NOTE NO 1

Conflict sensitivity and analysis for effective EU external action

Topic overview

Doing business as usual won't deliver results in any developing country, and in fragile and conflict-affected states, it can easily do harm — or backfire.

The first step in ensuring that overarching strategy (at regional, country, thematic/sector level) is conflict sensitive, involves developing a solid understanding of the context (specifically the conflict and peace dynamics), and the actors (i.e. who is affected by conflict or peace and how). It should then be possible to assess: i) Implications of underlying conflict drivers and conflict dynamics for strategic priorities and partnerships; and ii) Implications for conflict-sensitive action.

This understanding can be built into subsequent phases, namely designing, implementing, monitoring and evaluating progress on specific areas of intervention and overall strategy as part of a comprehensive approach. In particular, consideration should be given to transition aspects in the context (Box 1) — how emergency assistance may transition into longer-term programming and/ or to what extent different types of responses (relief, rehabilitation and development) may need to run concurrently.

'You need to take a long-term and systemic approach to the situation you are trying to operate in to have any chance of success.'
Micha Ramakers, Geo-Desk Afghanistan

On top of the in-depth country knowledge that staff should acquire, context analysis helps EU staff to:

- identify the modalities of EU support that best suit the context;
- when analysis is conducted jointly with partners (other donors, national counterparts, CSOs, etc.), share our understanding, approach and objectives.

EU programmes and projects are all, in theory, underpinned by analysis of the strategic context; the partner country's priorities; the EU's policy objectives, past experience and areas of strengths; and other donors' involvement; etc. (e.g. see the Instructions for the Programming of the 11th EDF and the Development Cooperation Instrument

SUMMARY

- This note on conflict sensitivity and analysis is the foundation for, and should permeate and inform, all of the practical guidance notes that follow.
- EU staff in situations of conflict and fragility often say that they have the instruments to do sound analysis, but not the time. However, even a quick desk review and annual one-day workshop can be hugely beneficial in recognising the main issues and opportunities for impact — and sharing this understanding across staff.
- Being clear and precise about what kind of analysis can best feed programme design and implementation can help transform this investment into development impact.
- Analysis is useful only if it is conducted in a participatory manner, involving heads of sections and project managers — rather than by a single champion or as an 'ivory tower' exercise.
- There is often good analysis available to draw from, and when it is not documented, people with relevant knowledge can be brought in.
- Multiple sources and viewpoints will contribute to a more robust analysis.
- Ongoing light analysis is likely to deliver more value than a big one-off exercise.

BOX 1 How to detect fragility when everything seems 'normal': my experience in Mali

It is very important to identify fragility in order to be prepared. In Mali, donors did not want to see existing signs of fragility, such as the following.

- Shrinking control of the state over national territory. In Mali, between 2007 and 2012, the possibility of travel (both mission and tourism) was progressively reduced to less than 25 % of the national territory.
- Substantial, long-standing armed insurgency, combined with the State's lack of capability to counter it.
- Ineffective army and police.
- Ineffective, weak and corrupt government structures, including at the highest level, preventing effective and timely reactions against threats.
- Abnormal complacency and weakness at the top. In Bamako, three weeks before the coup, the president was molested in his own office by a group of unhappy soldiers' wives. Yet few people read this as a last warning before the putsch.
- Weak and divided civil society unable to unite and react over even a limited common agenda.

Source: Jérôme Le Roy, Head of Section Finance/Contracts, Delegation to Guinea, Former Head of Section Finance/Contracts, Delegation to Mali and Acting Head of Administration during the coup in Mali

2014–2020, templates for annual action plans and templates for identification fiches and action fiches). However, it might be helpful to ask yourself the following at regular intervals.

Guiding questions	Top tips
1. Is there existing conflict analysis in place? Has it been shared among key EU stakeholders? Is it solid, structured, and up to date? Does it provide a sufficient basis for guiding a conflict-sensitive and comprehensive approach? 2. Are there gaps in the analysis? Does it provide sufficient information about the conflict drivers? Does it outline who the main interested actors or groups in society are? Does it capture how the conflict is affecting different groups differently (e.g. genders, ethnicities, regions, religious groups)? Does it review the position and legitimacy of the government in relation to any conflict issues? 3. Does the EU's current strategy reflect conflict analysis? Does the strategy intend to address conflict causes? Does it anticipate conflict risks? Does it have the potential to (inadvertently) impact negatively on conflict dynamics or certain groups? Does the strategy consider how to assist particularly-affected groups? 4. In what ways could different instruments undermine or support each other? What impact might this have on conflict issues? What impact might it have on how the EU is regarded? 5. How will you monitor changes in the context and adapt your interventions? Could you for instance use scenario planning to help monitor context and build flexibility into your interventions?	• Do your own conflict analysis and/ or use analyses produced by others. • To save time and resources, integrate conflict analysis into risk assessments, needs assessments, or other planning and monitoring processes. • Regularly review your analysis. • Do joint and structured analysis as early as possible, involving relevant services and external experts, and international partners as appropriate.

This note aims to help EU staff plan, conduct and use the analysis that should help to tailor EU support to the particular dynamics at play, both positive (opportunities for reform, drivers of change) and negative (challenges, risks).

