

NOTE NO 8

Working with international actors in situations of conflict and fragility

TAKING ADVANTAGE OF EACH OTHER'S ADDED VALUE AND AVOIDING CONTRADICTIONS

Topic overview

From information sharing to use of common strategic frameworks, collective action has proved both feasible and essential in situations of conflict and fragility. Where weak governance or conflict situations make alignment on government strategies difficult, donor coordination is particularly needed.

Better collaboration involves designing common analyses and strategies; effectively sharing information; dividing tasks and responsibilities among actors; maximising complementarities and synergies; avoiding gaps and

BOX 1 OECD Principle 8: Agree on practical coordination mechanisms between international actors

- Coordination between international actors can happen even in the absence of strong government leadership.
- It is important to work together on upstream analysis, joint assessments, shared strategies and coordination of political engagement.
- Practical initiatives can take the form of joint donor offices, an agreed division of labour among donors, delegated cooperation arrangements, multi-donor trust funds, and common reporting and financial requirements.
- Wherever possible, international actors should work jointly with national reformers in government and civil society to develop a shared analysis of challenges and priorities.
- In the case of countries in transition from conflict or international disengagement, the use of simple integrated planning tools, such as the transitional results matrix, can help to set and monitor realistic priorities.

SUMMARY

- Coordination between international partners is particularly needed in the absence of strong national counterparts.
- Coordination is easier in those sectors where the government has the most well-defined responsibilities and clearest policies.
- Country-specific transition compacts that provide light, flexible agreements between national and international partners are proving useful for joint prioritisation and in improving aid coherence and effectiveness.
- Fragile and conflict-affected situations need a multi-dimensional response which places further demands in terms of coordinating each agency's expertise.
- Working groups organised by sector, theme or geographic area can be effective for structured discussions on coordination.
- Building on existing coordination arrangements rather than creating new ones allows for swifter reaction to crisis.

contradictions; and taking advantage of each other's expertise, experience and added value.

Principle 8 of the OECD's 10 [Principles for Good International Engagement in Fragile States and Situations](#) recognises the importance of cooperation (Box 1). But this principle was considered one of the four most 'off-track' in 2011, according to an [OECD monitoring survey](#).

This note looks at how to work in coordination with EU Services — DEVCO, ECHO and FPI at the EC, and EEAS (internal coordination) — as well as with EU Member States and other international actors (external coordination).

External coordination arrangements

A brief overview of different types of coordination arrangements with other international actors is presented in Table 1. It is not meant to provide a complete picture of those processes.

TABLE 1 Brief overview of some coordination processes

Process	Main purpose	Reference
New Deal	The New Deal sets out a framework for more effective international engagement in fragile and conflict-affected situations and commits its signatories to support inclusive country-owned transitions out of fragility. National actors and their international partners commit to use resources more effectively and more transparently, to invest more in country systems, to build critical local capacities and to deliver timely and predictable aid.	http://www.newdeal4peace.org/ See also Section 2.3 of Part I
Compacts	Light, flexible agreements between national and international partners on key priorities with an explicit strategy for how, and from which instruments, implementation will be financed. Appropriate management and monitoring structures should be agreed upon, recognising the need for them to remain light and flexible.	http://www.oecd.org/officialdocuments/publicdisplaydocumentpdf/?cote=DCD/DAC(2011)41&docLanguage=En
Multi-donor trust funds (MDTFs)	MDTFs are generic funding mechanisms that can channel and leverage resources in an effective, predictable and coordinated way. The EU can now lead MDTFs; these are called European Union trust funds (EUTFs) for external actions.	See also Note No 5
Post-conflict needs assessments (PCNAs)/ post-disaster needs assessments (PDNAs)	Assessments that are needed after a conflict (PCNA) and after a disaster (PDNA). They are government-led exercises, with integrated support from the EU, the UN, the World Bank and other national and international actors.	PCNA; PDNA
Transitional results matrix	A planning, coordination and management tool for national stakeholders and donors that helps to set and monitor realistic priorities in countries in transition from conflict or international disengagement.	http://www.oecd.org/dac/incaf/48634348.pdf

Internal coordination arrangements

Coordination arrangements are adjusted from time to time, and reference to the latest organisation charts may be needed.

