

INTRODUCTION

1. What is Conflict Sensitive Programme/ Project Management (CSPM)?

CSPM describes strategies, procedures and tools designed for effective management of development and humanitarian programmes in countries experiencing political tensions, violent conflict, or suffering from the aftermath of an armed conflict or war. Thus most of such countries find themselves in a fragile context.

2. Why do we need CSPM?

In conflict contexts, traditional programme management is challenged:

- Interventions often encounter problems such as security risks for program staff and infrastructure, lack of access to beneficiaries and program partners, or a political climate that hinders work in conflict-affected areas or with all relevant actors.
- Development as well as humanitarian interventions can inadvertently escalate political tensions or armed violence.
- Political tensions are often accompanied by state fragility and might lead to outbreaks of violence or even violent conflict.
- Development actors in fragile, conflict contexts are faced with a variety of political challenges. Partner governments can become conflict parties while donors and agencies are confronted with the problem of armed, non-state groups that oppose a partner government. Moreover, the very admission that a country is experiencing political tensions or violent conflict is in itself a political statement that is often avoided by partner governments.
- The conflict situation in a country often changes the priorities of the beneficiaries and partners we are working with. What was true at the moment of signing the cooperation agreement may no longer correspond to what people want and need. These situations are also often accompanied by human rights violations. Agencies therefore have to adapt their programmes to the new emerging priorities; long term planning exercises may not be adequate when the immediate future of people and programmes is uncertain.
- A deeper political understanding of development has created a need for closer cooperation between political/diplomatic and development/humanitarian actors of donor countries.

Joint Swiss strategies/plans in different countries (e.g. Nepal, Sri Lanka) exemplify how to address these issues.

- Donor harmonization is challenged by donors' differing interpretations of, interests in and responses to fragile, conflict contexts. Lack of donor harmonisation may hinder finding coherent answers to the questions of how to stay engaged in fragile, conflict contexts and how to protect the humanitarian or development space.
- Situations of political tension and violent conflict are subject to rapid change. This causes development actors to discuss the possibilities of continuing or ending development work, scaling operations up or down, or finding alternative aid delivery modes. The reality of work in conflict zones has challenged the linear, upstream-oriented understanding of the relief-rehabilitation-development continuum. Consequently, development work is often possible in only some parts of the country, while other areas are heavily affected by violent conflict. If a long-term cooperation with the country has already been established, it is important to stay engaged and not to withdraw activities completely. Existing relationships with the partner government and other partners can be used as entry points for cooperation that might contribute to positive changes. Moreover, when the situation improves, enhanced development cooperation can more easily be reactivated.
- Staff, partners and beneficiaries who are working or living in countries with violent conflict are constantly exposed to security risks that have an impact on their work and on their lives. CSPM can help to identify these psychosocial tensions, and fosters adequate management responses.

3. Objective of CSPM

CSPM aims at supporting SDC and its partners' staff in addressing the above-mentioned challenges by providing them with principles, strategies, procedures and tools based on both a variety of experiences acquired through SDC programmes in conflict contexts and the knowledge of the international community.

4. What kind of conflicts is CSPM useful for?

Firstly, CSPM addresses all potential, existing or past situations of violent conflict in partner countries. It aims, for example, at supporting development and humanitarian programmes in such situations. Secondly, elements of CSPM address the consequences of armed violence for partners, beneficiaries and co-operation staff.

5. What kind of development/humanitarian work does CSPM address: country strategies/plans, programmes, projects, COOFs?

CSPM provides principles (the SDC Peace-building Guidelines, also including the 'Do-no-harm' principle), procedures, and tools to adapt country strategies and programmes to situations of political tensions and violent conflict on various levels:

- CSPM for country strategies and programmes provides:

Cooperation Offices and the geographical units with principles, adequate analytical instruments, possible strategies and tools to adapt their programme to a given situation;

Cooperation Offices with management hints, as a strategy change entails the alteration of requirements, for example an appropriate awareness-raising and training of staff;

- On the project level, the CSPM provides SDC and partner organisations' project staff with principles (the SDC Peace-building Guidelines), procedures and tools to integrate the 'Do-no-harm' approach and conflict sensitivity requirements into the 'Project Cycle Management'.