Key issues

Step 1. Plan the analysis

1.1. Be clear about the internal purpose and parameters of the exercise

The idea is to ensure that the context is well understood, so that EU support is highly tailored to it, and therefore has the greatest impact. In other words, the idea is to 'think and act politically'. For this to happen, it might be useful to clarify the following:

- Why invest in analysis? Is this triggered by a particular challenge, or is it part of a quality control process? What are the politics around it?
- What analysis has already been done or is planned?
- Who is the champion or owner that will ensure that the analysis translates into programming?
- Can the time needed for analysis be carved out: i.e. is it, or is it not, a priority for staff, including the head of the Delegation and the head of cooperation?
- Who is the main audience for the findings?
- Is the timing right to feed into strategic thinking, planning and implementation?
- What partners should be brought in to maximise its impact?
- What is the level of effort to put into this? Should it be a light or in-depth analysis? The analysis can range from a small closed-door, one-day workshop to a longer process that includes a literature review, interviews, a survey and a multi-stakeholder workshop.
- Is there an agreed-upon process for follow-up once the analysis is complete? Should it be repeated every year, every other year, every four years?
- Where can resources (financial, intellectual, logistical, etc.) be found (Box 2)? For example, linkages can be made with the EU Conflict Early Warning System (under development).

BOX 2 Funding conflict analysis

Conflict analysis is not a costly exercise, but funding should nonetheless be set aside. Conflict analysis could be funded through current framework contracts, through mid-term or final reviews, through projects, through the IcSP or through EU Expert Facilities.

1.2. Identify the most appropriate process

- Is the region, the country, a district, a population group, a sector or a specific problem the focus of the analysis? Or, more likely, are several of these the focus? For example, in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, many analysts and donors find it difficult to know whether the primary focus should be on cross-border issues, on strengthening the state at the national level, or on micro-local governance issues. In a country as vast as this, resources cannot be dispersed on too many levels and sets of issues for too long.
- To what extent should the process involve Member States and other donors? There is much benefit to derive from analysis conducted jointly across development partners (which is not the same as analysis shared after the fact). Joint analysis can lead to a common understanding and agreement on the causes of conflict and fragility, and on the appropriate response.

- To what extent should the process involve national counterparts, civil society, the private sector, etc.? In fragile states, societies are often divided. Only by triangulating — i.e. combining multiple viewpoints and methods — can you hope to overcome the biases that come with a narrower approach. Therefore, the process is more robust if it is participatory, and makes a special effort to have a good sample of stakeholders across groups (government, parliament, civil society, local authorities, regional economic communities, economic elites and diasporas, etc.). Be sure to give voice to groups that are usually voiceless.

- Is the most useful framework to use elements of political economy analysis, conflict analysis, fragility assessments, scenario planning or the more traditional analysis of strengths, weaknesses, threats and opportunities (SWOT)? Multiple methods, when relevant, can help to overcome the bias of a single approach. Similarly, there are benefits in linking one of the above to a lighter monitoring system.

When 1.1 and 1.2 are clear, the terms of reference for the process can be drafted (see example in Box 3).

BOX 3 The Joint Peacebuilding Needs Assessment in Myanmar: a process that builds peace and is light and modular

In the context of the ongoing peace process, the Myanmar government requested support from the Peace Donor Support Group for a joint assessment of needs in armed conflict-affected border areas. Under the leadership of the Myanmar Peace Centre, a task force was established to develop the framework for such an assessment, which is to be carried out in cooperation with armed groups and other key stakeholders in ethnic areas. A desk review of existing information on activities, needs and gaps was undertaken in April 2013, subsequent to which the methodology for the assessment is being developed. To accommodate the complexity of the political process in Myanmar, the assessment will be modular, accommodating different time frames appropriate to different geographic areas. It will have a prime focus on peacebuilding, and aims to recognise the importance of assisting an equitable and inclusive planning process across former political divides.

Step 2. Conduct the analysis

2.1. Review existing material

At the outset of any analysis, there is generally a synthesis of the existing literature — which includes conflict analysis, elements of political economy analysis, academic studies, evaluations and scenario planning/outlook analysis. You do not have to start from scratch: there is often good analysis available to draw upon, and when it is not documented, people with good relevant knowledge can be brought in. That said, multiple sources and multiple viewpoints will contribute to a more robust analysis. The ongoing research of PhD candidates can usefully complement that of more established go-to people on a given country or theme.

2.2. Conduct interviews and group discussions

Ensuring that individual interviews and focus group discussions cover a wide spectrum of stakeholders (Box 4), sample questions (DFID, 2009) could include the following.

- Who are the key stakeholders? What are the formal/informal roles and mandates of different players? What are the relationships between these players, and the balance of power? To what extent is power — both economic and political — vested in the hands of specific individuals/groups? How do different interest groups outside government (e.g. private sector, NGOs, consumer groups, the media) seek to influence policy? How are decisions made?

- Once made, are decisions implemented? Where are the key bottlenecks in the system? Is failure to implement due to lack of capacity, lack of accountability or any other reason?

- What are the main sources of finance in this country/district/sector? How are they evolving over time?

- What is the past history of the country/district/sector, including previous reform initiatives? How does this influence current stakeholder perceptions, if at all?

BOX 4 Analysing the context in the midst of crisis: the Central African Republic

At the height of the Central African Republic's renewed crisis in 2014, the EU (DEVCO, ECHO, EEAS) convened a workshop involving Member States, the World Bank and Central African Republic experts to conduct a joint analysis on humanitarian and development priorities and on fit-for-purpose support modalities. The workshop built on similar exercises (EU-Member States-OCHA and EU-UN) conducted a few weeks earlier. It helped in jointly identifying:

- priority needs, which are multi-sector, and cluster around job creation, food security and local development;
- priority geographic areas of focus (secondary cities);
- appropriate support modalities, chiefly the need to build the state — and the visibility of the state — in the provision of relief services, and the need for coordination in engaging with already saturated state administrations.