At Headquarters, DEVCO's Fragility and Resilience Unit acts as a focal point for coordination efforts with both internal and external actors to address situations of conflict and fragility (Box 2). In this capacity, the unit — together with ECHO's Specific Thematic Policies Unit — co-chairs the **Transition Inter-service Group** which brings together EC service (mainly DEVCO, ECHO and FPI) and EEAS representatives to discuss developments relevant to humanitarian and development cooperation. The Transition Inter-service Group is the main internal structure in charge of supporting implementation of the Resilience Action Plan.

On crisis coordination, ad hoc **DEVCO Crisis Coordination Platforms (DCCPs)** act as an internal DEVCO coordination arrangement to ensure full coordination with other EU institutions and particularly with EEAS. The DCCP coordinates DEVCO's position for the **EEAS-led Crisis Platform**. The **EEAS-led Crisis Platform**, facilitated by the EEAS Crisis Response (CROC) and Operational Planning Department, can be convened on an ad hoc basis to provide EEAS and EC services with clear political and strategic guidance for management of a given crisis.

BOX 2 Main missions related to coordination arrangements of DEVCO's Fragility and Resilience Unit

- Provides support when necessary to EU Delegations dealing with major crisis and fragile situations, in coordination with geographic and thematic directorates and EEAS
- Promotes a coherent and effective 'Whole of EU' approach to crisis and fragile situations for EU instruments and policies in synergy with EEAS, CSDP and Member States, and in cooperation with outside bodies (UN, regional organisations, etc.)
- Acts as a focal point in DEVCO on actions and interventions in countries in fragile or crisis situations and facilitates coordination with ECHO, FPI and EEAS — including CSDP structures such as the Crisis Management and Planning Directorate (CMPD) and the Civilian Planning and Conduct Capability (CPCC), EU Member States, the UN System and continental and regional bodies such as the African Union Commission — with the collaboration of all other relevant Directorates/Units

Source: Main missions of DEVCO Directorates & Units.

On the coordination between humanitarian assistance and development, the **Joint Humanitarian-Development Framework (JHDF)** methodology allows humanitarian and development actors to work from a common understanding and to define joint priorities for collective actions. The development of a JHDF is best done through a workshop, ideally organised in-country with the EU Delegation and ECHO field office — and possibly with the participation of other stakeholders (country partners, Member State agencies and other donors).

At the country level, good work practices between the Delegations and the ECHO field offices have been identified with specific reference to linking relief, rehabilitation and development (LRRD) (Box 3).

Specific day-to-day, field-level working arrangements between the EU Delegations and ECHO field offices are described in Section 2 of the [Working arrangements document, SEC\(2012\)48](#).

This note presents lessons identified in two coordination processes that led to:

- the **LRRD Bêkou ('Hope') EU Trust Fund** in the Central African Republic as an outcome of the LRRD process which included a workshop based on the **JHDF methodology**;
- the **Tokyo Mutual Accountability Framework** in Afghanistan, an approach based on mutual commitments of the Afghan Government and the international community to help Afghanistan achieve its development and governance goals.

Key issues

- **Donors sometimes have different agendas, diverging national interests and different analyses of the situation.** Joint approaches are nevertheless essential to support complex state-building processes. Joint context-specific analysis is a key starting point. For partner countries, collective actions improve the predictability of resources and minimise transaction costs. They also stimulate national actors' efforts in support of the transition out of fragility. To the extent possible, the partner government (at the central, sub-national or local level) should lead aid coordination.
- **Humanitarian and development actors usually have different priorities, working cultures, target groups, timelines, budget lines and tools to operate.** There is no linear sequence from relief to rehabilitation to development (continuum) but rather a parallel approach of complementary programmes and coexisting phases of response (contiguum). Development practitioners should be more risk-informed, taking into account possible consequences of vulnerabilities, disasters and crises. Humanitarian actors should try to identify options where alignment to longer-term objectives is possible. The resilience approach calls for more systematic interactions between development and humanitarian actors. The JHDF methodology proposes a frame to bring together these two sets of actors.

BOX 3 Lessons learned from a study on good LRRD practices within the Delegations and the ECHO field offices

Knowledge of the characteristics of the two types of operations. Exchanges between ECHO and EU Delegations are simpler and more constructive when each person has some knowledge of the main characteristics of the other's operations. For example, in the case of an urbanisation project in Haiti, ECHO staff demonstrated good knowledge of the characteristics and challenges of development work in the Haitian context. Examples of collaboration between EU Delegations and ECHO that went well were those that were able to overcome mutual preconceptions (i.e. that development actors do not focus on the most pressing problems and that humanitarians slow down development by not working with governments).

