



The Peace and Conflict Tool Box gathers knowledge material and method support on an integrated conflict perspective and peaceful and inclusive societies, in the form of Tools, Briefs and Thematic Overviews.

With an integrated conflict perspective opportunities to contribute to conflict prevention and inclusive peacebuilding are identified, and risks of conflict insensitive practices are mitigated.

## [ TOOL ]

# Building and assessing institutional capacity to integrate conflict sensitivity

### INTRODUCTION

Earlier attempts to integrate conflict sensitivity, foremost as a project management tool, has led to the recognition that conflict sensitivity should be institutionalised at different levels of the organisation – in the overall organisational capacity and management processes. However, while an institutionalised commitment to conflict sensitivity is important, what matters in the end is how these commitments are reflected in the implementation, through sound *operational practices*.

A large share of development work may not explicitly refer to being conflict sensitive and engaging in peacebuilding. However, many initiatives may implicitly include elements that support conflict sensitive ways of working. Such practices include strong contextual understanding, participatory and accountable partnerships, flexibility and responsiveness, etc. The concepts and methodologies applied in Sida's additional prioritised thematic perspectives – human rights-based approach, gender equality and environmental sustainability – may implicitly support conflict-sensitive practice.

Similarly, having all the policies, strategies and tools in place, is no guarantee for conflict sensitive implementation and outcomes if these commitments are not actively implemented at all levels of the organisation. Moreover, a number of external risks limit our capacity to adhere to conflict sensitivity and we are sometimes left with very few good options.

Nevertheless, active monitoring, evaluation and learning activities help to capture *results from a conflict perspective* by gathering evidence on whether the activities generate intended or unintended positive or negative effects on the conflict context.

### Purpose and intended use:

The list of guiding questions below is intended to guide the process of strengthening Sida's and partners' capacity and management processes for integrating a conflict perspective. Sida staff can also refer to this checklist when assessing partners' capacity to plan, design, implement and monitor conflict-sensitive programmes/projects.

Questions in the checklist may also serve as source of inspiration when elaborating Terms of References for reviews and evaluations.

**A. INSTITUTIONAL CAPACITY****Commitment, culture, resources, knowledge and tools.**

- Policies/strategies, annual work plans, budgets and other key planning instruments refer to conflict sensitivity?
- Management and leadership culture support learning, flexibility and responsive programming?
- Analytical processes and strategic choices are systematised and well-documented (lessons learned)?
- Management and staff understand (have shared understanding) and are able to explain why conflict sensitivity is important to their respective areas of responsibility? Have they received training?
- Guidelines and tools on conflict sensitivity are available to staff and partners?

**B. MANAGEMENT PROCESSES****Strategic, programme and project levels.**

- Strategic programme/project planning and direction is informed by a conflict analysis or similar analysis taking into consideration root causes to conflict, conflict risks and opportunities, dividers and connectors?
- Conflict sensitivity considerations are reflected in the initiative (overall design, objectives and/or in the risk analysis)?
- Opportunities to support conflict prevention/resolution and/or peacebuilding are identified and reflected in the strategic direction?
- M&E and learning frameworks include reference to measuring intended and unintended outcomes from a conflict perspective?
- Flexibility, adaptation and responsiveness principles are built into the project/programme?

**C. OPERATIONAL PRACTICES****Approaches, values and principles.**

- Core principles of the conflict perspective (participatory approach, inclusiveness, impartiality, transparency, respect, accountability, partnership and coordination, complementarity and coherence, timeliness and flexibility and responsiveness) are reflected in operational practices?
- Risk mitigation from a Do-No-Harm perspective is systematically applied in project and programme implementation?
- Opportunities to contribute to positive change (e.g. by transforming attitudes, structures and institutions that have a bearing on the conflict context) are identified and acted upon?
- Structural causes of conflict (such as gender-based violence, gender inequality and other patterns of exclusion and discrimination) that risk leading to violent conflict are addressed in the project/programme?

**D. RESULTS****Intended and unintended impact on the conflict context.**

Through M&E and learning activities (internal and external), we have gathered evidence demonstrating that:

- Efforts to mitigate the risk of doing harm have been effective, i.e. we are doing more good than bad?
- Activities have had a positive effect on the conflict context, i.e. we are contributing to conflict prevention, conflict resolution and/or peacebuilding within the limitations of our respective mandates and objectives?
- Operational challenges and lessons learnt, including from situations where activities may have had an unintended negative effect on the conflict context have been documented and analysed?