- Is there significant corruption and rent seeking in the sector? Where is this most prevalent (e.g. at the point of delivery, procurement, allocation of jobs)? Who benefits most from this? How is patronage being used? Which are the actors with vested interests in reform and, conversely, in the status quo?
- Who are the primary beneficiaries of service delivery? Are particular social, regional or ethnic groups included/excluded? Are subsidies provided, and which groups benefit most from these?
- What are the dominant ideologies and values that shape views around the country/district/sector? To what extent may these serve to constrain change?
- Are there any key reform champions within the sector? Who is likely to resist reforms and why? Are there 'second best' reforms that might overcome this opposition?

2.3. If needed, complement the interviews with a survey

This may provide less qualitative insights, but may allow for a greater sample of the population to be surveyed.

2.4. Make sure that the conclusions are clear and easy to understand

For example, represent causal relationships graphically as in Graph 1. Sometimes, analysis can remain very abstract, and it is hard to draw implications for EU support.

Step 3. Use the analysis to shape EU support

Conducting the analysis is only half the challenge. Many context analyses are shelved and only marginally influence programme design or implementation. The third step involves ensuring that the findings from the context analysis inform the design and planning phases for the interventions. It is important to consider the potential impacts of planned activities on conflict dynamics — both intentional and unintentional, direct or indirect — in order to help ensure that the actions will avoid doing harm and (as far as possible) contribute to long-term, sustainable peace.

This assessment should be carried out for all levels and combinations of interventions, as well as those planned by partners. It is equally applicable when planning country-level strategies, considering the most appropriate funding modalities and selecting implementing partners. The analysis should also be updated and added to as more information becomes available, and programmes assessed for risk accordingly.

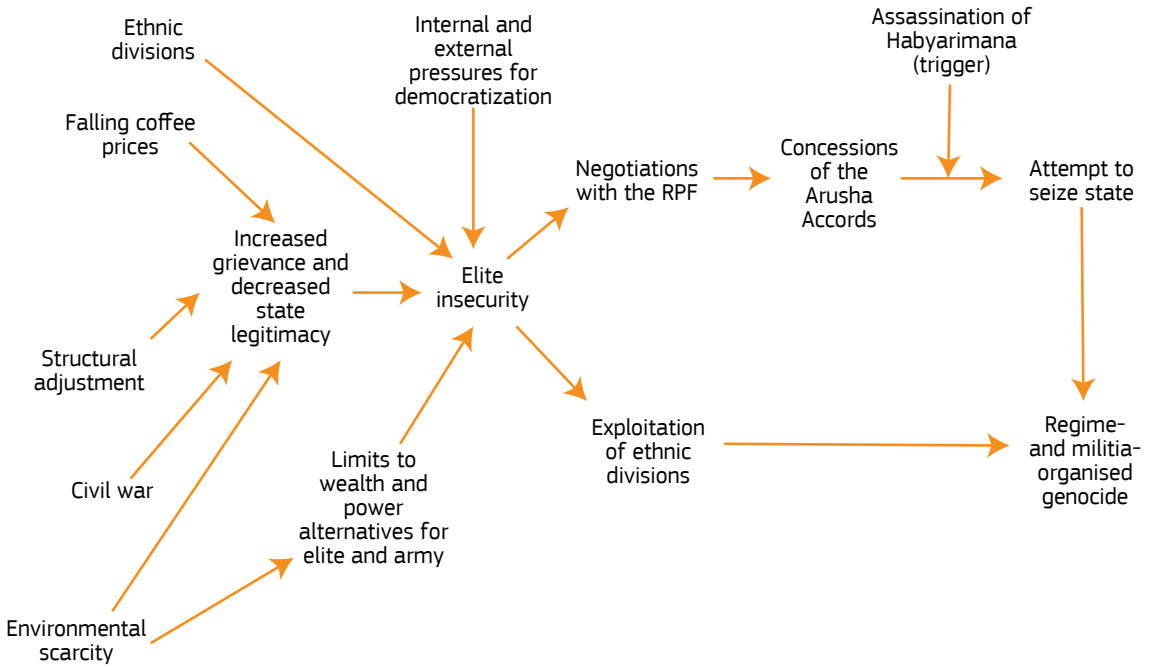
Here are some practical steps to ensure that analysis yields its intended value.

3.1. Input into programming

Armed with analysis, current or planned programmes and projects can be strengthened by the following.

- Validating (or revisiting) their objectives, checking to ensure the following:

GRAPH 1 A classic example of conflict analysis: the case of the 1994 genocide in Rwanda



Source: Homex-Dixon and Percival, 1998.

- → They have the right level of ambition given the programme/project time scale and the country's present conditions. The EU is well positioned to address the root causes of conflict and fragility, and not only the symptoms thereof. The EU represents a critical mass financially and, through its ability to convene its Member States, is usually present for the long haul.

