



MINISTRY OF DEFENCE

# Joint Doctrine Note 2/12

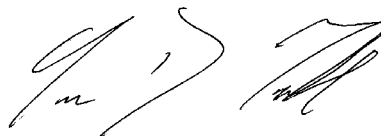
## **Assessment**



# JOINT DOCTRINE NOTE 2/12

## ASSESSMENT

Joint Doctrine Note 2/12 (JDN 2/12), dated February 2012  
is promulgated  
as directed by the Chiefs of Staff



Head of Doctrine Air and Space (Development, Concepts and Doctrine)



Head, Stabilisation Unit

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# PREFACE

1. Joint Doctrine Note (JDN) 02/12, *Assessment*, is a collaborative endeavour between the Development, Concepts and Doctrine Centre (DCDC) and the UK Stabilisation Unit (SU). It also includes input from wider government departments, namely the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, the MOD and the Department for International Development (DFID). These organisations use different terminology to describe the assessment process, including *monitoring and evaluation* and *measurement of effectiveness*. For the purposes of this JDN, the term *assessment* is used.

## Purpose

2. JDNs are developed to stimulate dialogue/debate on subjects that have operational significance, in order to inform subsequent enduring doctrine. The purpose of this JDN is to reinforce existing doctrine, such as Joint Doctrine Publication (JDP) 3-00 3<sup>rd</sup> Edition, *Campaign Execution*, and to inform the development of its, and future, doctrine publications. It promotes an integrated and consistent approach to assessment within a stabilisation environment. It draws on the emerging and developed assessment theory and practice from a range of communities. The JDN addresses how to assess progress towards national goals, and how to exploit information in order to inform campaign decision-making. By adopting an *integrated approach*, this JDN offers a consistent and comprehensive assessment methodology that should be integral to campaign planning, and not separate to it. Finally, it is structured to supplement military doctrine on campaign assessment.

## Readership

3. This JDN is written primarily for those decision-makers, planners and analysts, military or civilian, involved in integrated campaign planning at the strategic and operational levels. This may include: Her Majesty's Government Strategic Planning Group, Joint Forces Command, Permanent Joint Headquarters and the Joint Task Force Headquarters.

## Context

4. This JDN develops processes to support the demands of the integrated stabilisation environment. Much of the assessment approach described has equal application across all operational environments.

## Structure

5. This JDN introduces **key messages** and **top tips** for assessment. Chapters 1 and 2 provide the framework of understanding and guidance for commanders, while Chapter 3 details the tools that should be used by the staff when conducting assessment planning. Further:

- a. Chapter 1 explains **why** assessment is important and the challenges it presents.
- b. Chapter 2 explores the fundamentals of assessment, i.e. the **what**.
- c. Chapter 3 provides 4 principles of assessment and the **how**, in the form of a 5-step assessment plan.

## LINKAGES

6. This JDN builds upon the guidance given in the following MOD and other government departments' publications:

- a. JDP 2-00, 3<sup>rd</sup> Edition, *Understanding and Intelligence Support to Joint Operations*; 3-00, 3<sup>rd</sup> Edition, *Campaign Execution*, Chapter 4; JDP 5-00, 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition, *Campaign Planning*; and JDP 3-40, *Security and Stabilisation: the Military Contribution*.
- b. JDN 6/10, *Security Transitions*, JDN 1/12, *Strategic Communication: The Defence Contribution*; and JDN 5/11, *Peacekeeping: An Evolving Role for Military Forces*.
- c. Army Doctrine Note 09/07, *Measuring the Effectiveness of Operations*.

- d. Stabilisation Unit Information Note, *Monitoring and Evaluation*; and DFID's How to Note on the *Logical Framework*, 2011.
  - e. Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, Development Assistance Committee Guidance, *Evaluating Conflict Prevention and Peace Building Activities*. 2008.
  - f. US Joint Forces Command, *Commander's Handbook for Assessment Planning and Execution*.
  - g. DFID's Interim Guidance Note, *Measuring and Managing for Results in Fragile and Conflict-affected States and Situations*.
  - h. A *Quick Look Guide* for further research is at Annex 3D.
7. Readers who also wish to engage in the debate are encouraged to do so and should contact [DCDC-ThemDoc5SO1@mod.uk](mailto:DCDC-ThemDoc5SO1@mod.uk) or call 0179331 Ext 4257 or 96161 Ext 4257.

# JOINT DOCTRINE PUBLICATIONS

The successful conduct of military operations requires an intellectually rigorous, clearly articulated and empirically-based framework of understanding that gives advantage to a country's Armed Forces, and its likely partners, in the management of conflict. This common basis of understanding is provided by doctrine.

UK doctrine is, as far as practicable and sensible, consistent with that of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO). The development of national doctrine addresses those areas not covered adequately by NATO; it also influences the evolution of NATO doctrine in accordance with national thinking and experience.

Endorsed national doctrine is promulgated formally in JDPs.<sup>1</sup> Urgent requirements for doctrine are addressed through JDNs. To ensure timeliness, they are not subject to the rigorous staffing processes applied to JDPs, particularly in terms of formal external approval. Raised by the DCDC, they seek to capture and disseminate best practice or articulate doctrinal solutions which can subsequently be developed in due course as more formal doctrine. Alternatively, a JDN may be issued to place some doctrinal markers in the sand, around which subsequent debate can centre.

Details of the joint doctrine development process and the associated hierarchy of JDPs are to be found in JDP 0-00 *Joint Doctrine Development Handbook*.

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<sup>1</sup> Formerly named Joint Warfare Publications (JWPs).

# ASSESSMENT

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## **Lexicon**

## ASSESSMENT – KEY MESSAGES AND TOP TIPS

### **Assessment is:**

*The evaluation of progress, based on levels of subjective and objective measurement in order to inform decision-making*

JDP 01 (2<sup>nd</sup> Edition), *Campaigning*

- Assessment should be integral to all operations and from the outset embedded in campaign planning and design at the highest level.
- Alongside the strategic narrative, assessment (and the associated information requirements) is core to effective integrated campaign planning.
- Assessment is a strategic tool to regularly review and adjust plans.
- Understand the situation from the *target* population's perspective and frame the assessment in *their* terms.
- Assessment that is not based on a top-down information requirement can provide a distorted picture.
- Assessments enable commanders to test assumptions, judge progress, learn and adapt.
- Assessment frameworks must be consistently adopted by succeeding leadership and commanders.
- Military and other government departments' personnel should adopt an integrated approach to assessment to ensure a consistent understanding towards national objectives.
- Assessment must recognise the perspectives and influence of the inter-agency and multinational involvement.

- Assessments must balance the need to maintain a consistent set of metrics to ensure that longer-term effects and trends can be identified, and the need to adapt in order to remain useful in a dynamic environment.
- It is better to evolve an assessment regime than make wholesale changes to it or to innovate new schemes.
- Allocate sufficient resources to assessment.
- Focus on outcomes and impacts (the effects), rather than on inputs (resources) and outputs (for example, the number of people trained).
- Assess the impact of civilian and other military activities, including those of host nations and allies.
- Use a balance of quantitative and qualitative input to assessment to inform and support the commander's personal assessment.
- Regularly review the validity of the assessment in order to understand changes in the operating environment and identify potential unintended consequences.
- To avoid the risk of bias, use information from a wide range of sources by triangulation.
- Prioritise data collection requirements to prevent information-overload.
- Aim to capture unintended consequences, 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> order effects, as well as interdependencies between different strands of the campaign.
- Assessment planning and execution must be incorporated into formation-level collective training, mission rehearsal exercises and pre-deployment training, and the lessons-learned process.

## CHAPTER 1 – THE REQUIREMENT FOR ASSESSMENT

*‘All men by nature desire knowledge.’*

Aristotle

101. While current doctrine acknowledges the requirement for assessment, in practice, it has often suffered from inconsistency in application and being considered rather late in the process. Empirical evidence indicates that assessment has not been well conducted for various reasons, including:

- a. Vague campaign objectives.
- b. Lack of realistic milestones to assess short-term progress.
- c. Assessment not being conducted as an activity.
- d. Assessment frameworks being replaced at every rotation.
- e. Unrealistic data requirements being imposed on subordinates.
- f. Overly mechanistic approach that ignores the context.

### SECTION I – THE IMPORTANCE OF ASSESSMENT

102. Commanders must understand the current situation and the success, or otherwise, of previous efforts in order to plan and direct future activities. Assessment should support the necessary cyclical analysis, while promoting a long-term approach.

103. Reduced resources, the requirement for scrutiny and a growing desire to demonstrate progress heightens the requirement to ensure resources are used optimally. Essentially, this is enabled through a comprehensive, coherent and consistent assessment. This approach must endure throughout a campaign and beyond, and be understood across government agencies. Evidence suggests that in the absence of a central enduring assessment, each military rotation tended to develop bespoke assessments rather than evolve the existing one which undermined trend analysis.

104. Assessment must support 4 key requirements:

- a. **Strategic Evaluation.** Strategic Evaluation provides an understanding of the progress made towards strategic success, thereby, informing the commander's decision-making process.
- b. **Planning.** Planning establishes an understanding of common goals and related risks. It allows the outcome of activities to be tracked to provide an understanding of their contribution towards strategic objectives.
- c. **Influence and Strategic Communication.** Influence and strategic communication provides an understanding of target-audience perspectives in order to ensure adherence with the strategic narrative.
- d. **Lessons Learned.** The lessons-learned process must include assessment at its core.

## SECTION II – THE MAIN CHALLENGES TO ASSESSMENT

105. A number of reoccurring challenges exist across campaigns but are particularly significant in stabilisation operations. The latter are highly dependent on the actions of the civilian population and other actors, and not under command of the Joint Task Force Commander. Challenges include:

- a. The complex and unpredictable nature of the campaign.
- b. Dealing with multiple actors with different priorities/timescales.
- c. Short-termism caused by frequent rotations of commanders, headquarters and formations.
- d. The risk of being misled by the conflict between subjective and measurable sources of information.
- e. That progress is often non-linear and may reverse.
- f. The difficulty, at times, to appreciate political imperatives.