Curiosity, motivation to better understand the global context (environment, major issues, actors, etc.) and a desire to improve the situation beyond one's own action. Niger is an example where curiosity and the motivation to refine operations and adapt them as much as possible to contextual priorities led actors to approach other operators, or to create or join information exchange networks. This encouraged them to open up to actors outside their own institution.

Exchange of experiences on a regular basis between emergency relief organisations and development organisations (ECHO, EU Delegation and other actors). Regular exchanges (formal work meetings, informal discussions or experience sharing) and the sharing of reports, analyses and secondary documents that help in making relevant and contextually appropriate decisions and the design of integrated programmes (LRRD) were very useful, notably in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Ethiopia, Haiti and Niger. In Ethiopia, the EU Delegation took part in an evaluation of ECHO, which helped to increase its understanding of ECHO's operations and the constraints and challenges it faces.

Joint analysis of the context and appropriate responses. In the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Niger, LRRD-related operations by the EU Delegation are based on joint analysis by the two bodies of the operational context and priorities to be taken into consideration. When possible, joint missions to the field are organised (initial assessment, evaluation and monitoring). In Ethiopia, the EU Delegation and ECHO are working in the same geographical areas, called '**EU Resilience Clusters**', chosen because of their high vulnerability, risk of drought and recurrent humanitarian presence. The EU Delegation and ECHO support the development of a long-term vision per cluster and a **joint monitoring and evaluation framework**. Moreover, they often work with the same consortia of NGOs; use the same coordination set-up at local, regional and national levels; and jointly work on research, exchange of lessons learned and impact assessment.

Source: Good LRRD practices within the Delegations and the ECHO Field offices, Groupe URD, January 2013, 'Methodological Support and Training for Project and Programme Management' Programme.

- **The more partners that are involved, the more complex the decision-making process becomes.** However, using analysis and information made available by others (e.g. donors' risk assessments and the related mitigating measures) and/or working jointly on assessments is key to making rapid, informed decisions.
- **Coordination tends to decrease speed and flexibility when reacting to a situation.** The transaction costs of coordination can be high. However, gaps in international assistance and uncoordinated activities may be harmful to peacebuilding and state-building processes. Working on existing coordination mechanisms is necessary. Generic coordination mechanisms should be adapted to the local context before a crisis occurs, and re-evaluated afterwards.

Additional resources

- EU, May 2007, [EU Code of Conduct on Complementarity and Division of Labour in Development Policy](#)
- EU, June 2009, [EU Toolkit for the Implementation of Complementarity and Division of Labour in Development Policy](#)
- EC, 2014, [The Busan Commitments, An analysis of EU progress and performance](#)
- The DAC International Network on Conflict and Fragility (INCAF): <http://www.oecd.org/dac/incaf/>

Case studies

In addition to the two cases on the Central African Republic and Afghanistan presented here, Somalia also represents an interesting experience regarding the Somali New Deal Compact. This process was initiated in December 2012 by the Federal Government of Somalia and the international community, with the EU taking the role of lead donor. The compact prioritises Somalia's peacebuilding and state-building goals for the next three years (2014–16), with one chapter dedicated to 'a new partnership for more effective international assistance'. The compact's primary aims are to diminish overlap and duplication of efforts, and increase government ownership as well as coordination between the EU services, the Member States and others. See more at <http://capacity4dev.ec.europa.eu/article/nuts-and-bolts-new-deal-somalia#sthash.5tlQ2f71.dpuf>.

Central African Republic: LRRD process and the LRRD Bêkou ('Hope') EU Trust Fund

SOURCE



Dominique Albert, ECHO; Erica Gerretsen and Théodore Vallegeas, DEVCO; and Olivier Ray, Agence Française de Développement

(Photo credit: Pierre Terdjman for the Agence Française de Développement)

CONTEXT, CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

The Central African Republic has been a typical 'aid orphan' in the grey zone between humanitarian assistance and development. The coup d'état in March 2013 plunged the country into serious conflict during which thousands have died and close to 1 million people have fled their homes; refugees currently account for nearly one-quarter of the population. The country faces a bleak mix of governance, economic, social, humanitarian and security challenges. The transitional government is very weak, and the absence of a minimally functioning state and its confinement to the capital (Bangui) is one of the root causes of the crisis. Sub-regional problems include trafficking, poaching and agro-pastoralist clashes.

The Central African Republic endorsed the New Deal and is a member of the [g7+ group of fragile states](#). There are few donors in the country, although a strong commitment has been made by the EU, which is co-piloting the New Deal implementation with France.