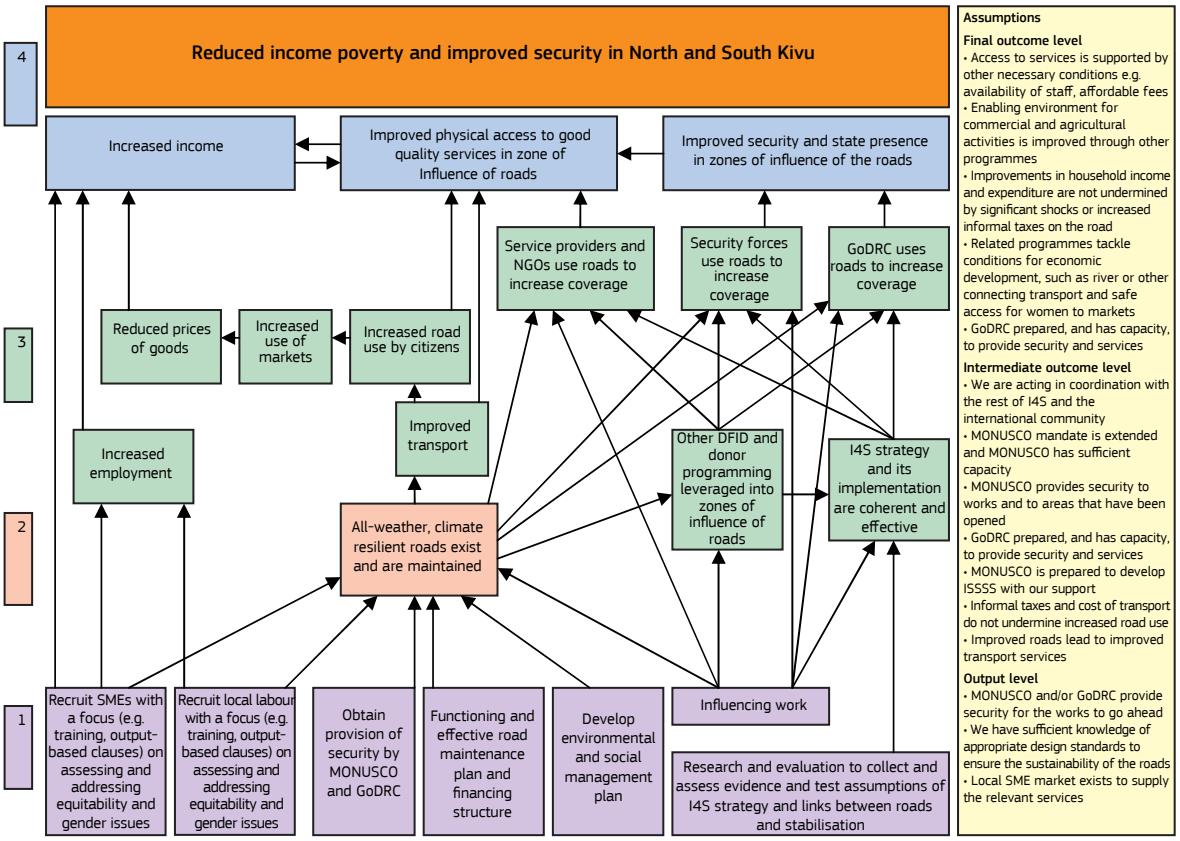
- → They are indeed critical to more resilient states and societies. For example, up to 2006, donors to Timor-Leste were focused on relations with the former occupying power, Indonesia. This was understandable as Timor-Leste only restored its independence in 2002, but this led donors to miss the political and social tensions within the country, which boiled over and resulted in 30 people dead and 21 000 people fleeing the capital in 2006 and the return of UN peacekeepers (who had left in 2005).

- → They have the right timing and sequencing. Staff in fragile situations often wonder: 'What is the priority when everything is a priority?' Needs can seem infinite and all are equally pressing. But, given the often volatile security and/or political situations and limited capacity, interventions frequently need to be sequenced to deliver results. For example, jobs and growth are always needed to sustain peace, especially when there is high population growth, as the cases of Burundi, Sierra Leone and Timor-Leste illustrate, but the best way to contribute to that is generally through improving security, underpinned by a political settlement among former belligerents.

- Validating (or revisiting) their underlying assumptions, making them as explicit and precise as possible. Are they still reasonable and part of the most plausible scenario, given the newly gathered evidence? For example, in eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo, the assumptions linking roads, work, security and poverty are made explicit and revised regularly (Graph 2).

- Has the analysis identified new areas of risk, as well as new opportunities on which to build? For example, what does the mix of population growth, unemployment and urbanisation mean for how to approach security in

GRAPH 2 An example of theory of change that is constantly revisited through recurrent analysis



Source: DFID, 2014.

post-crisis countries such as Burundi, Sierra Leone or Timor-Leste? Does it mean a need to shift the focus from developing the army and police towards jobs and growth?

This section primarily relates to the following intervention/programming phases:

- DEVCO, NEAR and FPI: formulation including unified action document, intervention logic and logical framework, planning for monitoring and evaluation and communication of results, and calls for proposals;
- ECHO: humanitarian implementation plan and calls for proposal on humanitarian action;
- EEAS: planning documents relating to political strategy (e.g. diplomacy, political dialogue), mediation efforts, election observation/political responses, sanctions design, human rights strategies/ dialogue etc.;
- CSDP: concept of operation and operational plan.