## CHAPTER 2 – THE FUNDAMENTALS OF ASSESSMENT

*‘All truths are easy to understand once they are discovered; the point is to discover them.’*

Galileo Galilei

### SECTION I – TERMINOLOGY

201. While there are a variety of terms which refer to assessment, such as Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E), this JDN will use the term *assessment*, which is synonymous with M&E, but has developed in military doctrine to capture the fundamental requirement for evaluation to inform decision-making. Assessment is the most widely recognised term within the military environment and should be understood by military or civilian decision-makers, planners and analysts who are involved in the integrated campaign planning process at the strategic and in-theatre operational levels. Organisations that employ such personnel include: Her Majesty’s Government’s Strategic Planning Group (SPG); Joint Forces Command (JFC); the Permanent Joint Headquarters (PJHQ); and the Joint Task Force Headquarters (JTFHQ).

202. As defined in JDP 01 (2<sup>nd</sup> Edition), *Campaigning*, assessment is: *the evaluation of progress, based on levels of subjective and objective measurement in order to inform decision-making.*

203. Regarding the term M&E, proposed definitions for monitoring and evaluation are:

a. **Monitoring.** Monitoring is: *the systematic collection of data to provide those involved in a campaign or mission with adequate information to track progress against objectives and outcomes.*<sup>1</sup>

b. **Evaluation.** Evaluation is: *the ongoing systematic and objective assessment of what has been achieved against objectives.*<sup>2</sup> This allows commanders to develop insight as to why progress has been

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<sup>1</sup> Proposed definition for this JDN.

<sup>2</sup> Proposed definition for this JDN.

made or, why it has not. This forms the basis for deciding to continue on the same trajectory or, change course.

## SECTION II – STRATEGIC DIRECTION

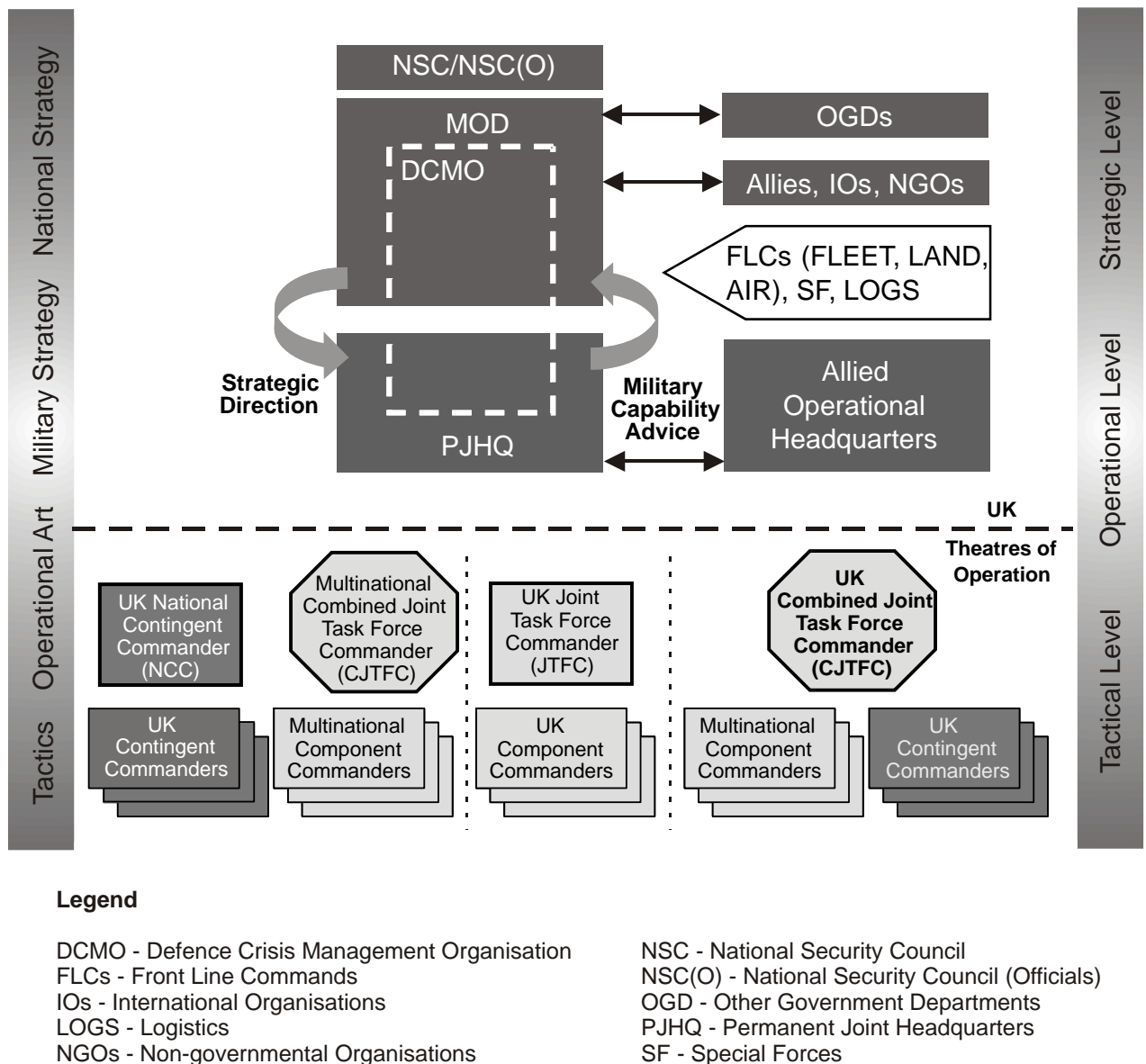
204. The starting point is to understand the political end-state, quantified by national and coalition goals.

a. **National Goals.** When operating within a coalition or UK-only campaign, there should be a single overarching HMG integrated campaign plan which defines the UK's strategic objectives, set by the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) foreign policy. Informed by strategic all-source assessment,<sup>3</sup> these should be set at the highest level within the National Security Council (NSC) or by NSC (Officials). These must include the campaign requirements of MOD as well as other government departments, which are represented in Figure 2.1.

b. **Coalition Goals.** There should also be a coalition campaign plan setting out the agreed coalition strategy, of which HMG's campaign plan should be cognisant and consistent with it. There will be occasions where UK will have specific requirements that are not incorporated into those of the coalition. This is particularly likely within coalition stabilisation campaigns where complete unity of purpose between participating nations may be unlikely.

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<sup>3</sup> As defined in the Strategic Defence and Security Review (SDSR) 11, paragraph 6.4.



**Figure 2.1 – UK Military Planning and Decision-Making<sup>4</sup>**

## SECTION III – CAMPAIGN DESIGN

205. The campaign plan will be led by the Strategic Planning Group. Campaign design is detailed in JDP 5.00 (2<sup>nd</sup> Edition), Change 1.

### Campaign and Mission Assessment

206. **Campaign Effectiveness Assessment.** The measurement of progress along the campaign plan towards the objectives is conducted through

<sup>4</sup> Joint Doctrine Publication (JDP) 5-00 (2<sup>nd</sup> Edition), Change 1 – *Campaign Planning*, Chapter 2, Figure 2.1.



the campaign effectiveness assessment. Campaign effectiveness assessment is defined as: *the evaluation of campaign progress, based on levels of subjective and objective measurement in order to inform decision-making.*<sup>5</sup> It considers the timely progress of the campaign: *are the right things done properly, getting us where we want to go or, need to be, within the desired timescale?*

**207. Campaign Assessment Ownership.** While the campaign objectives must be set at the national level, the measurement of progress should be led by the organisation that is best placed to provide an informed assessment. For example, the Joint Force Headquarters may be tasked to assess security, the Provincial Reconstruction Team to assess stabilisation and reconstruction, and the FCO to assess governance aspects.

**208. Mission Assessment.** Within the requirement of long-term campaign assessment, subordinate commanders will be assigned mission assessments for time-specific periods, such as a brigade commander's mission for a 6-month tour, or for a particular operation. Any assessment should make clear its purpose, time period and place within the campaign assessment strategy. These mission assessments enable individual commanders to assess progress relating to their own responsibilities. Mission assessments inform interim campaign assessment.

**209. SMART Objectives.** Any assessment must relate to relevant objectives which are SMART.<sup>6</sup> These objectives may be final or interim objectives. Final objectives define what must be achieved to complete the campaign or mission. Interim objectives define what should be achieved in order to progress towards completion of that campaign or mission. Usually the final objectives for a mission will have been interim objectives for the campaign.