ACTIONS TAKEN

An LRRD workshop was held in February 2014 with participants from the EC (DEVCO, ECHO), EEAS, Member States (France and the United Kingdom) and a small number of external experts. The workshop built on a desk study (by Inspire consortium) and a joint EU-UN conflict analysis. The desk study and workshop were structured along three focal areas: food security, health and education.

The workshop was prepared with the [JHDF methodology](#), which was adapted to the country context. The sequencing of the steps outlined in [Note No 4](#) on resilience follows the JHDF method.

The workshop started with a [common analysis of the situation based on the conflict analysis and desk study](#): what are the root causes of the crisis and their interplay?

A [diagnostic for each sector](#) was presented and completed by the participants. Taking into account the diagnostic and the existing interventions, they identified the most vulnerable target groups and priorities for the short and medium term.

A [matrix of interventions for each sector](#) was designed in working groups. Preferred options were selected according to each option's benefits and limitations.

A [donor matrix](#) was then compiled based on what each donor has in its portfolio. This provided an opportunity to analyse intervention coverage, possible gaps and overlaps.

A final session was held on the [identification of coordination mechanisms](#). Participants agreed on the need for more practical coordination between the most active humanitarian and development actors for the identification of interventions, monitoring and evaluation.

The main outcome of the LRRD process was the **establishment of an EU trust fund**, the first time the EU will lead a multi-donor trust fund. The LRRD Bêkou EU Trust Fund is planned in three phases from the end of 2014 until 2019. It will support the Central African Republic in the LRRD process and will become the EU vehicle for LRRD.

LESSONS LEARNED AND NEXT STEPS

- **We should think ‘outside the box’ in crisis situations.**
- **The JHDF methodology should be adapted to the context.** It can be based on existing studies so that the first step is an agreement on what has been previously analysed. **The process of going through the methodology is more important than the final framework.**
- The sector approach has limits and was questioned by some participants, but it allowed for the identification of operational priorities in each area. It does not prevent the promotion of an inter-sectoral approach on the ground — for example, providing food security through an education project (school canteen). **It is essential for group work to focus on different sectors, thematic areas or geographic regions.**
- In the situation of the contiguity between humanitarian, security and development stakes, the LRRD Bêkou EU Trust Fund is a unique opportunity **to get fast results while building efforts over the medium and long term.** The fund will serve as a joint funding modality, as a framework for strategic coordination and as a platform for policy dialogue. A flexible approach will be used to adjust humanitarian, rehabilitation and development actions to a changing context. The continuous involvement of Central African Republic authorities is one of the trust fund’s objectives.
- **One of the challenges is to go beyond simple coordination and to act collectively:** by aligning a common technical and financial partners’ strategy on the road map of the interim government and on the transition compact; and creating mutual means, missions and expertise, as well as a portfolio of integrated projects.
- **The EU role will be to mobilise and coordinate expertise** among Member State agencies according to their comparative advantage. The EU is not supposed to be a 29th European donor. Its value added will be to organise, facilitate and encourage collective actions among Europeans and possibly more broadly, to allow for knowledge sharing.

FURTHER INFORMATION

- http://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/where/acp/country-cooperation/central-african-republic/central-african-republic_en.htm
- <http://www.unocha.org/car>

The Tokyo Mutual Accountability Framework: mutual commitments of the Afghan government and international community

SOURCE



Kristian Orsini, EU Delegation to Afghanistan (Kabul 2011–13)

CONTEXT, CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

Following the 9/11 terrorist attacks and the overturn of the emirate of Afghanistan, the December 2001 Bonn Conference initiated a post-conflict state-building process. A Joint Coordination and Monitoring Board was established in 2006 chaired by the Afghan government and the international community. This is the main coordination mechanism for assistance to Afghanistan, supported by three Standing Committees (security, governance and socioeconomic development) and a permanent forum for aid coordination. Regular consultations with the international community take place through weekly coordination meetings chaired alternately by the Ministry of Finance and the UN Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA). There are also two major multi-donor trust funds in the country, namely the Afghanistan Reconstruction Trust Fund (ARTF) and the Law and Order Trust Fund for Afghanistan (LOTFA).

However, the Standing Committees and the Joint Coordination and Monitoring Board lacked focus, and UNAMA was unable to provide the necessary leadership to improve the coherence of aid.

The main challenges linked to the Afghan context were as follows.

