quality Support Group could also be tasked to review proposed interventions from a conflict sensitivity perspective.

Possible steps for conflict-sensitive project/programme funding include:

- Make sure it is clear where these different funding recipients are positioned in terms of any possible conflict dynamics — remembering that nobody is neutral. The type of people agencies employ, the area where they work, their public reputation and their relationships with key conflict actors will all have an impact on whether they are a conflict-sensitive choice as an EU implementing partner.
- Make sure that these partners are themselves conflict sensitive, based on their proposals, reports and evaluations of their work — if they are not conflict sensitive in how they work, it can undermine the EU's efforts and reputation. Some ways of doing this could include (see also Guidance Note):
 - Ask partners to articulate their theories of change in relation to anticipated conflict and peace impact; and review potential unanticipated impacts
 - Ask partners to assess their own capacity on conflict sensitivity and provide capacity-building support to them if necessary
 - Make use of a 'helpdesk' arrangement to review proposals (EEAS K2 Service Contract can be used for this to some extent; FPI has a service project that can provide support to IcSP projects; donors like DFID and Sida have also at various points had such arrangements in place)
 - Make some discreet enquiries about the organisations and how they are seen or positioned in relation to key conflict issues and actors
 - Ask partners to report on particular indicators relating to the conflict-sensitivity of their work — these could be designed by partners or could be proposed by the EU as part of linking the project/programme to the overall EU strategy indicators.
 - Allow partners to do their own conflict analysis as part of an inception phase
 - Allow necessary flexibility in project/programme planning and budget to adjust to changing context/conflict dynamics

Budget support

As set out in the EU's [Budget Support Guidelines](#) (2012), budget support aims to provide predictable funding through a government's own financial systems, thereby making it easier for medium- or long-term planning, strengthening government systems and increasing government ability to provide services. The EU uses:

- **good governance and development contracts** to provide general budget support to a national development or reform policy and strategy;
- **sector reform contracts** to provide budget support in order to address sector reforms and improve service delivery;
- **state-building contracts** to provide budget support in fragile and transition contexts.

Whereas state-building contracts are specifically designed for fragile and conflict-affected contexts, all forms of budget support should be considered in terms of their conflict sensitivity. The EU Budget Support Guidelines call for careful analysis of the *'risk of conflict and insecurity, including political and social destabilisation, regional tensions and the support of policies and powers that may exacerbate tensions'*. The Political Risk Management Framework for EU Budget Support Operations also highlights issues of insecurity and conflict. The following should be considered when making decisions about budget support, or when monitoring and evaluating the impact of budget support:

- Could the EU give additional legitimacy and be seen to 'side' with the government, thereby reinforcing conflict trends?
- Would it be more difficult for the EU to take action against (e.g. suspend support or impose sanctions) a government for corruption, human rights abuses or other actions contrary to the EU's fundamental values? Especially where such abuses and unaccountable behaviour may fuel conflict and grievances?
- Is there a risk that the fungibility of funds allows the government to divert money to pursue conflict or sustain corrupt or patronage networks to the exclusion of the population at large?
- If budget support is only provided at the national level, is there a risk that neglected peripheries may be further disadvantaged, thereby further fuelling conflict drivers?
- Do state-building contracts include sufficient risk assessments for the possibility that the government may not fulfil its commitments and may instead contribute to conflict? Do they contain sufficient flexibility for the EU to react and adapt programmes in such a scenario?
- Is there a risk that inaction or providing resources too late may lead to conflict or instability because the government is unable to build trust with the population by restoring/initiating services? Or because armed groups are able to mobilise support due to unfulfilled expectations and frustration?

Multi-donor funding mechanisms

The EU often coordinates with other donors in multi-donor funding instruments, like trust funds and joint funding facilities. These provide opportunities for pooling resources, coordinating with other actors, reducing transaction costs and intervening at a scale that the EU may not be able to achieve on its own. Alongside this, the EU has also recently launched the first EU Trust Fund (in Central African Republic), set up as a transition funding instrument to support reconstruction, including government administration, elections and provision of basic services. The fund is open to EU as well as international donors and includes a specific component allocated to a State Building Contract.

From a conflict perspective, multi-donor trust funds and joint funding mechanisms could enable a higher level of coordinated policy dialogue among external donors and with recipient governments in addressing particularly structural conflict issues. Lack of coordination can be very detrimental in a conflict context as resources are spread

too thinly thereby preventing impact on important conflict issues. However, joint funding mechanisms also require more complex management arrangements, making it more difficult for EU staff to maintain close monitoring of the conflict sensitivity impact of the mechanism or to ensure decisions are made to change priorities or partners if found to be conflict-generating.