Guiding questions to consider when programming	Top tips
1. How do you think your intervention may impact on conflict dynamics and issues, even if it may not be a crisis response or peacebuilding intervention? 2. Which groups are likely to benefit the most from your intervention? Which groups are likely to lose out? How will the intervention support or undermine the legitimacy of conflict and peace actors? What impact is this likely to have on divisions or inequalities between groups? What impact is this likely to have on alliances or positive relationship between groups? How will you respond to this? 3. How have men, women, boys and girls been affected by the conflict? How will your interventions address these impacts? Do men, women, boys and girls have equal access to humanitarian assistance and peacebuilding resources? How can you help address unequal access? 4. Is there a risk that the objective and activities of your intervention might trigger tensions? Or conversely can your intervention activities support connections between conflicting groups and strengthen peaceful relations? 5. How are your interventions likely to be viewed by different groups with an influence over conflict in the context? How may the EU be perceived as a result? Could there be accusations of bias against the EU or any of its interventions? 6. To what degree have local people been consulted about the design and nature of the interventions? To what degree will their feedback be sought (in accordance with Humanitarian Action Principles)? 7. How are your partners seen in the context? Are they associated with one side of a conflict, which would make them seem biased? What capacities do your partners have in terms of understanding and analysing conflict issues and/ or working in a conflict-sensitive way? Can they demonstrate knowledge/ experience of conflict sensitivity principles? Is their staff composition representative, and how can they ensure conflict sensitivity in sub-contracting? 8. In what ways might your selection of funding modalities impact the conflict dynamics? Which actors will be strengthened or weakened? How will resources be channelled? In what ways could this affect conflict dynamics? 9. Are your interventions designed with potential conflict trigger events or periods of heightened tension in mind (e.g. elections, commemorations of important historical events, 'fighting seasons', etc.)? Have you considered what impact these events could have on the intervention? 10. How will your intervention adapt if there is a significant change in the context? Have you built in sufficient flexibility in your intervention plans, budgets and timelines in order to adapt to a changing context? 11. What are the implications of your selection of geographical focus for your interventions? What implicit messages might your geographical focus send to key stakeholders in the context? 12. What will you do if there is an intensification of conflict? How will you ensure that you have as much prior warning as possible? How will you ensure safety of staff, partners and (as far as possible) local people? 13. Have you identified suitable indicators that capture the effect that the intervention is having on the context and on different stakeholders, and the impact that the context has on the intervention? (For example, a 'normal' economic development indicator may measure general economic or small and medium enterprise [SME] growth. But it may be more conflict sensitive to track reduced socio-economic inequality between population groups/geographic regions.) Are the indicators disaggregated by age and gender and by any other social or demographic characteristic relevant to the context? Have you considered how you/ your partners will gather the data and its reliability? 14. What is the exit strategy for your intervention? How will you seek to ensure that any benefits are sustainable beyond your time in the context?	• Include a range of actors (local actors, key groups with influence over conflict and relevant EU institutions) in the design of your interventions to ensure the design is well-informed, gains maximum buy-in and avoids perceptions of bias. • Use your risk analysis process as an entry point. • Integrate lessons from evaluations and reviews.

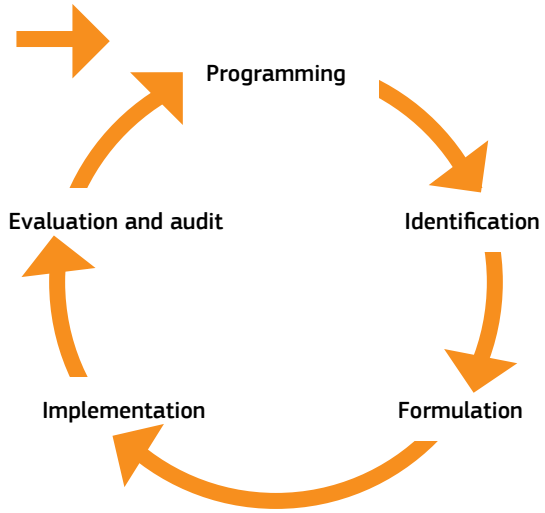
3.2. Implementation of the programmes/projects and monitoring

Situations of conflict and fragility usually evolve quickly, as the situation in Myanmar illustrates (see the Myanmar case study included in this note). If an intervention does not adapt to changes in the local context, it runs the risk of becoming irrelevant at best, and at worst exacerbating conflict and undermining progress towards more peaceful societies. Conflict-sensitive implementation requires staff and partners to regularly update their conflict analysis and to monitor how the changes in the context affect their intervention, and how their intervention affects the conflict issues and relationships in the context. A modest-scale analysis envisaged as an ongoing process is preferable to an ambitious one-off, tick-the-box exercise.

Practical ways to ensure that analysis is an ongoing process include the following.

- Make analysis part of an annual team-building and/or strategic planning exercise, for example at the beginning of each year.
- Build monitoring into regular reviews (e.g. mid-term reviews) and include indicators that measure the peace and conflict impacts of interventions.
- Draw lessons from ongoing monitoring and regular evaluations. Every annual report or evaluation is an opportunity to take stock of whether EU support is on track to deliver its objectives — given fast-evolving situations.
- In fast-evolving, data-poor contexts, using innovative monitoring systems can also be very informative. For example, Internet- or SMS-based (short message service–based) systems are used to monitor electoral violence in Kenya, local governance in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and extreme poverty in Bangladesh.

GRAPH 3 Cycle of operations



In the design phase (Graph 3), important conflict issues and challenges would have been identified and the intervention designed to address these. Indicators should also have been developed to assist in tracking the intervention's impact on these conflict issues. For conflict-sensitive implementation therefore, it is necessary to monitor:

- whether an intervention (or programme) is inadvertently making conflict worse or straining relationships between conflicting parties, or successfully addressing conflict issues and strengthening important peace-enhancing relationships;
- how the presence and actions of EU staff and partners and the management of the intervention is perceived and what kind of impact this has on conflict issues and relationships;
- how changes in the context may affect the effectiveness of the intervention, or the intervention's beneficiaries or partners.

When EU interventions are implemented through partners, the partners also need to set up the appropriate mechanisms for final beneficiaries and target groups — particularly those affected by conflict — to hold them to account.

Conflict-sensitive implementation then requires changes to be made to the interventions in order to avoid doing harm (by exacerbating conflict drivers) and, when appropriate, to maximise positive impacts on peace. This may mean

adapting intervention objectives, budgets, partners, staffing, target beneficiaries or other intervention modalities, which can only be done if there is some flexibility in procedures or if the necessary flexibility has been built into the design and risk management of the intervention from the start.

