



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]

Sida's approach to an integrated conflict perspective

WHY DOES SIDA INTEGRATE A CONFLICT PERSPECTIVE IN DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION?

A growing number of Sida's partner countries are marked by fragility, conflict and violence (FCV), as well as increased levels of social tension – leading to lack of human security and increased or sustained levels of poverty.

These conditions create increased challenges for Sida and its partners to contribute to poverty reduction and attain the objectives of the Swedish Policy for Global Development. As of July 2015, Sida's government instruction therefore prescribes an integrated conflict perspective in all development cooperation activities.

Applying a conflict perspective on development cooperation is essentially about having a good knowledge about the context where a development program is implemented, taking into account how contextual factors affect the implementation of a development program, and how the development program can intentionally or unintentionally affect ongoing and submerged conflicts/tensions. The perspective also emphasises the importance of designing development cooperation at portfolio- and contribution levels with the aim to minimise the negative effect and maximise the positive contribution to conflict prevention, peacebuilding, reconciliation and conflict management. It requires an understanding that women, men, girls and boys are affected differently by conflict and have different possibilities and resources to contribute to sustained peace. Conflict analysis and conflict sensitivity analysis are key tools in applying a conflict perspective.

WHEN TO APPLY THE INTEGRATED CONFLICT PERSPECTIVE

The **conflict cycle** illustrates that a conflict perspective needs to be integrated beyond situations directly affected by violent conflict. In order to prevent conflicts from becoming violent, it is important to recognise and react to **situations of submerged tensions**, and to **situations of rising tension** in a society. Development processes, shift of power-relations and behavioural change usually do not take place without certain tensions, but a fundamental guiding principle for Sida is that societal conflicts should be solved peacefully and not with violence or threats of violence.

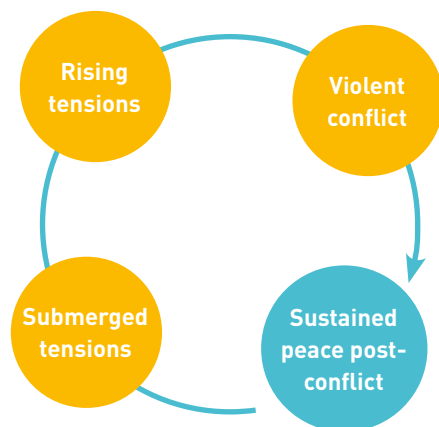
Purpose and intended use:

This tool explains the integrated conflict perspective and provides guidance (including when and how) to the systematic integration of the perspective at strategic, portfolio and project/programme levels.

Key audience is Sida staff, but the tool may also be useful for Sida partners for orientation of Sida's key processes as well as strategic priorities in Swedish development cooperation.

In situations of **violent conflict** it may be most self-evident to apply a conflict perspective. However, the character and intensity of violent conflict may differ considerably depending on the context, and thus the approach needs to be adapted. Numerous ongoing violent conflicts tend to be protracted. Alongside the humanitarian assistance to respond to the immediate effects of conflict, Sida is providing considerable support for longer-term development to address root causes of conflict and underlying grievances, as well as support to manage conflicts and build peace.

Post-conflict situations are often fragile and characterised by lack of rule of law, lack of access to justice and sustained or increased levels of violence. In these situations, it is crucial to address root causes of the previous conflict, aimed at preventing relapse into violence, and achieving inclusive and sustained peace.



HOW TO APPLY AN INTEGRATED CONFLICT PERSPECTIVE

Too often development initiatives are implemented without consideration of conflict dynamics. We might not see the context as one where violent conflict may erupt, i.e. our view of when to apply an integrated conflict perspective is too narrow, or we might not see how our specific initiative interacts with and effects conflict dynamics due to our limited knowledge about root causes of tensions.

An integrated conflict perspective signifies two levels of ambition, depending on the given context, overall mandate and intended objectives. A distinction is made between working **in conflict** (any development initiative designed and implemented in in any phase of the conflict cycle) and working **on conflict** (i.e. activities aimed at contributing to peace and security).