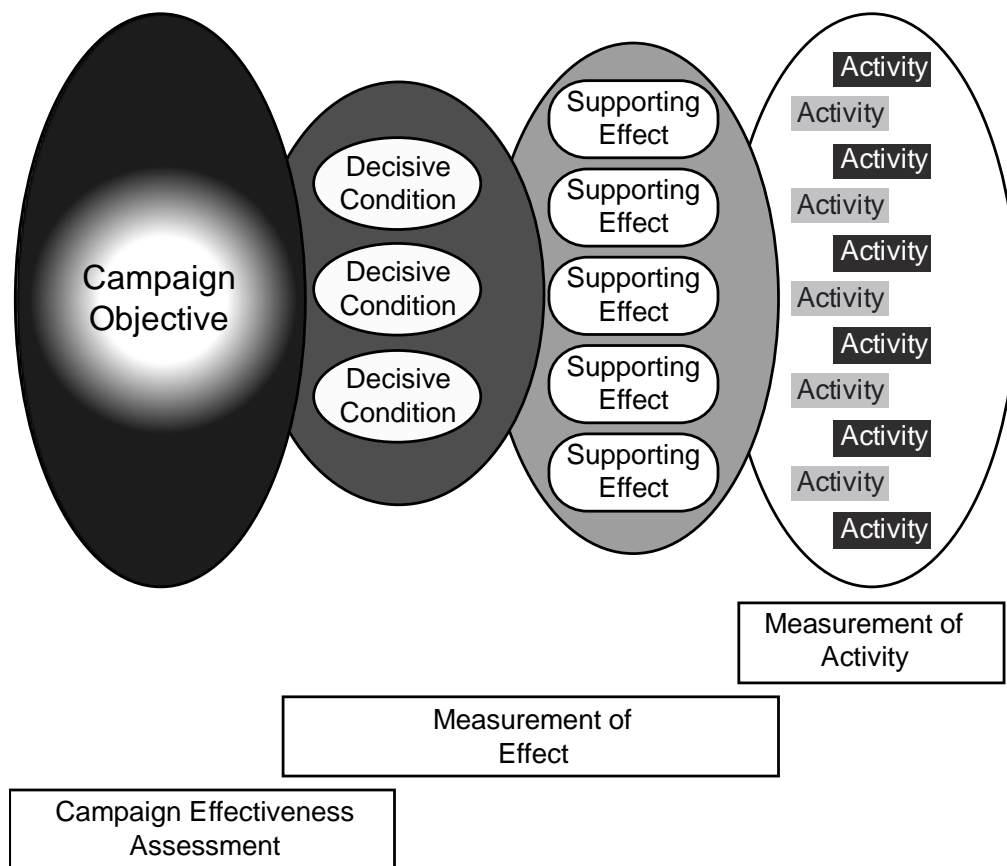
**210. Commander's Judgement.** One of the most important considerations is the commander's judgement and contribution to campaign assessment. The commander has a unique opportunity through engagement and experience to assess whether objectives have been met or, are on track. He is, therefore, both a major beneficiary of the assessment and also a significant

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<sup>5</sup> JDP 01 (2<sup>nd</sup> Edition), *Campaigning*.

<sup>6</sup> SMART – Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic, Time-based.

contributor to the understanding underpinning that assessment. Critically, the commander's input must drive and supplement the assessment process, but measures should be taken to guard against assessment based on intuition alone. Subjective assessment of these measures must be reinforced by evidence, which can be gained by using the most appropriate method, or combination of methods, available. The relationship between assessment methods is shown in Figure 2.2 and defined in JDP 3-00 (3<sup>rd</sup> Edition), *Campaign Execution*.



**Figure 2.2 – The Military Campaign Assessment<sup>7</sup>**

- a. **Measurement of Activity.** Measurement of activity is defined as: *the assessment of the performance of a task and achievement of its associated purpose.*<sup>8</sup> It informs decision-makers on whether activity should be repeated or altered, and is an evaluation of which actions have been completed, rather than simply what has been undertaken – *did we do, properly, the things we planned to do?*

<sup>7</sup> Extracted from JDP 3-00 (3<sup>rd</sup> Edition), *Campaign Execution*, Chapter 4, Figure 4.1.

<sup>8</sup> JDP 0-01.1 (8<sup>th</sup> Edition), *UK Supplement to the NATO Terminology Database*.

- b. **Measurement of Effect.** Measurement of Effect is defined as: *the assessment of the realisation of specified effects.*<sup>9</sup> It considers what effects, intended and unintended, have been realised – *did we do the right things?*

## Limitations

211. These definitions, however, have limitations as they only consider the effects of our own actions. The overall situation may develop beyond the control of the military, yet will have significant effect on our progress towards campaign success. Completion of objectives can not be measured by assessing individual activities. While activities may support progress towards objectives, our activities are only a small part of the overall picture. It is quite possible to achieve the objectives despite all activities failing, or achieving all activities, yet missing the objectives by a mile.

212. A second limitation of the definitions is that they imply that the only way to assess is by providing a measurement or value, while in reality progress can be most effectively confirmed by a simple statement of *yes* or *no*. For example, *'have presidential elections been completed according to the constitution?'*

## Recommendation

213. It is recommended that assessment takes a more dynamic approach to 'evidence' beyond measurement of activity and measurement of effectiveness, and to look at each objective in detail. The assessment should focus on **what needs to be achieved** and not on the actions that we intend to take to encourage achievement.

## SECTION IV – ASSESSMENT PROCESS

214. Assessment needs to be consistent and coherent across all levels in both planning and execution. It should examine data and determine the current status of the operation or, the operational environment. Assessment should answer the 'so what'. It should determine what the evidence is

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<sup>9</sup> JDP 0-01.1 (8<sup>th</sup> Edition).

indicating, and provide the relevant, context and analysis to determine what that information means. Most importantly, assessment must answer, or begin to answer, the ‘what’s next?’ To be of value, assessment must re-integrate analysis into the planning process. Assessment should identify opportunities, point to the way ahead, and provide recommendations that initiate or re-energise the planning process.

215. **Over-complicating Assessment.** There is a tendency to over-complicate assessments, particularly within demanding environments such as a stabilisation campaign. This results in the collation of a combination of qualitative and quantitative evidence,<sup>10</sup> and the tendency to use lots of metrics. As a result, subordinate formations can become overwhelmed by information requirements. This should be moderated.

216. **A Balanced Approach.** There is a requirement to balance a collective bias towards objective, quantitative based assessment, with the need to apply experience and intuition. As suggested, the commander will add considerable value to the assessment process, given his broader role and wider exposure to the campaign.

217. **Assessment Support to Decision-Making.** Developing and making recommendations to the commander based on assessments, on ‘what needs to be done’, can be challenging. Often, just developing the ‘what happened’ and the ‘so what’ of assessment consumes the staff and they don’t get to the most important aspect – recommending ‘what needs to be done?’ It is vital that headquarters’ battle rhythms are developed to optimise staff input into the decision-making process. Not only will this ensure the commander is as informed as possible, but also that he is provided with assessment-based choices for actions or adjustments.

218. **Consistent Idea.** Although different organisations use different formats, concepts and terminology, they share the basic idea of a hierarchical decomposition of higher level objectives into layers of sub-objectives. For example, while the military, and to a large extent the FCO, labels its variables *Campaign End-State, Campaign Objectives, Decisive Conditions, Supporting Effects and Activities* (JDP 5-00 (3<sup>rd</sup> Edition), page 2-9), the Stabilisation Unit

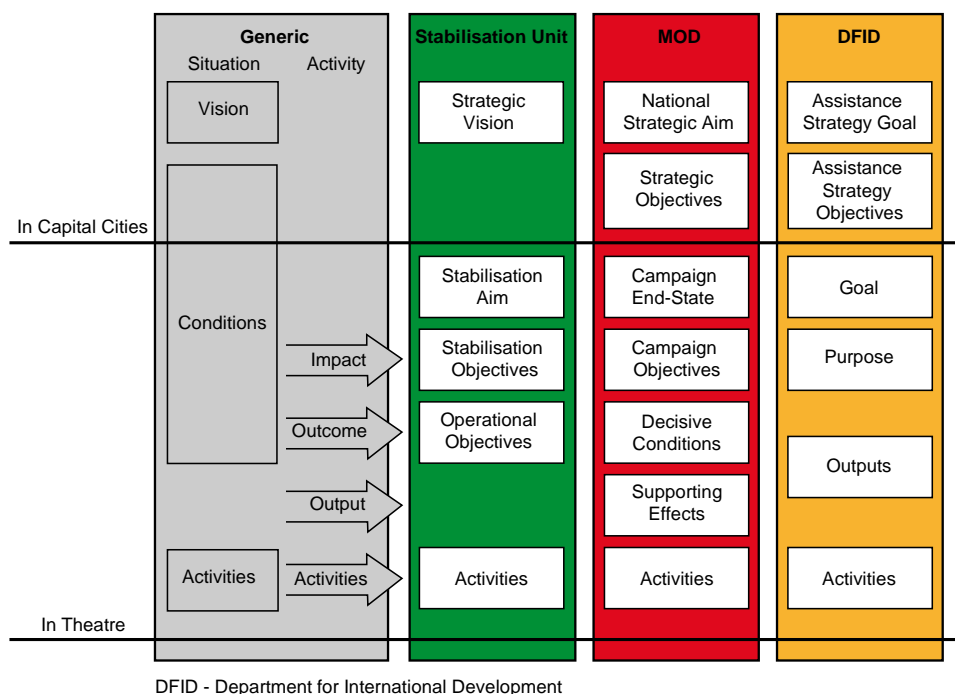
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<sup>10</sup> Described in detail in Chapter 3, Step 4.

uses the terms *Strategic vision*, *Stabilisation aim*, *Stabilisation Objective*, *Operational Objective*, *Operational Output and Activity* (JDP 5-00 (3<sup>rd</sup> Edition), page S2-5).

## 219. Other Government Department Planning Methodologies.

Understanding each other's terms helps to facilitate an integrated approach to assessment, see Figure 2.3. Institutional familiarity will enhance collaborative working and trust between entities. Just as familiarity with NATO and US doctrine enhances multinational operations, so too should an understanding of partners' methodologies enhance integrated assessment planning, be they government or, international organisations. The commander should understand the different tools and methodologies used in order to optimise integration. The military should also know the constraints and freedoms under which others operate, such as their approach to risk. It will also be necessary to agree with other government department planners on the most effective integrated or, collaborative planning process. Early personal contact between the commander and staff with other key government department representatives is critical in developing personal trust and understanding. Ideally, this will start during pre-deployment planning and continue as the campaign progresses.



**Figure 2.3 – Cross-Government Terminology Comparator<sup>11</sup>**

<sup>11</sup> JDP 3-40, *Security and Stabilisation: The Military Contribution*, Figure 10.5.

## CHAPTER 3 – ASSESSMENT DESIGN

*‘If you don’t know where you’re going, you’ll end up somewhere else.’*

Yogi Berra

301. This Chapter proposes a structure for campaign-level planners to design assessments that can be implemented by operational headquarters.