Analysis can not only inform what the EU can do, but also how the EU can provide support, i.e. budget support or project approach, use of country systems or an EU/internationally managed trust fund, etc. For example:

- Projects that target easy-to-access districts and employ trusted and educated local staff may contribute to increasing the gap between elites and excluded groups. This was summarised in Burundi by the local proverb: 'it always rains in the same place first'.
- In Haiti, to boost private sector development, jobs and growth, it was recommended that support be given to creating a few islands of excellence in services and infrastructure rather than trying to systematically improve standards in every sector and province.
- In Timor-Leste, a sector reform contract for public financial management was deemed most appropriate to the context: governance foundations are in place, meaning that a state-building contract would not be appropriate; yet public financial management is a critical area for Timor-Leste to adopt pro-jobs and more pro-poor policies (see the Timor-Leste case study included in this note).

This section primarily relates to the following intervention/ programming phases:

Guiding questions to consider when implementing	Top tips
1. What impact is the local context having on your intervention? And what impact is your intervention having on the conflict drivers? 2. How are you updating your understanding of changes in the context and adapting your scenarios? Are you drawing upon the full range of EU and wider international and civil society resources for political, social and economic analysis available for the context? 3. How is your intervention being perceived by beneficiaries and target groups and/or the wider public? What systems are in place for ongoing (real-time) monitoring and for beneficiary feedback? How easy is it for local people to communicate with EU and implementing partner staff responsible for implementing the intervention? E.g. can local people report abuse, corruption or other types of malpractice and concerns to EU staff of partners? Can men, women and children all access these mechanisms? 4. If issues are reported to implementing partners or EU staff, are these concerns taken seriously and corrective action taken? Is this action clearly communicated to local people? If corrective action is not taken, why not? What impact has this had on relations between the EU or its partners and local stakeholders? 5. Is there regular reflection and reporting on interaction between the intervention and conflict dynamics, using the indicators designed in Phase 2? Are these regularly measured and reported? What do they show? 6. How responsive is the intervention or project to changes in the context? Has the intervention adapted to these changes? How? If not, why not? What have been the barriers to adaptation? How can these be overcome? 7. How do you encourage staff (EU and implementing partners) to seek out and share information about any unintended negative consequences of the interventions? How can you encourage staff to learn from their experiences and adapt their approach? 8. What training and support have staff received (both EU and implementing partners) to help them to identify conflict risks and design suitable responses? Are staff sufficiently knowledgeable to work on sensitive issues such as sexual violence, child protection and facilitating beneficiary feedback?	• Draw on already planned-for risk analysis and partner meetings to assist in data collection (conflict analysis, needs assessments, research), reflection and monitoring for conflict-sensitive implementation. • Consider doing a periodic full country programme conflict sensitivity assessment (see Sri Lanka example below). • For mid-term reviews of ongoing programmes, including conflict sensitivity questions as part of the terms of reference and include the right expertise in the team conducting the mid-term review.

- **DEVCO, NEAR and FPI:** implementation through various funding modalities, data collection, monitoring, mid-term reviews;
- **ECHO:** implementation through partners;
- **EEAS:** implementation/action, ongoing monitoring, context analysis and reporting;
- **CSDP:** conduct of operations, political reporting and monitoring, strategic reviews.

3.3. Exit, evaluation and redesign

It is essential that you consider the potential impact that your withdrawal or exit from a context or programme may have on conflict dynamics in the area. For example, the withdrawal of a seemingly successful CSDP mission without the proper follow-up measures in place can result in the re-ignition of conflict if the underlying causes of conflict have not yet been sufficiently addressed. Similarly, a development intervention addressing a structural conflict driver — such as the economic marginalisation of a particular geographic region — could risk seeing gains reversed if it ends too early.

All interventions therefore need to be planned and implemented with a realistic strategy to enable the positive impacts from EU actions to continue beyond the life of the specific project. This could be particularly challenging in a transition context, where decisions on appropriate interventions need to consider the conflict situation across the country (national and sub-national levels) and target interventions at contributing to peace in the longer term at all these levels. This may mean that certain interventions focus on continuing emergency assistance (humanitarian) while others target long-term structural change (e.g. improving access of marginalised groups to education, health or employment).

Equally important is the need to effectively capture the lessons learned from engagements in conflict-affected contexts, and to use this learning to inform future action and approaches. This can be particularly difficult in conflict-affected contexts where access to conflict zones can be challenging and where it can be difficult to measure the impact of a single intervention on complex conflict dynamics. Yet it is important to attempt to do this while being clear about the constraints.

Financial mismanagement can contribute to conflict by reinforcing patterns of corruption and exclusion and can undermine the EU's standing in the eyes of local people — EU audits are therefore also important from a conflict perspective.

Key resources are available from the Collaborative for Development Action (CD) in the form of additional guidance on evaluation and Do No Harm.

This section primarily relates to the following intervention/ programming phases:

- **DEVCO, NEAR and FPI:** project and programme evaluations, strategic evaluations,meta-evaluations, drawing on lessons and evaluation recommendations for future interventions, performance and financial audits;
- **ECHO:** evaluation, real-time evaluations;
- **EEAS:** included in DEVCO-led evaluations and reviews of political engagements;
- **CSDP:** lessons learned exercises, strategic reviews.