Key resources

- [Note No 5](#) on identifying and implementing EU modalities and instruments in situations of conflict and fragility; [Note No 6](#) on using flexible procedures in situations of conflict and fragility; [Note No 8](#) on working with international actors in situations of conflict and fragility
- Hauck, V., Galeazzi, G., and Vanheukelom, J., [The EU's state building contracts: courageous assistance to fragile states, but how effective in the end?](#), ECDPM Briefing Note 60, European Centre for Development Policy Management, Maastricht, 2013
- Scanteam, [Flexibility in the face of fragility: programmatic multi-donor trust funds in fragile and conflict-affected states](#), Oslo, 2010
- Conflict Sensitivity Consortium, [Promoting conflict sensitivity amongst donor agencies](#), Policy Brief, 2012

Module 10: Conflict sensitivity in humanitarian assistance

EU-supported humanitarian assistance is guided by the principles of neutrality, impartiality and independence. As such, the active promotion of peacebuilding and conflict prevention falls outside of its mandate, despite the centrality of these objectives to wider EU action. In the context of the Comprehensive Approach therefore, ECHO maintains a position of being 'in-but-out'. ECHO is however committed to integrating conflict sensitivity across its programmes. It recognises that effective humanitarian action must be based on a solid understanding of the multiple vulnerability and risk factors that communities face, including conflict risks. Staff and partners must account for these in the design and implementation of interventions if they are to avoid the risk of exacerbating potential conflict drivers. Failure to do so can undermine or reverse successes, and ultimately could lead to an increase in humanitarian needs. Conflict sensitivity is therefore a critical component of a broader resilience approach.

Integrating conflict sensitivity into humanitarian interventions faces particular challenges as programme time frames tend to be shorter than development programmes. In the case of rapid-onset emergencies, staff and resources may need to be mobilised at very short notice, and often deployed into new and unfamiliar contexts. The extremely dynamic nature of humanitarian emergencies means that programmes need to respond fast to new challenges, which can make considered analysis and broad-based consultation very challenging.

The questions and resources below (see also Guidance Note) are intended to help guide humanitarian staff to integrate conflict sensitivity into each stage in the programme cycle.

Phase 0: Response preparedness phase

It is important to include consideration of how conflict sensitivity will be integrated into response activities in advance of the need to mobilise staff and resources for humanitarian action. During the disaster preparedness phase therefore it is important to ensure that all relevant staff (including EU staff and implementing partners) have the suitable skills and expertise to be able to identify and assess the impact of conflict on programmes as well as the impact programming could have on conflict. Equally, conflict considerations should be built into disaster risk reduction (DRR) strategies, in order to help ensure that communities, partners and EU staff are aware of conflict risk factors and able to act and respond accordingly, with the objective of avoiding the need for humanitarian response.

Guiding questions

1. Have EU or implementing partner staff received training in conflict-sensitive humanitarian response, risk assessment or Do No Harm?
2. Do other EU institutions, Member States or implementing partners regularly conduct conflict analysis in countries prone to humanitarian emergencies? Are ECHO staff able to access these?
3. Do strong links exist between EU humanitarian, development and diplomatic focused staff at HQ level and in-country?
4. Is conflict analysis included in EU emergency preparedness plans? Do DRR strategies, tools and methodologies seek to identify conflict risks, and develop conflict-sensitive mitigation strategies? If not, how could they be included?
5. Are conflict sensitivity questions or considerations built into partner pre-identification processes and the design of needs assessment questionnaires?

Phase 1: Conflict analysis, assessment and identification of priorities

Considering key conflict causes, actors and dynamics can be part of the annual process informing the Humanitarian Implementation Plans and the ongoing monitoring of ECHO regional and country offices. The relationship between disaster risks and conflict risks should also be considered as part of the EU Early Warning System and related

Conflict Prevention Reports. This will enable ECHO field and headquarter services to consider potential impacts of humanitarian interventions in relation to conflict dynamics, and potential risks posed to the interventions. In the case of a humanitarian emergency, it may not be realistic to conduct a full conflict analysis within the initial stages of a humanitarian response, given the need to mobilise staff and resources very rapidly. ECHO services will however often be able to draw upon conflict-related understanding and knowledge from ECHO field experts, EU Delegations, headquarter staff or Member States and international partners such as the UN. This analysis should be sought as an essential first step in responding to an emergency.

Guiding questions

1. What EU institutions and Member States have an established presence in this context? How can you make best use of everybody's in-country knowledge and expertise, including ECHO colleagues who may have experience in the country?
2. Has ECHO articulated a conflict analysis as part of the needs assessment and definition of humanitarian priorities? If not, have other agencies conducted conflict analysis and can ECHO draw on this? In case of limited expertise at field level can you speak to knowledgeable individuals within these missions (ECHO or other staff) to develop a rapid understanding of potential conflict and conflict sensitivity issues?
3. What conflict analyses or other materials can ECHO staff access to help them think through the most effective ways to provide humanitarian assistance and strengthen communities' resilience in this context?