302. **Army Doctrine Note 09/07.** The Army Doctrine Note, *Measuring the Effectiveness of Operations* is being rewritten to be consistent with this Joint Doctrine Note (JDN), and, as such, will be the most suitable document for those at the tactical levels, although the key messages throughout this JDN remain valid and relevant at all levels.

### SECTION I – ASSESSMENT FUNDAMENTALS

303. **Four Assessment Principles.** Assessments require a structured and robust approach that must be consistent and enduring. The 4 principles of assessment are:

- a. **Objectives Led.** The assessment should be derived from the campaign objectives (end-state), otherwise it is likely to be irrelevant.
- b. **Useable.** Assessment is not an end in itself; the data and analysis that it produces must be useable. It needs to meet the purpose for which it has been designed and enable decision-making.
- c. **Achievable.** Assessment must be designed such that it can be delivered despite the challenges of the operational environment.
- d. **Valid.** Assessments must ensure that the data and analysis is valid, with solid foundations and based on the truth.

## Key Players in the Assessment Process

304. **Integrated Approach.** Assessment design and implementation should support an integrated approach, using military and civilian staff, from not just government departments but also from those organisations that have the best understanding of the operating environment.

305. **Commanders' Role.** Commanders should be committed to assessment, maintain its credibility and transparency, and take ownership of the results, even when they are negative. They should balance the need to maintain consistent data for the longer-term trend analysis with the need to adapt in a dynamic environment. They should adopt the existing assessment process rather than inventing a new one.

306. **External Teams.** Independent evaluations and audits are also likely to be needed. They should, in most cases, be carried out by external teams.

## Requirement for Assessment Education and Training

307. **Broadening the Understanding of Assessment Activity.** Assessment is covered in JDP 3.00 (3<sup>rd</sup> Edition), *Campaign Execution*, Chapter 4, but it has yet to be fully institutionalised. It is often misunderstood and rarely integrated into campaign planning or carried through with any consistency during campaign execution. Assessment activity, in its own right, can have intended and unintended consequences in the operational environment. The indigenous population can quickly tire of the same questions and, where there is no discernable progress, giving the same answers only serves to compound a negative impression. Uncoordinated assessment strategies can directly or indirectly influence campaign or mission objectives. Early integration of assessment will allow commanders to establish the initial baseline from which all other activity and progress can be measured.

308. **Individual Education and Training.** In order to meet contingent requirements, the importance of assessment, its design and implementation, should be included in education and training. This can range from an awareness level on command and staff courses to

comprehensive coverage on specific individual pre-deployment training. The benefit of the latter is that staff can become familiar with the specific assessment framework before any deployment.

309. **Collective Training.** There is a need to integrate assessment activity into collective training and formation pre-deployment training. Mission rehearsal exercises typically incorporate members of the deployed headquarters' staff who will be able to pass on current assessment practices to their successors. Again, this will facilitate a more seamless handover of the assessment framework, including the data record, as well as ensuring that assessment and progress reports have a high degree of continuity and resilience.

## SECTION II – ASSESSMENT PLAN FRAMEWORK

310. **Assessment Plan Framework.** An assessment plan needs to be developed using a comprehensive and enduring methodology that can be adjusted to meet the dynamics of an evolving campaign. This must not be a separate process to normal planning; rather, it should be incorporated and integral to the planning process. This Chapter offers a typical assessment plan framework, but is not exclusive. It offers considerations to assessment that should demonstrate whether the assessment effort is useable, achievable and valid.

311. **Enduring and Consistent.** The aim of the assessment plan framework is to provide a model that is enduring, adaptable where necessary, and can be applied consistently from the strategic to the tactical level.

312. **Five-Step Process.** The 5 steps of the assessment plan incorporate the assessment principles and consist of:

- a. Step 1 – Understanding the Operating Environment.
- b. Step 2 – The Purpose of the Assessment Effort.
- c. Step 3 – The Scope of the Assessment Effort.



- d. Step 4 – The Assessment Framework.
- e. Step 5 – Assessment Management and Review.

*‘The real world is one of constantly shifting environments and constant adaptation to those shifts. This is particularly true in the setting of deep rooted conflict and violence. The most realistic, as in the most realpolitik, thing we could do in peace-building would be to create processes with peripheral vision, capable of maintaining purpose while constantly adapting to the difficult and shifting tides and sands they must face to survive.’*

Lederach 2005

### SECTION III – STEP 1: UNDERSTANDING THE OPERATING ENVIRONMENT

313. The development of the assessment plan must be an intrinsic part of the wider campaign or mission planning process. The first step in developing campaign and mission assessments should be to follow a robust and consistent sequence, initiated by understanding the operating environment, through the adoption of the criteria listed in the paragraphs below.

314. **Objectives Led.** Planners, military or civilian, need to develop a thorough understanding of the political end-state, cognisant of national and/or coalition goals and objectives. Any assessment plan should be consistent with, and derived from, either campaign or mission objectives. Collectively, these should focus the effort towards successfully reaching milestones.

315. **Framing the Commander's Assessment Requirements.** The commander's assessment requirements need to be framed within the campaign or mission context so that the assessment design supports an integrated approach and satisfies his responsibilities within the campaign.

316. **Conflict Sensitivity.** Once the commander's assessment requirements have been framed, planners need to articulate the assumptions and hypotheses<sup>1</sup> that support this understanding. Examining the campaign or mission through an assessment-based prism may enhance the understanding of the conflict by providing theories of the conflict and offering explanations of the problem. This analysis should be recorded to enable campaign continuity and evaluation thereof. In effect, this record is developing a sensitivity and understanding of the conflict environment. It should express:

- a. **Conflict Dynamics.** Conflict dynamics examines what is happening, including the perceived underlying causes of the conflict. It should be an expression of the problem, the actors, factors and drivers that are influencing it both positively and negatively – not forgetting to look at the situation from the indigenous population's perspective. This conflict sensitivity will allow the commander to be better informed of the potential consequences of his decisions.
- b. **Underlying Logic.** Expressing the theory behind the conflict helps planners develop the logic that will shape their response and deduce the campaign and mission objectives. While Steps 1 and 2 of the military campaign planning process covers this analysis, the emphasis tends to be on drawing out the deductions rather than capturing the implicit logic; both need to be done.

317. **Collaborative and Complementary Working.** Again, developing this understanding collaboratively and comprehensively with other key actors can provide both a richer, more informed understanding of the operational environment and contribute to effective collaborative action later.

318. **Limitations.** This initial understanding will, however, be imperfect; information will be lacking, incomplete or wrong, and a number of inaccurate assumptions made. This analysis, therefore, forms an initial baseline understanding and will need to be reviewed, updated and

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<sup>1</sup> Hypotheses express the *theory of change* underpinning plans, normally as 'if...then' statements. They describe the logic *why*, for instance, a particular combination of outputs would generate the desired outcome. Theory of change is expanded upon later in this Section.

amended as better information becomes available and as understanding deepens. The assessment process is the mechanism for doing this.

### **Ensuring the Assessment Effort Considers Conflict Sensitivity<sup>2</sup>**

319. **Unintended Consequences.** While assessment may evaluate to what extent interventions are *conflict sensitive*, those involved in planning and conducting assessments also have a responsibility to systematically explore the extent to which assessment activities themselves have any unintended consequences that may aggravate grievances, increase tension or vulnerabilities, or perpetuate conflict in some way. Examples of such questions are at Annex 3A.

320. **Relevant Evidence.** In order to make assessment effective, the assessment design only needs to collect information that adds value and directly informs whether objectives are met. A list of assessment subject-matter experts can be found at Annex 3B.

### **Understanding the Solution – The Theory of Change**

321. Once a commander has a clear understanding of his particular problem, he will need to address how he could achieve the campaign or mission objectives.

322. **The Theory of Change.** Understanding the logic from ‘a to b’ and from ‘b to c’ is commonly referred to as the *theory of change*. JDP 5-00 (2<sup>nd</sup> Edition, Change 1) *Campaign Planning* refers to it as ‘... *what is perceived to be wrong and what may be changed to improve matters .... [is] often described as a theory of change.*’

323. The commander's theory of change is his ‘big idea’ of how the operation will change the current operational conditions to the future desired conditions. Successor commanders do not always need a big idea as this can undermine consistency and continuity. Led by the strategic

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<sup>2</sup> Further information can be found at: [http://www.conflictsensitivity.org/resource\\_pack.html](http://www.conflictsensitivity.org/resource_pack.html).

narrative, this theory of change will be developed from the campaign planning process, or estimate, depending on his level of command.<sup>3</sup>

**324. Developing a Theory of Change.** The theory of change should set out why certain activities are expected to lead, or contribute, to a particular desired outcome from the current conditions; effectively, it becomes a 'road-map' to the desired, future condition. Typically it should:

- a. Identify the overall aim.
- b. Set out the inputs, processes and outputs required to achieve that aim.
- c. Describe the logic that underpins the solution. Effectively, it gives an explanation of how and why the proposed actions will change the situation.

**325. Evaluation Approach.** Theories of change provide a conceptual framework that guide an evaluation approach. Annex 3C provides some typical examples.

**326. Understanding the Logic.** Initial assessment efforts can help inform and develop the campaign logic, i.e. *understanding the operating environment and campaign objectives*. Subsequent assessment efforts will then test, and evolve, this original logic, as well as track developments. Although critical for planning and assessment, it is rare for the thinking behind campaign logic to be captured explicitly. Most hypotheses, logical links and assumptions, tend to remain undocumented. Yet, recording intervention logic is extremely valuable in campaign/mission planning and assessment.