Guiding questions for exit, evaluation and redesign	Top tips
1. How will you ensure that the positive conflict and peace impacts of the intervention will be sustained beyond the life of your presence in the context? 2. If you are handing activities over to another agency (including other EU institutions), local partners or government agencies, do they have the capacities, resources and experience to continue the programmes? Have those agencies been involved in the design and implementation of the programme? Do they have the capacities to ensure that the programme continues to be implemented in a conflict-sensitive manner? 3. Does the evaluation methodology explicitly seek to assess the impact of the interventions on conflict dynamics? Does it assess whether and how planned interventions were able to respond to changes in the context, including conflict? Does it capture any unintended negative consequences? Does the evaluation or lessons learning approach allow for contributions from civil society, beneficiaries and conflict-affected groups? Does it seek contributions from women and men, and by social/demographic characteristics as identified in earlier analysis? 4. What data is available? What quality is the evidence used? Is data disaggregated? 5. How will you ensure that the lessons learned from this intervention are easily accessible and communicated to relevant teams working in this context and in other places that may be facing similar challenges? 6. Did the financial management of the funding influence the intervention's impact on conflict dynamics and on the way the EU is perceived in-country? 7. Has the perception of the EU and implementing partners changed over time? If so, in what way, and why?	• Articulate objectives and intervention logic at the start of interventions and follow this through programme monitoring — this makes the evaluation process easier and allows for reflective lesson learning and communication.

BOX 5 Joint conflict analysis in Sudan

In 2014, a joint conflict analysis was undertaken in Sudan, attended by all active EU institutions, EU MS in country, as well as key UN agencies. The process was facilitated by DEVCO and EEAS and involved a literature review of existing conflict analyses; an extensive consultation with the delegation to clarify objectives, design the workshop and agree on appropriate participants; a two-day conflict analysis workshop; a report capturing the analysis and key recommendations for engagement. The analysis considered drivers of conflict; capacities for peace; stakeholder analysis; conflict dynamics and scenarios; assessing current EU work against this analysis to see if it is fit for purpose. The Delegation will now use the analysis to lead a process in country to design conflict-sensitive engagement for the next funding cycle

Additional resources

- EU, 2013, Guidance Note on the Use of Conflict Analysis in Support of EU External Action
- g7+, 2012, Fragility Assessment Methodology
- EU, UNDP, World Bank, 2007. Post-Conflict Needs Assessments
- UK Department for International Development, 2010. Analysing Conflict and Fragility
- UK Department for International Development, 2009. Political Economy Analysis

Case studies

EU support tailored to the fast-evolving context of Myanmar

SOURCE Manuel de Rivera and Vaclav Svejda, EU Delegation to Myanmar

EU support to the democratic transition in Myanmar since 2007 is an illustration of how a response can be tailored to a fast-evolving situation, seize windows of opportunity and support the fast pace of reform — while also upholding EU values.

It started with modest but targeted actions, using multiple angles, and gradually building trust with the government through solution-seeking dialogue. The use of available instruments has also evolved, from humanitarian aid to a 50-50 mix of country programming and thematic instruments, to a predominant use of country programming — and over time, increasing government involvement and leadership.

The initial phase (1996–2006). Until 2004, EC assistance to Myanmar was limited to humanitarian aid; then from 2004, it began to include development projects, based on strategic assessments and financed from a variety of budget lines. All development assistance was framed by the Common Position adopted in 1996 and strengthened and extended several times in view of the military regime's failure to make significant progress in areas of EU concern.

The learning and piloting phase (2007–09). The 2007–13 Country Strategy Paper focused on education and health. However, EIDHR funding was available to promote human rights and democratic participation through NGOs, although the terminology was adapted for the security of implementing partners. A first local call for proposals (EUR 600 000) was issued in 2009 as a 'good governance country-based support scheme' without reference to human rights, using 'fundamental freedoms' instead. Meetings were held with partners bilaterally, in trusted circles. Democratic governance and human rights work focused on sensitisation and documentation of rights abuse. EU support was provided remotely from Bangkok, with bi-weekly travel by EU officers and regular consultations with CSOs and local communities.

Significant event: Cyclone Nargis in May 2008. The international community responded with a massive aid effort, with the most significant contribution made by ECHO. The IfS (now IcSP) financed several comprehensive needs assessments and also supported the capacity development of journalists, future democratic and civil leaders, and NGOs in the areas of democracy, ethnic reconciliation, disarmament and demobilisation, and conflict-sensitive reporting. In addition, groups across ethnic nationalities were supported to discuss and overcome their differences and eventually stimulate dialogue with the central authorities and democratic opposition parties. Due to the political situation in Myanmar, many of those activities had to be conducted in Thailand.

Scaling-up and sanctions lifted phase (2010–13). While the country was still subject to sanctions, it embarked on a path of democratic transition. Following the 2010 elections, EU support scaled up significantly, but also became more proactive in the area of democratic governance and human rights. The EU worked with CSOs to help them work collaboratively with government, notably the National Commission for Human Rights and the Elections Commission, towards meeting international human rights and election standards. Particular emphasis was put on partnering with international NGOs to develop the capacities of local NGOs. The EU has also worked with the media, addressing discrimination issues, political parties and members of Parliament. Targeted actions were identified and financially supported in order to sustain the nascent democratic transition, as well as the peace process. By awarding direct contracts to key partners, the EU was able to respond quickly to emerging needs from various sides.

Based on the progress made in 2011–12, the EU Council suspended EU sanctions in April 2012. This was followed by increasing engagement at all levels in response to further political and economic reforms; in April 2013, EU sanctions were lifted altogether. The suspension of EU restrictive measures enabled the EU and Member States to engage directly with the government for the first time.