6. What is the difference between CSPM and 'classic' programme management?

From a management point of view, it is important to understand the difference between managing a development programme in a 'non-conflict' situation compared to that in a fragile context marked by political tension or violent conflict. The following table demonstrates that it is not the main elements of programme management that change, but rather the way they are applied. 'Programme Management in 'non-conflict' and 'Programme Management in conflict' should be seen as continuum opposites given the possibility that a country context might gradually slide from one phase into the other.

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Programme Management in 'non-conflict'	Programme Management in fragile contexts/violent conflicts – (CSPM)
Donor harmonisation towards development effectiveness; National Development Plan and/or PRSP as main reference of development framework.	Donor harmonisation towards development effectiveness in a fragile, conflict context (see DAC Guidelines); often PRSP only as reference; recognition that the central government cannot be the central actor in development work.
The inclusion of SDC's cross-cutting/transversal issues such as gender & governance and other relevant themes in country context, e.g. the environment or HIV.	In addition to SDC's cross-cutting/transversal issues, it is important to identify issues that are relevant in a conflict context. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Gender and governance remain relevant, but may be tackled from a conflict perspective; for example, local governance issues might be more important than national ones. 2. Include conflict as an additional, transversal theme by considering the causes of conflict (for example, social exclusion or limited access to resources).
Depending on the development context, special projects concerning governance or other issues could be an element of a given country programme.	Often special projects focusing on Human Rights or peacebuilding objectives are added to a given country programme.
Working with national and local governments as main partners along with the civil society and the private sector	Working differently with national and local governments as they are a 'conflict party'; often increased work with other partners
Monitoring of the development environment	Additional monitoring of the conflict environment: more comprehensive MERV, local risk analysis
Standard annual risk & security assessment as part of the annual programming exercise	Increased risk & security assessment and management, including regular updates of the Local Security Plan
Knowledge Management	Systematic documentation of lessons learnt across all levels including dissemination inside SDC (geographical units) and internationally

7. Process of Programme / Strategy Adaptation

Although general guidance in the cooperation strategy/ programme adaptation is possible, context-specific adaptation is indispensable. This chapter gives a basic overview of what the programme/strategy adaptation in conflict/fragile contexts means and entails. The here-following major process steps represent an ideal process. They can take place in parallel and/or in a different order depending on the situation in the country of the programme.

Ideally, the programme/strategy adaptation follows a **strategic decision**, as was the case in Nepal where the SDC, after collaboration with other donors and agencies, decided to stay engaged with a development programme during violent conflict. An **analysis** of the conflict situation and the relation of the country programmes and its projects to the conflict is necessary in order to understand, for instance, the root or proximate causes of conflict that need to be considered and appropriately built into programme and project designs. The development of a conflict sensitive, **comprehensive and coherent strategy** for a country programme is required, duly including political (peace, human rights) and conflict sensitive development policy and operational elements, as well as the linkages between the levels/elements. Such a strategy **implementation** involves:

- Conflict-focussed donor harmonisation
- Project-by-project adaptation including setting of priorities;
- Development sector adaptation
- Assessing geographic orientation
- Assessing partnerships in the light of conflict causes and dynamics
- Linkage between development-diplomacy and human rights
- Assessing regional cooperation in the light of the conflict
- Ongoing analysis/monitoring of context (MERY)
- Risk & security assessment and management

The programme/strategy calls for strategic **management** that includes, but is not limited to, leadership commitment and the empowerment of the local COOF and project staff. Furthermore, management of resources, e.g. flexibility in budget allocation and re-organisation within COOF and its relations to projects, might be additional elements. Staff working in conflict affected areas should be offered psycho-social care. Consistent documentation of lessons learnt on all levels (**knowledge management**) should be systematically introduced, together with **communication** both through internal (in the field: COOF team and partner; and COOF/HQ/PD/Embassy) and external (press, national stakeholders, other donors, parliament, etc.) channels.

8. Structure of the CSPM folder

Part 1: SDC Peacebuilding Guidelines

Part 2: CSPM for the country strategy/
programme level
CSPM for the project level

Part 3: TIP Sheets

Part 4: Resource Pack
Reference to the Resource Pack from
International Alert
Psycho-social approach
Examples of country programme/
strategy adaptations
"Asia Brief: Nepal: Development in
conflict" Nov. 2006