**327. Articulating the Logic.** It is vital to articulate the logic throughout the process. Doing this between steps can reveal hidden assumptions as well as highlight inconsistencies or gaps. It forces planners to think through the purpose and logic of the campaign thoroughly. When drawn from a shared understanding it can also help promote coherence across different

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<sup>3</sup> A 1-star brigade commander will typically not write a campaign plan, but will conduct an operational estimate, most probably using the 6-Step Operational Estimate format.

actors, enabling a more integrated approach. If left undocumented, different views as to why a series of activities will lead to a desired change will exist, even between members of the same planning team.

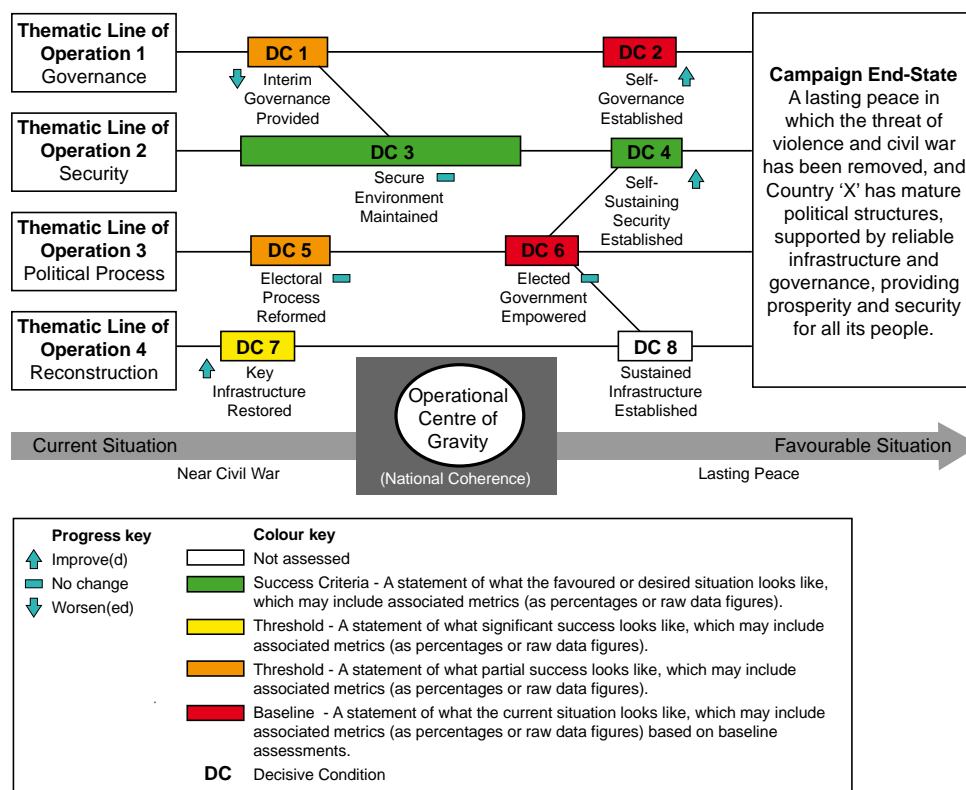
Misunderstandings between different actors responsible for implementing a plan can, therefore, occur with the higher commander's original intent being diffused. Writing the logic down, and recording the institutional memory, is also an invaluable aid to campaign continuity as staff members and commanders rotate.

**328. Different and Complex Theories of Change.** There may not be one single theory of change – indeed it is likely that reality will be more complex, particularly where different actors (*civilian and military, inter-agency, multinational*) are involved and acting independently. The process of jointly planning and articulating theories of change should at least help to establish a deeper common understanding of objectives, to make visible implicit assumptions and beliefs about why change occurs, and reduce the likelihood of one campaign or operation undermining another.

### **Linking Campaign and Mission Planning to Assessment**

**329. Generating the Assessment Process.** Irrespective of whether the assessment process is designed by other government departments (such as the Department for International Development (DFID)'s Logical Framework, the Stabilisation Unit's Joint Stabilisation Planning Process, or the MOD's Campaign Planning Process) there is some form of hierarchical relationship throughout. Irrespective of which department is leading assessment design, it is vital to articulate the relationship between assessment and campaign objectives. Vague or ambiguous causal chains suggest a lack of clarity and make it hard to evaluate progress. Designing the assessment plan needs to be conducted at the highest level possible and should assess the objectives directly. If designed and synchronised properly, the assessment of lower-level elements, such as decisive conditions and supporting effects, can be delegated. Activities themselves should not be assessed (often because of the number of them), and it is illogical to say that achieving an activity is proof that an objective has been achieved.

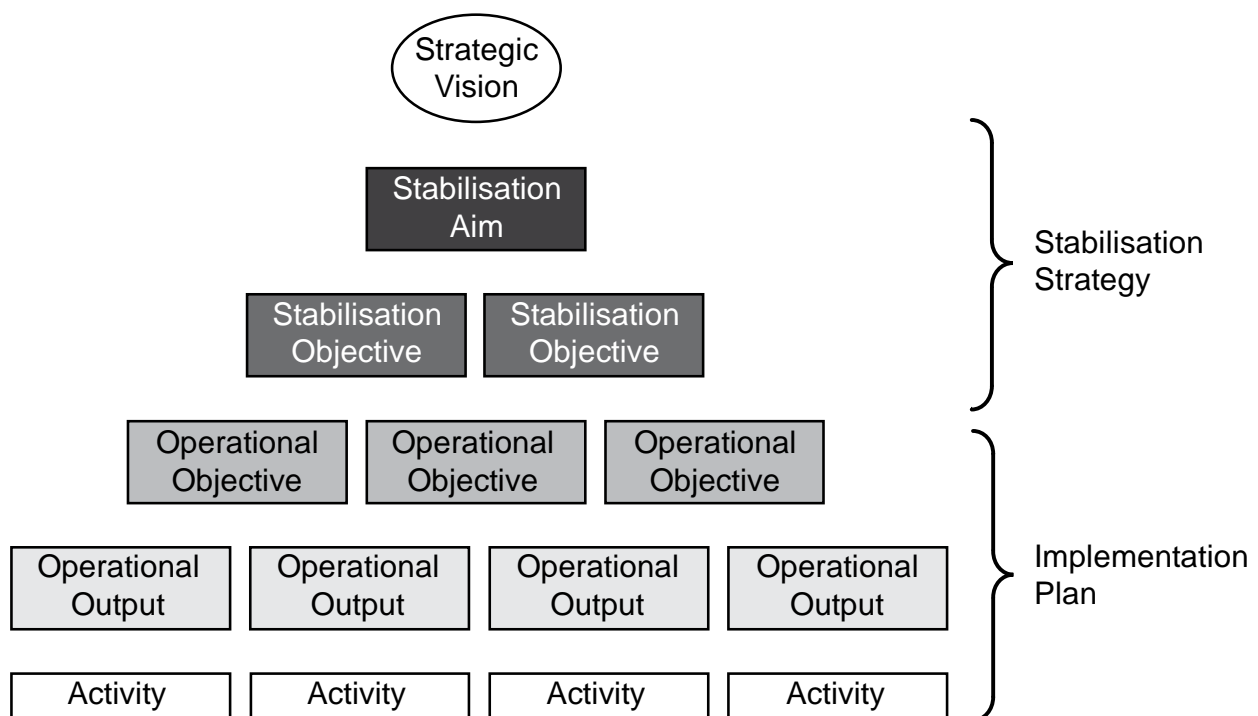
330. **The MOD's Campaign Planning Process.** The MOD uses the campaign planning process outlined in Figure 2.2. This envisages a hierarchical relationship between campaign objectives, decisive conditions, supporting effects and activity. Typically, a military-led plan will involve different lines of operation. In the example at Figure 3.1, there are 4 lines of operation covering traditional stabilisation themes: governance, security, political process and reconstruction. Progress against each line of operation is measured using measurement of effect, measurement of activity or, the overall campaign effectiveness assessment. Figure 3.1 demonstrates this schematically as one way of presenting progress. While it is a useful visual tool, it is not necessarily accurate and can be misleading. The legend implies a weak relationship with assessment data. As introduced in Chapter 1, assessment must be based on a balance between quantitative and qualitative evidence, alongside a commander's judgement and intuition. Figure 3.1 can be easily misunderstood as it does not provide sufficient granularity to fully understand the actual status of each line of operation.



**Figure 3.1 – Integrating Assessment into MOD Campaign Planning<sup>4</sup>**

<sup>4</sup> JDP 3-00 (3rd Edition), *Campaign Execution*, Chapter 4, Annex C, Figure 4C-2.

**331. Stabilisation Unit's Joint Stabilisation Planning Process.** The Stabilisation Unit, which comprises MOD, DFID and Foreign and Commonwealth officers and officials, has developed a joint planning process across these government departments. Represented in Figure 3.2, this shows the hierarchical relationship between the strategic vision and activities.<sup>5</sup> While this demonstrates the linkage between each level, it tends to generate atomisation of operational outputs and activities, unnecessarily over-complicating the assessment process and the capture of suitable, balanced evidence. Human instinct tends to expand rather than restrain itself. As a result, planners generate more and more considerations at each subordinate level until the number of activities at the base level is so vast that capturing evidence is difficult and intensive. Care must be taken, therefore, to only develop those considerations or factors at each level, that are absolutely necessary.



**Figure 3.2 – Stabilisation Unit Joint Stabilisation Planning**

**332. DFID's Logframe Results Chain.** Assessment can be presented in the form of a *results chain*, such as DFID's logical framework (logframe), or as a narrative description. Figure 3.3 is an example of a results chain and

<sup>5</sup> Perhaps looking towards a 10-year goal.

how it aligns to the logframe format. This must be based on evidence drawn from the lessons-learned process and seek to underpin a project or activity design, thereby, enabling the development of realistic targets. This is a preferred method as it does not naturally drive the atomisation of new considerations at each level. The *input to impact* roadmap is sufficiently straightforward to measure progress against, and logical enough to be easily understood and thus presented. The critical element of developing a logframe is to ensure that each preceding element naturally feeds the next, i.e. output prior to outcome, is relevant and logical.