Outlook (from 2014). The 2013 Council Conclusions set out a Comprehensive Framework for the EU and Member States' policy and support to Myanmar for the next three years. With the lifting of sanctions in 2013, the 2007–13 Country Strategy paper is being relayed by a Joint Transitional Strategy Paper (joint with Member States) 2014–16 and a Multi-year Indicative Programme 2014–20, to take place in the context of normalised relations. These are underpinned by ongoing analysis, including elements of a political economy analysis conducted in 2012–13 and to be updated on a regular basis, given the fast pace of reform and ongoing challenges in the area of the peace process and discrimination. They are to focus on rural development, education, governance and rule of law, and peacebuilding. In the area of governance, the focus is likely to be on strengthening the capacity of key public institutions, the rule of law and access to justice, and the electoral cycle. The holding of general elections in 2015 will be another milestone in the democratic transition.

Timor-Leste: a sector reform contract to support government ownership and public financial management

SOURCE

Sonia Godinho and Vincent Vire, European Delegation to Timor-Leste; Action Fiche, 2013

CONTEXT

Since the restoration of its independence in 2002, and in spite of a major crisis in 2006, Timor-Leste has made substantial progress in setting up political, social and economic foundations for stability and economic growth. Since 2011, a Strategic Development Plan aimed at moving Timor-Leste towards upper-middle-income status by 2030 has been adopted and is primarily being financed through oil and gas domestic resources. Timor-Leste is also looking to strengthen regional integration and submitted a formal request to join the Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN) in February 2011.

CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

While governance frameworks are in place in the area of public financial management, policy implementation capacity is limited and budget execution remains low, hampering the country's ability to transform its current growth into development results for its fast-growing population.

ACTIONS TAKEN

The EU aims to continue its support to the government's public financial management reform agenda but via an instrument more appropriate than a project approach: namely, a Sector Reform Contract to further strengthen country systems and ensure full national ownership.

The EUR 4 million, 2014–16 Sector Reform Contract focuses on improvement of taxation and customs systems in terms of their compliance with applicable regimes and maximisation of domestic revenue. It should also help in fulfilling the requirements needed for Timor-Leste's membership in ASEAN.

The contract is fully aligned with the country's public financial management action plan, as well as with the Budget Support financed by Australia, which is supporting implementation of the government's public financial management strategic plan through a performance-linked programme using country systems. It will also benefit from the World Bank's provision of analytic and advisory services to the Ministry of Finance.

The contract is expected to reinforce policy dialogue with the government in a vital sector for improvement of social service delivery and for achievement of the country's development objectives. The use of a Sector Reform Contract also confirms the EU's clear commitment to implementing the New Deal in Timor-Leste, joining efforts with Australia.

LESSONS LEARNED

While it is too early to draw lessons, there is every indication that a Service Reform Contract is suited to the Timorese context: governance foundations are in place, making a state-building contract inappropriate; yet public financial management is a critical area for Timor-Leste to adopt pro-jobs and more pro-poor policies, execute its budget, and turn its current high growth into development results for ordinary citizens.

Conflict analysis in Guatemala to inform new programming

SOURCE

Birgit Vleugels, EU Delegation to Guatemala; Terms of Reference for the Conflict Analysis (2013); National Conflict Assessment (2014)

COUNTRY CONTEXT, CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

Guatemala is a multi-ethnic, multicultural and multilingual country with considerable economic potential. It has made progress since the signing of the 1996 Peace Accords, and its economic growth has been stable. Guatemala increased its social expenditure over the last decade, leading to progress on key indicators such as primary education coverage. Advances have been made towards a more accomplished democracy with free and fair elections and democratic change of power.

Nevertheless, important challenges remain. There are dramatic differences in income distribution between rural and urban areas. The country has not yet overcome its history of structural exclusion; and the state faces major institutional, social and economic challenges to achieve an equitable and inclusive society. Guatemala also features an extremely high — and growing — level of social conflicts. They are multi-dimensional, but often relate to questions of land tenure, natural resource management or labour conditions.

The justice system may not properly function to channel and resolve social conflicts. The country's existing dialogue, consultation and conflict resolution mechanisms have not been able to effectively address pressing social demands — a fact acknowledged by President Pérez Molina in the aftermath of the 2012 events in Totonicapán, when seven protesters were killed by the army during demonstrations.

ACTIONS TAKEN

The EU-funded Programa de Fortalecimiento Institucional del Sector Juventud en Guatemala and the Project to Support Justice and security (SEJUST) address conflict transformation. However, on the eve of a new National Indicative Programme and Joint EU-Member States Strategy for Guatemala, more in-depth analysis is required to form a comprehensive picture of conflict mapping, nature and dynamics, and ensure that programming is conflict sensitive.

To this end, a conflict analysis was launched in October 2013 and delivered in December, involving the whole Delegation, EU ambassadors and experts. It produced a literature review, a national conflict analysis (main causes of conflicts, mapping of conflicts; analysis of the interests, goals, positions, capacities and relationships of the main stakeholders; conflict dynamics; and policy implications), and proposals for conflict-sensitive engagement on the three proposed focal sectors for EU intervention.

The main outcomes were a common understanding across EU Ambassadors of the risks, and agreement on key principles and messages, and a fresh and up-to-date look on what is feasible and what is not.

LESSONS LEARNED

- **People:** Substantive Delegation involvement and consultants with deep prior knowledge of country dynamics and access to the right stakeholders made the exercise valuable, and involving Member States compounded the value of the exercise.
- **Process:** Stakeholders wanted to influence the results. For this reason, the conflict analysis was not conducted with government or civil society, but independently and involving both. It was clear from the start which outputs would be public or confidential. Ideally, the analysis would be updated every 6–12 months.