Phase 2: Design of interventions and planning for implementation

The identification and selection of implementing partners should be informed by an awareness of potential conflict issues. For example, Framework Partnership Agreement holders could be required to demonstrate commitment to adopting a conflict-sensitive approach e.g. by following guidance laid out in the CSC [How to Guide](#). Humanitarian Implementation Plans or their technical annex should require partners to demonstrate conflict awareness and steps to mitigate potential negative impacts of interventions on conflict dynamics (see guiding questions below). ECHO's e-single form "resilience marker" introduced in January 2015 requires project partners to integrate conflict sensitivity and do no harm considerations. It may also be appropriate to consider investing in establishing capacities for analysis and conflict sensitivity advice in-country to help guide EU and implementing partner assistance.

Phase 3: Implementation and monitoring

Communities should be included in the development of targeting criteria, management of distributions and monitoring and evaluation processes for ECHO-funded programmes. Conflict-focused indicators should be included as standard when developing monitoring and evaluation frameworks in fragile contexts. ECHO implementing partners should ensure that the recruitment of any new staff takes into account any potential identity-based divisions within the context (e.g. ethnicity and language skills of new recruits), and consider the impact that this could have on how humanitarian aid and delivery teams are perceived by local people. ECHO and its implementing partners can also use in-country inter-agency and donor coordination groups to deepen contextual understanding and develop joined-up conflict analysis. It is also important that feedback mechanisms are built into response activities, and that the complaints or concerns of local people are carefully considered and responded to.

Guiding questions (for reviewing conflict sensitivity of proposals and programme implementation)²

1. Does the background description demonstrate a sound understanding of the operational context (including conflict analysis)?

⁽³⁾ Adapted from CARE International Emergency Proposal Review check-list.

2. Have comprehensive assessments been conducted, including those involving the affected population?
3. Has risk monitoring and impact indicators for conflict sensitivity been included (e.g. whether target groups think the intervention contributes to conflict)?
4. Are there mechanisms and resources in place for effective inclusion and communication with affected/targeted people, including the most vulnerable, throughout the project cycle? Have staff spoken with different factions to make sure that they understand that aid is neutral and based on humanitarian principles?
5. How can beneficiaries/participants and non-beneficiaries in the project area provide feedback or file complaints?

Phase 4: Exit, evaluation and redesign

Including questions relating to conflict sensitivity in real-time evaluations, after-action reviews or other mechanisms for evaluating humanitarian assistance is critical for learning lessons from what worked well (as well as what may have gone wrong) in humanitarian response in fragile and conflict-affected contexts.

Guiding questions (to help guide evaluation processes):

1. Was any conflict analysis conducted during the response (e.g. following the initial stages)? If so, how did the project respond to the findings of this analysis?
2. Were conflict dynamics taken into account in planning the response? If so, how? Did the needs assessment include consideration of conflict dynamics?
3. Did the response adapt to changes in the context? For instance did implementing partners amend the ways in which beneficiaries were identified, food distributed or communities engaged because of any unexpected negative outcomes associated with the implementation strategy? If so, how?
4. Did other elements of the EU response to conflict inadvertently undermine the EU's humanitarian response? Or did the humanitarian response inadvertently undermine other elements of the EU response?

Throughout the humanitarian programming cycle, it is important that EU staff and partners continue to critically assess their impact against long-term impacts on peace and conflict dynamics. Staff should also consider how humanitarian actions might best contribute to, or transition into longer-term developmental approaches, in line with the EU's Linking Relief, Rehabilitation and Development and transition policies. This needs to include consideration of complex issues such as the risk that local people become dependent on NGOs for service provision, thereby allowing the state to avoid fulfilling its responsibilities towards its citizens. Over the long term, this can erode (or help to prevent the establishment of) bonds of accountability between society and the state: an issue commonly cited as a driver of conflict.

Key resources

- [Note No 4](#) on promoting resilience in situations of conflict and fragility; ECHO's Resilience Marker 3 also provides an entry point for integrating conflict sensitivity into programmes
- Conflict Sensitivity Consortium, [How to guide to conflict sensitivity](#), UK Department for International Development, 2012: Chapter 4 provides more detailed practical guidance for integrating conflict-sensitive approaches across the humanitarian programme cycle

⁽⁵⁾ The Resilience Marker is a series of questions developed by ECHO (and available from them) aimed at ensuring resilience considerations are integrated into programme design and implementation strategies.

- Zicherman, et al., [Applying conflict sensitivity in emergency response: current practice and ways forward](#), ODI/ CSC, 2011: reviews approaches to conflict sensitivity by leading humanitarian agencies, and includes an outline of a simple 'good enough' humanitarian conflict analysis
- [CARE International web-portal on Conflict Sensitivity in Emergency Response](#): includes practical tools and guidelines for humanitarian workers, including step-by-step guidance for integrating conflict sensitivity into initial stages of humanitarian response, and capacity-building for humanitarian staff in conflict settings; relevant sections of the Conflict Sensitivity Consortium's [How to guide to conflict sensitivity](#) are also available in English and Arabic
- Wingender, L. M., [Humanitarian response in violent conflict: A toolbox of conflict sensitive indicators](#), Catholic Relief Services, Baltimore, MD, 2013