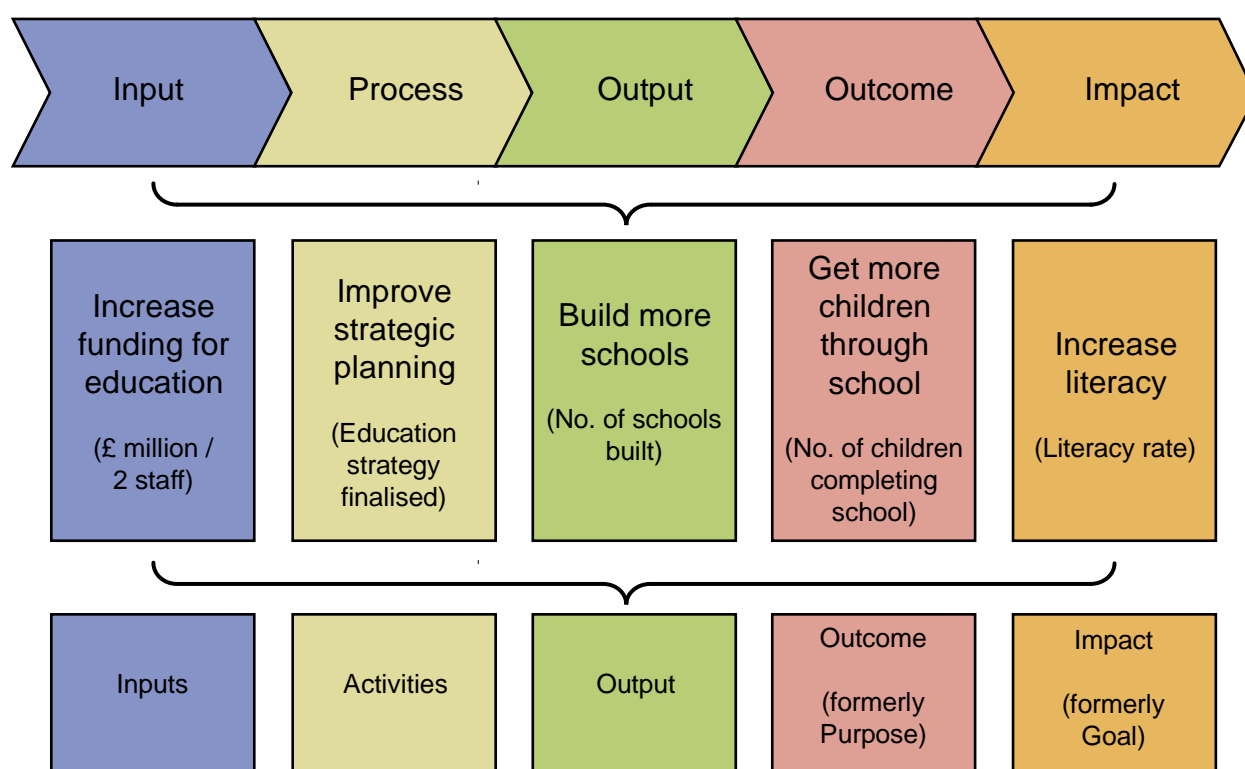


Figure 3.3 – DFID's Logframe Results Chain

## SECTION IV – STEP 2: THE PURPOSE OF THE ASSESSMENT EFFORT

### Clarity of Purpose - Formulating Assessment Questions

333. The first stage of ensuring the usability of an assessment is to clarify the purpose of the assessment and, who it is to serve. It must be clear what questions the assessment is to answer, i.e. *‘what is it we want to find out about our plan, as well as what part of our plan we need to examine and assess?’*



## Who is the Primary Audience?

334. **Stakeholder Analysis.** It is likely that there will be many calls for the products of any assessment and many interested stakeholders. Assessors should be clear who the primary user of the assessment will be and what they intend to do with the results. Evaluators should resist the temptation to expand the purpose and resolutely ask what the key questions are that the assessment should answer. Explicitly identifying the client will help focus and prioritise the assessment even if the results can serve several interested readers. It will also allow evaluators to tailor recommendations and present findings in a form best suited to the user.

### Purpose and Audience of Assessment

In 2008 in Afghanistan, Headquarters International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) operated a quarterly campaign assessment. Although conducted by its headquarters, and briefed to Commander ISAF (COMISAF), it had been designed to inform the Joint Task Force Commander's Campaign Assessment. As a result, it did not provide the information that COMISAF required to inform his decision-making. At the same time, COMISAF also needed information to brief the US Congress in order to make a case for additional resources. While the same basic data could be used to serve all 3 needs, the requirements of each were very different. Consequently, there was confusion amongst staff as to the purpose and audience for the assessment. It would have been better to have had 3 smaller, better-targeted, assessments nested together, so that they referred to each other only when appropriate.

## What Do We Want to Find Out and Why?

335. **Clarify the Primary Aim of Assessment.** A lack of clarity over the aim will lead to a confused assessment framework that is unlikely to meet the commander's needs and fail the useability test. For example, is the aim to:

- a. Learn from current activities to inform either the present intervention (formative) or, future interventions (summative)?

- b. Provide a forum for dialogue between key actors and enable a more integrated approach?
- c. Assess whether past decisions and proposed changes were right?
- d. Argue for additional or different resources?
- e. Argue for a change of strategy, or is it to generate a particular effect?

### What is the Specific Purpose of the Assessment Effort?<sup>6</sup>

336. Clarifying the aim of the assessment process will shape the type of assessment that is conducted. A number of different types exist and can be broken down into those that focus on looking at the outcomes of an intervention and those that look at the manner in which it was conducted.

337. **Outcome Focus.** This first type explores what has actually been achieved. It not only allows progress against objectives to be identified but can also provide insights into the validity of the underlying logic of the plan.

- a. **Impact Analysis.** This explores the positive (intended) and probably more importantly negative (unintended) effects of a campaign on higher level campaign objectives. The impact should be identified before making the final decision to proceed.

- b. **Effectiveness.** This type of analysis assesses the extent to which a campaign has achieved its objectives. It examines if the campaign logic is plausible, complete and accurate. It, therefore, focuses on the causal links between outputs, outcomes and impacts. On the basis of its outputs, has the campaign achieved its purpose, or can it reasonably be expected to do so?

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<sup>6</sup> See Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (Development Assistance Committee) OECD/DAC (2008), *Guidance on Evaluating Conflict Prevention and Peacebuilding Activities – Working Draft for the Application Period*, pages 39-45. For a more detailed list: [http://www.oecd.org/secure/pdfDocument/0,2834,en\\_21571361\\_34047972\\_39774574\\_1\\_1\\_1\\_1,00.pdf](http://www.oecd.org/secure/pdfDocument/0,2834,en_21571361_34047972_39774574_1_1_1_1,00.pdf).

### **Cause and Effect**

Actions have consequences. In a controlled environment (such as a laboratory) it is relatively straightforward to identify cause and effect by repeating experiments. However, in any complex environment the situation will be affected by a wide range of variables that cannot be examined in isolation. As a result, other than at the most immediate level, it is difficult to state with any certainty what action has caused a certain outcome and even more difficult to determine how much it has contributed. It becomes increasingly hard to accredit a certain impact or outcome to a specific input: to say that A caused B which in turn caused C. Therefore, it should not be assumed that just because an action has been conducted that the desired result will be obtained.

338. **Implementation.** The second category examines how well the assessment logic (the plan) has been implemented.

- a. **Efficiency.** This compares outputs with inputs, and explores how economically inputs were transformed into outputs. It can identify waste, fraud and other inefficiencies, and how well the campaign has applied its resources. Not only does it look to see whether outcomes have been achieved, but also asks whether the most efficient use of the resources was applied.
- b. **Process Appraisal.** This examines the merits of the particular process used in the assessment process to deliver the desired objectives.

339. **Factors to Consider.** In designing an assessment plan, the following factors should be considered:

- a. **Relevance.** Is the conflict analysis upon which the campaign logic is based accurate and up-to-date? Is the campaign logic focused correctly? Is it optimised for the current situation and desired goals?

- b. **Sustainability.** The extent to which the campaign generates results that will endure after the campaign ends.
- c. **Coherence.** How the campaign fits in with the host nation's and international community's overall stabilisation efforts. What are the potential conflicts and contradictions, and are synergies exploited?
- d. **Coverage.** Coverage refers to the reach of the assessment identifying who is affected/excluded and the implications of this coverage on conflict dynamics and drivers. It can be a useful check to ensure that a campaign intervention is not fuelling underlying tensions and exacerbating conflict drivers, thus ensuring that it is conflict sensitive.
- e. **Appropriateness.** Whether the assessment is tailored to meet local needs, or is it skewed towards external perceptions of that need, or to external needs? Appropriateness can be considered a subset of relevance and, of sustainability.

## The Purpose of Monitoring

340. Observable measurements and indicators are monitored to track changes to variables for 4 main purposes.

- a. **Baseline Assessment.** Establishing a baseline is an important first step. Monitoring can be used to help populate or backfill a baseline where it is missing or incomplete.

### Baseline

Ideally, a baseline should be established before a campaign starts. Planners should seek to identify what data exists, and from that construct a baseline. This baseline helps to gain information to understand the operational environment and provides a starting point from which comparisons can be made. This allows progress to be mapped.

- b. **Progress Monitoring.** This tracks changes to higher-level objectives (outcomes and impacts). It can indicate trends and provide insights into the validity of the campaign intervention logic. It provides data for an evaluation of effectiveness and impact.
- c. **Implementation Monitoring.** This tracks changes to lower-level variables and objectives (input activity, output) and identifies to what extent the plan has been implemented. It may highlight areas where efforts need to be reinforced and provide basic data for an evaluation of efficiency.
- d. **Assumption and Environment Monitoring.** This monitors changes to external factors that may invalidate the logic of the plan. These may be specific to certain causal links, or of a more general nature. Such changes should be identified quickly to allow plans to be adapted and to enable a more responsive intervention.