Working in conflict requires risk awareness as well as conflict sensitivity

1. **Risk awareness** – how the conflict situation affects the development initiative
2. **Conflict Sensitivity** – *the ability of an organisation to understand how the development initiative may affect the conflict situation, and how to minimise potential negative impacts and maximise positive impacts on conflict dynamics, within an organization's given priorities/objectives (mandate¹).*

Conflict insensitive development cooperation risks reinforcing tensions or conflict, while conflict sensitive development cooperation can contribute to strengthening local capacities for peace.

There is a built in potential associated with identifying possible risks of negative impact of a strategy or a program in relation to conflict dynamics. If carefully designed to avoid the risk of a negative impact it can actually also be turned into a possibility to have a positive impact on the conflict situation, to work *on* conflict.

Working on conflict requires an additional depth of analysis to:

3. **Promote peace and security** – Understand and address root causes of violence and conflict and including conflict prevention, peace and human security as a primary or secondary objective.

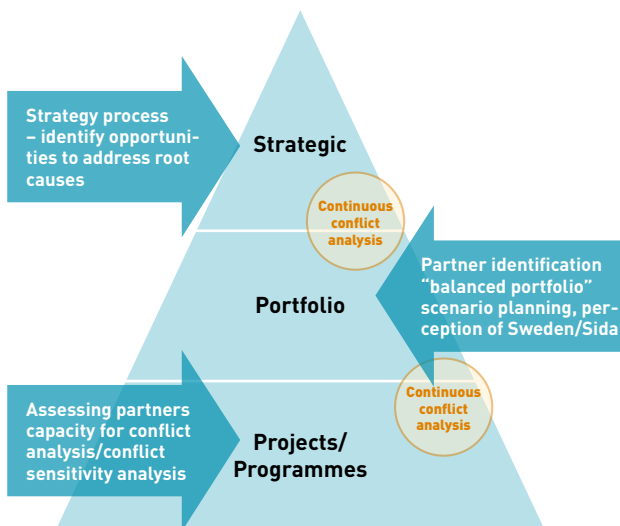
It is key to understand that also development initiatives specifically designed to promote human security or build peace can negatively affect the conflict situation. It all depends on how the initiatives are designed and implemented. It is therefore important that such initiatives also apply a conflict sensitive approach, i.e. 1 and 2 above.

¹ Foremost humanitarian actors, could in some contexts, be limited by their humanitarian mandates to incorporate peacebuilding as a primary or secondary objective.

INTEGRATION OF A CONFLICT PERSPECTIVE AT STRATEGIC, PORTFOLIO AND PROJECT/ PROGRAMME LEVELS

Several studies on conflict sensitivity have highlighted that donors rarely consider conflict sensitivity at the strategic level, but rather that conflict sensitivity is “pushed down the lines” to the project/programme level and to something that mainly concerns partner organisations in their implementation.²

However, strategic decisions during the development, operationalization and implementation of the country/regional/global strategy also may have negative and/or positive impacts on conflict contexts. A conflict perspective should therefore be systematically integrated into Sida's key processes.



Strategy level: developing strategy proposals

To ensure that Swedish country engagement is both conflict sensitive and takes full opportunity of the potential to contribute to peace and security, the process of developing a strategy proposal is the very foundation.

It is important to firmly base the strategy proposal on an analysis that takes into account current tensions or conflict dynamics, including gender dimensions. Strong knowledge and understanding of the context is key in this regard, especially to identify opportunities for addressing root causes of current tensions or conflicts, dividers and connectors in society.³ The latter means identifying entry points for when a certain area or sector, such as health or job creation, can serve to contribute to conflict prevention or peacebuilding alongside other development objectives.

Such understanding can be achieved at **strategic level** either by carrying out a **conflict analysis** or by integrating a conflict perspective into poverty, power analyses, or any other analyses that are carried out as part of the strategy proposal process.

