



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 ]

# Conflict sensitivity in programme management

At the project and programme management level, a conflict sensitive approach entails careful analysis, design and monitoring of the possible positive or negative impacts Sida-funded initiatives may have on existing tensions/conflicts in a given context. The purpose is to minimise unintended negative impacts (“Do-No-Harm”) and to maximise positive impacts, i.e. identifying both risks and opportunities related to conflicts and tensions. These risks and opportunities exist in all societies but are higher in contexts affected by conflict, violence and fragility.

### What are the key practical steps to integrate conflict sensitivity in planning, design, implementation and monitoring of programmes?

The <i>what</i> and <i>how</i> of conflict sensitivity	
<b>Core principles:</b> Participatory approach, Inclusiveness, Impartiality, Transparency, Respect, Accountability, Partnership and Coordination, Complementarity and Coherence, Timeliness and Flexibility and Responsiveness	
What to do	How to do it
Understand the context	Undertake conflict analysis and make sure to update the analysis on a regular basis
Understand the interaction between your intervention and the context	Link this analysis to the programme environment and to the programme cycle
Identify, assess, mitigate, manage and monitor risks (from a Do-No-Harm perspective) and identify/ take opportunities to support positive change in society (in attitudes, behaviours, relations, etc.)	Plan, implement, monitor and evaluate the programme with conflict sensitivity in focus (making sure that all voices are heard, risks are considered and mitigated, etc.)

### Purpose and intended use:

This tool provides guidance to understanding and applying conflict sensitivity at the programme management level, including how to integrate the perspective in the context analysis, design of the intervention, risk management and mitigation and in monitoring activities. It also provides information on central aspects of Sida’s conflict sensitivity assessments of partners and programmes.

### How does Sida assess the conflict sensitivity of partners and programmes?

1. A sound judgement, based on Sida's existing knowledge and context analysis, of whether the planned intervention may have a negative or positive impact on existing conflicts or tensions; and
2. An assessment of the partner's capacity to make the same judgment and adjusting its programming to avoid negative impact and contribute to positive impact in relation to the conflict context (e.g. prevent conflict, reduce tensions and/or supporting peace and security.)

The questions below serve as guidance to ensure conflict sensitivity in Sida-supported projects and programmes.

#### Assessment of the context and conflict analyses

- Does the implementing partner demonstrate strong understanding of the context?
- There is a documented understanding of power dynamics, root causes, drivers of conflict (sources of tension) and drivers of peace (sources of cohesion)?
- Is there in-depth understanding of how different identify groups (ethnic, religious, clan, faction, gender, etc.) are affected by the conflict, and the differential impacts of conflict on the lives of women, men, boys and girls are considered?

#### Relevance assessment of the design of the intervention including risks and opportunities in relation to the conflict context

Does the partner explicitly reflect on how the proposed **intervention interacts with identified conflict risks** (including sources of tensions) as well as **opportunities in strategic choices made** (e.g. selection of local partners, beneficiaries and geographic target?)

*Examples of specific issues to look for include:*

- Opportunities to contribute to conflict prevention and peacebuilding are identified and acted upon?
- Local partners and beneficiaries represent different sides of the conflict or has a strategic choice to support a specific group in the conflict been made?
- Where will the programme geographically be implemented and how does that choice relate to identified conflict risks and opportunities?
- Are the positive and potential negative implications of these choices reflected up on?
- There is an explicit reflection on perceptions of the implementing partners by relevant stake-holders, including conflict parties?
- There are assigned responsibilities (for all implementing partners) to ensure conflict sensitive implementation?

### What actions could be taken to strengthen the approach to conflict sensitivity?

- If strong context understanding and conflict-sensitive practices are not explicitly documented, but assessed as inherent in the organisation's experiences and approaches: ask the organisation to update its proposal by clarifying and systematising its approach to conflict sensitivity or make it an agreement condition to have such a clarification in the next annual report. Also consider integrating conflict sensitivity as a key dialogue objective during the implementation phase.
- If your assessment is that the planned intervention may have a negative impact in relation to conflict, and the organisation lacks both explicit and implicit assessment of the risk of harmful interaction between the intervention and the conflict context, – redesign of the intervention or rejection of the proposal should be considered.

#### Monitoring of results

While it is important to analyse how conflict-sensitivity is reflected in the design of the intervention it is equally important to adopt a sound implementation approach, in which flexibility and adaptation to rapidly changing conflict dynamics are key aspects. A program that appears conflict sensitive on paper is not guaranteed to be so in practice. Equally so, while some programme proposals lack explicit recognition of conflict sensitivity, the partner may prove to have sound operational practices that result in a conflict sensitive implementation of the programme.

Thus, continued monitoring of the conflict sensitivity of the intervention is necessary. Such monitoring should include field visits and meetings with the implementing partner organisations. Questions to consider are:

- How is the partner monitoring the context and adapting to changing realities? Are monitoring and evaluation systems updated to take into account the current analysis of the conflict?
- Is the partner monitoring the positive and potential negative impact of programme activities on the peace and conflict context?
- Are there ways to strengthen the program's potential to contribute to conflict prevention and peace-building during implementation?

### Where to find further guidance?

Sida's staff: Contact Sida's Peace and Security Advisors and/or the Helpdesk on Human Security and Humanitarian Assistance<sup>1</sup> for support on how to strengthen the conflict sensitivity of the initiative. For further guidance in Trac and PlanIt, see Tool: Conflict Sensitivity in Trac & Tool: Policy Marker on Peace and Security.

Partners: Please refer to additional Tools and Briefs provided in this Tool Box, and do not hesitate to contact your responsible Sida programme manager for further dialogue and guidance.

<sup>1</sup> <https://inside.sida.se/samarbeta/humansecurity/Helpdesk/Forms/AllItems.aspx>

### Some recommended resources on conflict sensitivity in project and programme management

CDA Collaborative Learning Projects ([CDA – http://cdacollaborative.org/](http://cdacollaborative.org/)) gathers numerous resources on conflict sensitivity and do-no-harm, for example “[The Do No Harm Chain: Linking Analysis to Action using both Do No Harm Frameworks](#)”

Swisspeace; [KOFF Conflict Sensitivity Fact Sheet](#)

Saferworld: [Conflict-sensitive approaches to development, humanitarian assistance and peacebuilding](#)

### The Do-No-Harm Approach was originally developed by CDA – Collaborative Learning Projects in 1999, and builds on the following key lessons:

1. Development cooperation and humanitarian assistance initiatives are **never neutral**, but rather **become a part of the conflict context**;
2. There are two realities in any conflict situation – **dividers** and **connectors**. Dividers are those factors that people are fighting about or cause tension. Connectors bring people together and/or tend to reduce tension;
3. Development cooperation and humanitarian assistance **have an effect on both dividers and connectors**. Conflict insensitive initiatives can increase tensions while conflict sensitive initiatives can support local capacities for peace;
4. An intervention consists of both **actions** and **behaviours**. Actions reflect the resources being brought into a context (what are we offering and doing?), while behaviours reflect the conduct of the actor bringing the resources (how are we doing it?);
5. The **details** (what, why, who, by whom, when, where, and how) of cooperation strategies and programmes matter;
6. There are always **options**. Redirecting a strategy or a programme can help to mitigate negative impacts (increased tensions) and increase the opportunity to contribute to conflict prevention and peacebuilding.