## **SECTION V – STEP 3: THE SCOPE OF THE ASSESSMENT EFFORT**

341. **Focusing Assessment on What is Most Important.** Identifying variables of interest is a key aspect of assessment and must flow directly from the purpose and the decisions that the assessment is meant to inform. There will usually be far more variables of interest than is possible to monitor and assess; prioritisation is, therefore, vital. Assessment will be constrained by resources and must, therefore, concentrate on areas where it can be most beneficial.

342. An assessment will never be fully comprehensive; it lies somewhere along a spectrum from nothing examined to everything examined. There will usually be depth in some areas combined with a shallower overall view. While different measures and mechanisms may be needed for short, medium or long-term issues, there may well be a need for all. An assessment design could be straight-forward and form one of the approaches below, but is more likely to incorporate variances on each of these approaches:

- a. **Partial or Systemic?** How comprehensive is the assessment aimed to be?
- b. **Horizontal or Vertical?** Does it attempt to assess everything equally (horizontal) or does it attempt to assess some aspects in depth (vertical)?
- c. **Immediate or Long Term?** Immediate assessments deliver early indications of near-term objectives, while long-term assessments focus on much slower moving progress. Combining them would mask each other's results, making it difficult to separate short-term issues from long-term progress.

343. **Assessment Priorities.** Priorities should be linked to the parts of the plan that are most likely to threaten mission success, and can be set in the following order:

- a. Assessing progress towards difficult and challenging objectives.
- b. Near-term objectives.
- c. Objectives where there is limited situational awareness.

344. **Being Efficient in Assessment.** Planners and the assessment team must be realistic and efficient. There is a need to be clear about what assessment efforts should achieve and which specific questions would be most useful and relevant. It is important that they adjust the ambition and refine assessment questions to what is:

- a. **Achievable.** What is realistically achievable so as to avoid misinforming decision-makers with invalid results?
- b. **Required.** What is essential, not just a nice to have?
- c. **Appropriate Risk.** Data requirements require resources to be expended; this may include exposure to risk for the data collectors.

## Collaboration

345. **Avoiding Duplication and Exploiting Synergies.** Efficiencies through economies of scale can be realised by collaboration with other actors and re-using existing assessments. It can also bring other significant benefits as well as risks. It is important to explore what other assessment efforts are planned or underway within other organisations and at different levels within your own organisation. Try to seek opportunities for collaboration.

346. **Benefits of Joint Assessments.** Conducting assessments with other actors should always be considered. Joint assessments have a number of significant benefits. The involvement of partners will bring fresh perspectives and is likely to improve the quality and coverage of the assessment. The involvement of the host nation can also help build local capacity, while potentially reducing the impact on conflict dynamics. Shared or dovetailed assessments can also reduce polling fatigue and may provide additional means of triangulating across different sources.

347. **Risks of Co-operation.** Decisions on joint assessments need to balance the potential benefits against the risks and costs of co-operating with other agencies. These include the risk of a security breach, an excessive training burden, conflicting priorities, prolonged deliberation, and the combined assessment becoming very complex while failing to satisfy both sets of requirements. There is also the risk that by bringing multiple actors together, a form of 'group think' may develop whereby all fall into the trap of accepting the same assumptions.

348. **Risks of Shared Data.** Care must be taken when combining data from different sources. Drawing on existing data sets also entails risk. It is essential to compare 'like with like' to ensure variations in data reflect variations in reality, rather than variations in assessment methods.

### **The Importance of A Common Approach: Improvised Explosive Device Statistics in Afghanistan**

Until mid-2009, what warranted improvised explosive device entries in the operational database varied largely between different ISAF units: some counted those that exploded; others, unexploded but functional ones, or unexploded and dysfunctional ones; while others counted individual components found. The data was simply not comparable without going back to the original source reports and re-categorising them against common criteria.

349. **Participation.** Participation in the assessment needs to be decided early and should fall outside of discussions on the level of collaboration. Two key decisions need to be made: who should be involved in the process and the extent of that participation. A balance needs to be taken to ensure that there is a range of views which is able to inform the assessment of each of the objectives, while maintaining the practicability of co-operation.

### **Timing, Duration and Frequency**

350. **Assessment Timing.** The timing of the assessment will depend on the purpose. If it is to inform a specific one-off decision the timing of that decision will drive the scope and approach of the assessment. In such cases, care must be taken to identify any seasonal factors that may have affected the reliability of the results: weather patterns, agricultural cycles, as well as social or religious events can all affect behaviour and distort the findings. If the assessment is part of a longer-term framework, it will be possible to better take these into account and provide seasonally adjusted findings. Some activities are likely to lead to a fairly rapid output and outcome. Others, however, may take considerably longer to emerge.



## SECTION VI – STEP 4: THE ASSESSMENT FRAMEWORK

351. This Section outlines some general guidance on how to ensure the data collection plan is valid.

### 352. **Ensuring Assessment Methods Generate Valid Results.**

Assessment can be regarded as a means of quality assurance and quality control. As such, it is important that methods, findings and recommendations are as reliable as possible. There is always a trade-off between rigour and resources that has to be balanced. The security situation is a further constraint that impairs rigour and validity.<sup>7</sup>

353. **Qualitative and Quantitative Approaches.** Debates about whether qualitative or quantitative approaches are preferable often lead to misunderstandings, especially as they tend to suggest that a strict separation is possible. Qualitative approaches relate to examining words; quantitative approaches involve examining numbers. Qualitative approaches are often about understanding the experiences and practices of key informants and putting them firmly in context. They can also help fully unpack the observed trends displayed in the quantitative analysis and provide a more in-depth understanding of the story and causal factors behind some of the less straightforward trends.

354. **Qualitative Approach.** Qualitative data and approaches are good at providing insights into attitudes, beliefs, motives and behaviours, particularly across small samples. Words can capture far more detail, allowing the observer to become aware of, and better capture, the actual complexity of reality. They are vital for assessing progress and trends against qualitative objectives. Objectives such as the legitimacy of a local political leader depend on the perception of the local population and, therefore, need to be assessed through qualitative means. Qualitative data can often be gained rapidly and relatively cheaply. However, it is rarely statistically valid or representative of a wider population and consequently generalisations may not be valid. It is also more susceptible to influence by the perspective of those conducting the data collection, the interviewers, observers and informants. Social science techniques, such as content

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<sup>7</sup> Such as the intimidation of data collectors or the indigenous population by irregular actors.

analysis, can be used to look at the occurrence of themes within source material to provide quantitative outputs that can then be subjected to trend analysis. Qualitative measures help us identify which measures matter and how they relate to each other, and also help to discover useful indicators.

**355. Quantitative Approach.** The strengths of quantitative approaches are that they can provide precise information that can easily be analysed to provide statistically valid conclusions, and are also useful in testing a hypothesis. Data can sometimes be aggregated or disaggregated to provide a broad view of a population, or a small subsection of it, and to enable comparisons to be made. However, while it may be precise, it may not be measuring what was intended and this may not be immediately obvious; it can be ‘precisely’ wrong. This is particularly the case within any complex environment where statistically valid data collection is difficult. In such situations care must be taken that quantitative analysis approaches do not provide a veneer of respectability on what constitutes data of dubious validity. Similarly, care must be taken in drawing conclusions from changes in quantitative data. For example, what does a doubling of the number of open shops in a bazaar mean? If it doubles from 2 to 4, is this the same as it doubling from 8 to 16? And, what do we mean by an ‘open shop’? Is a trader sitting on the floor with a handful of wares for sale constitute a shop? Care must also be taken in combining different factors and on applying weightings between them. For example, what is the relative importance or, significance of, 2km of rebuilt irrigation ditches as opposed to 2km of new road? These decisions are context-specific and subjective; analysing the implications of them requires a detailed level of knowledge. Quantitative approaches alone cannot explain the underlying causes of a situation.

**356. Encourage Qualitative and Quantitative Mix.** As qualitative and quantitative approaches are intertwined, it is not particularly helpful to argue that one is more objective or rigorous than the other. Rather than discounting one, or the other, both approaches should be regarded as part of the toolkit available to staff involved in assessment; they are mutually reinforcing. Although it can be appropriate to use quantitative analysis techniques on qualitative data, care should be taken not to take this to excess. Grouping responses, categorising them and reporting them in terms of ratios and percentages may mask important nuances.

Additionally, it may also prevent a more detailed, and potentially more rewarding, exploration of ideas, opinions and attitudes. In turn, this could help answer the *why* and the *how* assessment questions.

## Selecting Variables of Interest

357. As the name suggests, variables are issues or objects that can change. Within the DFID logframe (Figure 3.3), for example, all the boxes (inputs, activities, outputs, outcomes and impacts) constitute variables and changes to them can be monitored. The same applies to those activities, supporting effects, decisive conditions and objectives in the military campaign assessment (Figure 2.2).

358. **Observable Variables – Direct Measurements.** Changes in some of these variables will be easy to track, in particular those at the beginning of the assessment process. Activities, inputs and outputs are usually directly observable and even measurable. *How many hours of labour and of what type were required? How much money was spent? How many wells were completed?* In such cases, direct measurements can be used to directly track changes to the variable of interest.