A strategic conflict analysis facilitates a robust theory of change linked to peace, security and development in Sida's strategy proposals, and offers an increased opportunity for addressing root causes of violence and conflict – either as a targeted objective or as in integrated perspective in relation to other results areas.

An alternative is to draw on existing conflict analyses and other relevant analyses produced by partners or other like-minded actors. This option contributes to joint understanding of the context, and can facilitate joint programming options.

Portfolio level: operationalization, implementation and MTR processes

The **operationalization of the strategy** provides a renewed opportunity to assess how the strategy relates to the current conflict context. An integrated conflict perspective can help identifying risks that may impede on the implementation of each area in the strategy, and examine how planned activities may affect the conflict context – negatively and/or positively.

Revisiting and updating of analyses underpinning the strategy proposal can help to inform conflict sensitive strategic portfolio decisions. Issues linked to the perception of Sweden/Sida are central, for example how to strike a balance between support to government and support to civil society organisations. Sida's choice of partner organisations affects the legitimacy and power dynamics between local actors.

It is advisable to continuously update the conflict analysis during the **implementation of the strategy**. It is important to establish useful routines – as part of a “good-enough approach” – for when and how to assess the strategic decisions and their possible impact on the conflict situation. Such routines may include a discussion around the conflict context at team meetings at a regular basis; to review the conflict context and overall links to the portfolio more in-depth at planning days; and to include conflict sensitivity as a standing point for Quality Assurance Committee meetings⁴.

The **Mid-Term Review (MTR)** process is another important opportunity to strategically reflect on how Sida is integrating a conflict perspective. A more formal update of the conflict analysis may be valid to do as a basis for discussions. It may also be useful to conduct an external review to capture whether a broad understand-

² See for example: International Network on Conflict and Fragility (INCAF), “Piloting Conflict Sensitivity Monitoring in Myanmar and South Sudan for information” (2016).

³ The specific instruction will guide what dignity an integrated conflict perspective should have as well as whether specific areas linked to peace, security and violence should be included in Sida's proposal.

⁴ This means discussing the overall link between the project/programme and the conflict context, and not the potential partner's capacity to implement the project/programme in a conflict-sensitive way.

ing of conflict dynamics and the key drivers of conflict have informed the strategic decision making and overall program implementation. This type of analysis was made in Myanmar in 2016 as part of the review process. The focus was to critically assess portfolio design and implementation so far, whilst taking note of lessons learned and providing recommendations for a possible changed direction or redesign.

Project/programme level: manage contributions

At **project/programme level**, an integrated conflict perspective is ensured primarily by the strategic selection of partners and programmes, with key emphasis on the implementing partner's capacity in terms of conflict analysis/conflict sensitivity analysis, and the relevance of the project/programme in relation to the context/conflict analysis. In the appraisal process, Sida's role is to ensure that commitment to conflict sensitivity is reflected in partner's organisational capacity, programme design and working methods and approach. In the implementation of the project/programme it is crucial to ensure that conflict sensitivity is built into operational practices, as well as to undertake regular monitoring of intended and unintended positive and negative impacts on the conflict context.⁵

⁵ For further guidance on integrated conflict perspective at project/programme management level, please refer to Tools on Conflict sensitivity in Programme Management and Conflict Sensitivity in Sida's Project Management System (Trac).

Tips on central resources

Having **focal points** for peace, security and a conflict perspective within country teams/Embassies could facilitate maintained focus on the conflict perspective throughout the strategy implementation.

Sida's **Peace and Security Advisers** can provide support on systematic integration of the perspective in key processes.

Sida's **Helpdesk on Human Security and Humanitarian Assistance** can be requested to map and synthesise existing strategic conflict or similar analyses in a given context, or undertake brief tailor-made conflict assessments within certain sectors or thematic areas.

[Sida's Manual on Conflict Analysis](#) offers guidance on Strategic Conflict Analysis, which may serve as a guideline for drafting a Terms of Reference for a consultancy assignment.