- **The very limited government capacity to absorb aid.** Aid flows outside the national systems have been vast, and donors have rarely consulted or coordinated with the government for off-budget projects.
- **Corruption.** This was a major issue and recognised by the government.
- **Various pressure groups in-country.** This led to too many government priorities and difficulties in carrying out reforms.
- **A period awaiting political transition and dominated by electoral competition.** This transition also required the presence of many donors with conflicting priorities.
- **Aid being made subordinate to military-driven short-term stabilisation needs.** One result of this was the provincial reconstruction team, which was yet another form of bypassing and disempowering state institutions.

The strong pressure from the donors to stabilise the country through necessary reforms of governance and economic growth led to the endorsement of the Tokyo Mutual Accountability Framework (TMAF).

ACTIONS TAKEN

At the Tokyo conference in 2012, the international community pledged to improve aid effectiveness and to support sustainable growth and development of Afghanistan throughout the transformation decade (2015–24), with USD 16 billion for the next four years, establishing a stronger foundation for partnership. In return, the Afghan government committed to important economic and governance reforms, including holding credible elections, tackling corruption and improving financial transparency; and promoting human rights — including the rights of women and girls — sustainable democracy, good governance and economic growth.

Discussions at the creation of the TMAF included addressing the following questions.

- Who should lead coordinating efforts, given the weak government leadership?
- How should priorities be selected from the many set by the government?
- How could an enforcement mechanism be developed that would not lead to a negative impact on the final beneficiaries or losses for development agencies?

Ultimately the last point was not agreed upon, with several donors uncomfortable with the idea of setting up a **joint conditionality enforcing scheme**. This proved to be a weakness of the TMAF in light of the slow progress of government, given the weak credibility of sanctions.

The government and the international community agreed on a set of long-term indicators to monitor progress towards meeting their mutual commitments. In addition, a set of ‘hard deliverables’ were agreed on in order to assess progress in the short term — for example, ‘by June 2013, and annually thereafter, each Development Partner routes 50 percent of its aid through the National Budget’. While five donors took the lead in interacting with the government for the international community (Australia, Canada, Denmark, the EU, Finland, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, the Netherlands, South Korea, Sweden, Turkey, the United Kingdom, UNAMA, the United States and the World Bank), **the other donors had an advisory role on an ad hoc basis according to their comparative advantage**. Broader consultations among donors were held in the weekly donor coordination meeting, while formal discussions took place through the pre-existing structure of the Standing Committees and the Joint Coordination and Monitoring Board.

Achievements include the endorsement of various laws — notably, promoting implementation of the law on the elimination of violence against women with the release by the Ministry of Women’s Affairs of its baseline report, the endorsement by the lower house (Wolesi Jirga) of the laws on minerals and value-added tax, and the introduction to the National Assembly of the laws relating to anti-money-laundering and combating the financing of terrorism and the law on tax administration (the law on value-added tax was passed by the upper house (Meshrano Jirga) in June 2014) — and the Aid Management Policy, which captures the New Deal commitment for mutual TRUST. The policy prioritises transparency, risk sharing, the use and strengthening of country systems, the strengthening of capacity and the provision of timely and predictable aid. Progress has also been made with regard to local governance, elections and human rights, including women’s rights.

LESSONS LEARNED

- The TMAF is useful as an instrument for political pressure, but ultimately it lacked teeth.
- It is a useful framework to **focus government action** on short-term deliverables rather than high-level outcomes (e.g. Millennium Development Goal indicators).
- The strong pressure from donors to trigger reform was key in the process, notably the **shared identification among donors of what should be prioritised**.
- Having an **inclusive process**, notably acceptance of the governance structure, was essential.
- Having a **clearly identified counterpart**, in this case the Ministry of Finance, was very helpful.
- Weak government, however, prevented a greater degree of aid coordination. Ultimately, donors felt that complying with pledges (how much) was enough, and did not sufficiently push the government to develop a framework about what to fund and how to fund it.
- **The TMAF was mainly an instrument for governance change and reforms.** Aid coordination occurred in a limited way through this framework and was instead the result of several years of work. This was the case in health and education, where better defined responsibilities of the government, clear policies and the limited presence of a few core donors made coordination easier.
- **Establishing a set of restricted coordination leadership helps:** in this case, having five major donors leading the coordination and negotiation processes, with decisions taken by all.

FURTHER INFORMATION

- <http://www.g7plus.org/afghanistan/>
- http://mof.gov.af/Content/files/TMAF_SOM_Report_Final_English.pdf
- <http://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/N1442913.pdf>