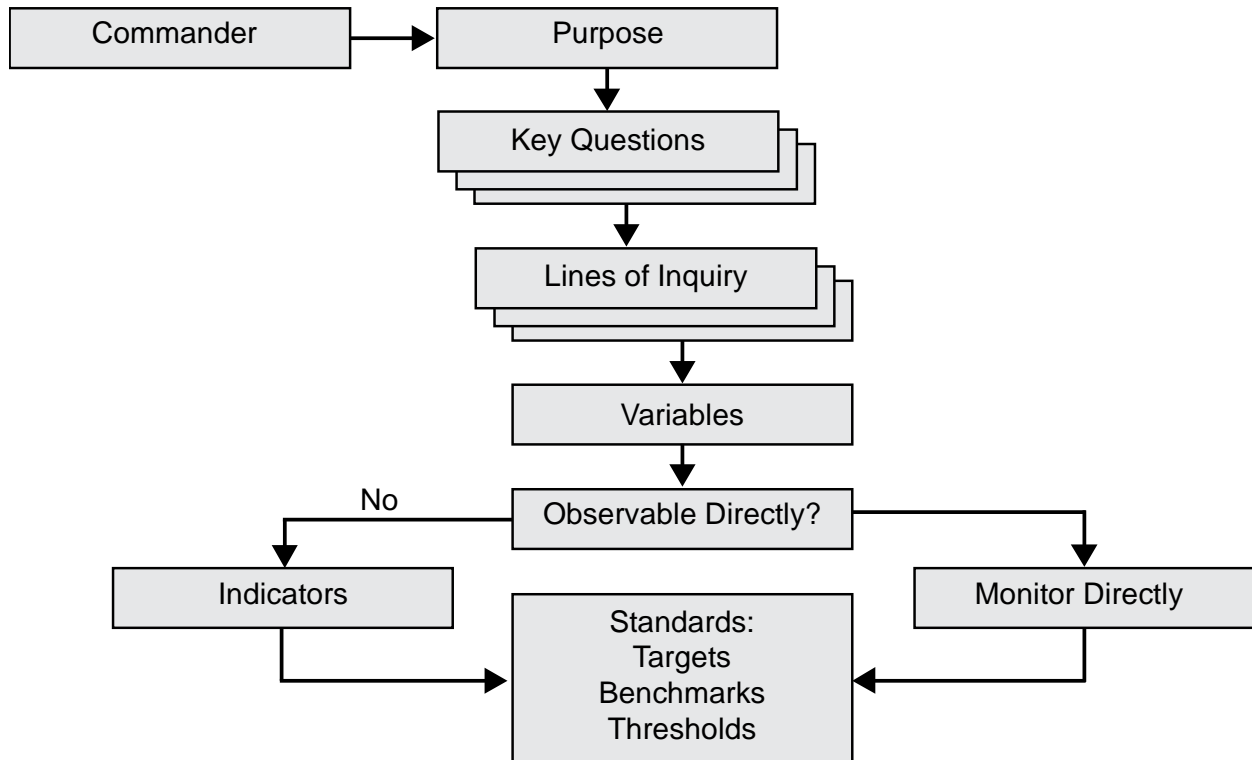
359. **Unobservable Variables – Indicators.**<sup>8</sup> In other cases, changes to variables may be observable in principle, but not in practice. For example, when the security situation restricts access. Yet others, in particular at the higher level of the assessment process, may not be observable at all. For example, the legitimacy of the host-nation government or the perceived security environment. These types of variables are important and help to organise, and make sense of, reality. To capture changes to unobservable variables, we examine indicators, namely observable changes that are presumed to correlate with the variable of interest. Accordingly, all indicators are proxies.

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<sup>8</sup> Indicators are qualitative or quantitative factors/variables that provide simple and reliable means to measure achievement to reflect the changes connected to a campaign intervention, or to help assess the performance of an actor. Indicators describe what is to be measured and enable the commander and his staff to see if progress is being made.

### Selecting Direct Measurements and Indicators

360. Variables of interest can be deduced from the lines of inquiry and the key questions (Figure 3.4). Variables must be prioritised such that effort is focused on those that directly inform the key questions. Once the variables of interest have been deduced the direct measurements and indicators that are to be monitored need to be identified.



**Figure 3.4 – Identifying Direct Measurements and Indicators**

361. The following good practice should be kept in mind:

- a. **Inclusion.** Involve the key stakeholders in the identification and selection of direct measurements and indicators. It is particularly important to involve those who will collect the data and whose expertise will be critical to the analysis of the data. Inclusion builds buy-in and is more likely to lead to quality data collection and support for conclusions.

b. **Partnerships.** Establish partnerships with other key organisations and institutions as described in paragraphs 345 to 349.

c. **Existing Data.** Existing data and reporting systems should be used when possible. If the host nation has its own assessment system, it should be used. Where it lacks rigour or, is open to abuse, attempts should be made to support the system and to develop its capacity. Bypassing it entirely may create parallel systems and undermine the credibility of the very institutions that we are trying to build. Existing data can also provide a baseline and often provide an indication of trends over time. Be aware of the risks described in paragraphs 347 and 348.

d. **Triangulation.** Combine different methods and several measurements/indicators for each variable. Triangulation helps to overcome problems stemming from reliance upon a single logic, method, source, set of data and/or investigator. If the results from different methods and sources converge, inferences about the nature and magnitude of the consequences of the campaign will be stronger. In addition, different methods, measurements and indicators will allow different facets of reality to be captured, which will enable a deeper understanding of the situation.

362. **SMART.** A general guideline is that indicators (and objectives) should be *specific, measurable, achievable, realistic* and *time-based* – (SMART). One could add *simple* to ensure that they are well understood by all involved in the assessment process.

a. **Specific and Simple.** If data is collected by different people, will they note the same results for the indicators? Is it clear what is being observed, and is change recorded in a consistent manner that allows for comparisons?

b. **Measurable.** To track changes, indicators (even qualitative ones) must at least classify data on a nominal scale.

- c. **Achievable.** Can we collect this data in the required volume, to the necessary quality and with the needed coverage?
- d. **Realistic.** Do measurements and indicators realistically capture the appropriate changes to the relevant variable?
- e. **Time-based.** Will changes to the variables be noticeable by the time the customers want the answers?

363. **Filtration.** It is likely that the number of possible indicators will initially balloon and it is essential that they are filtered against the priorities and lines of inquiry so that a suitable balance is achieved. Constructing a matrix listing the indicators, identifying their importance for programme monitoring, the ease of obtaining data on the indicator, and the cost of data collection may be helpful. Care should be taken to ensure that the mix of indicators adequately covers the scope of the assessment, picking up on objectives, causal links, the wider environment and our own structures and processes.

364. **Unintended Incentives.** In selecting indicators, evaluators should consider what incentives these may create for subordinates: for example, could the selected indicators encourage behaviour in a potentially perverse manner such that their activities impact on the indicators but not the variables?

### Identify Indicators (Measures)

365. **The *Why* and the *What*.** Defined properly, good indicators should capture the *why* as well as the *what*. This means they need to go beyond simple output measures (for example, numbers of forces trained and equipped). They should also gather information regarding the quality, and the higher-level consequences, of the activity (for example, whether human rights abuses are decreasing as a result of training, and as a consequence legitimacy of the government is increasing). DFID's logframe, explained in paragraph 332, captures this process well.

366. **Changes in Perceptions, Attitudes and Relationships.** Stabilisation measures will need to assess changes in perceptions, attitudes and relationships. These are, by their nature, subjective and

difficult to measure, and will need to draw upon social and political analysis. In addition, it may be helpful to try to corroborate them by 'hard data' or measures of action to complete the picture (for example, balancing perceptions of confidence in the police with data on reported incidents and convictions). They should address both intended and unintended consequences. The latter can be addressed, in part, by monitoring the risks identified during the planning process.

367. **Timescales.** Indicators may need to accommodate different timescales, including near-term/intermediate and longer-term goals where progress may be slow and otherwise imperceptible. While some indicators may need to change as the plan does, a core set should remain constant, even if imperfect, to enable trends to be tracked over time. They may also need to be disaggregated to identify differences between demographic groups and/or between regions, particularly where inequalities are a driver of instability. Country-level indicators such as corruption or governance indices may therefore be useful, but will not be sufficient alone.

368. **Early Warning Thresholds.** Early warning thresholds (for example, numbers of, or levels of violence in, protests) may be helpful to allow problems to be identified early on, particularly in volatile environments. Triggers may be set to reflect changes in trends or strange patterns of activity.

369. **Good Enough Evidence.** It is important to bear in mind who will use the assessment framework and, what for. This will help determine evidence will be *good enough*. For instance, if assessment is expected to support decisions where the consequences of getting it wrong are severe, a higher standard of evidence may be needed than if the indicators were to assess progress of a small and low-risk project.

370. **Realistic, Actionable, Robust Evidence.** It is also important to consider how realistic the indicators are. Is data available? Can it be safely gathered at reasonable cost? Can it be routinely collected over time, and how reliable is it? Evidence needs to be actionable and sufficiently robust to support decision-making.

371. **Quick-Look Reference Guide for Further Reading.** Significant work has already been conducted into identifying, using and testing indicators for a broad range of campaign interventions. Annex 3D contains links to useful resources that provide menus of indicators that could be used as a starting point, and include DFID's *Interim Guidance on Measuring and Managing for Results in Conflict-Affected and Fragile States*, *Measuring Progress in Conflict Environments* and NATO's *Operations Assessment Handbook Interim Version*. These ideas can be adapted or complemented for specific interventions.

## Gathering Data

372. **Reliable Data.** Indicators need to be supported by reliable data. Common methodologies for gathering data relevant to stabilisation include surveys, focus groups and interviews, as well as observation. These can be difficult in stabilisation environments because of the security situation. Local organisations can sometimes be used although care must still be taken not to put either researchers or those interviewed in danger.

373. **Data-Capture Sensitivities.** Insecurity and political sensitivities, as well as potential expectations of material gain, will affect responses to questions. Who is asking the question (for example, a familiar face or an armed foreigner) will inevitably change the answer that is given. Even with the best methodology some bias is unavoidable and needs to be understood and factored into the interpretation of results.

374. **Secondary Sources.** Secondary sources including information produced by non-governmental organisations, international partners, academics and research institutions, can also be used. This helps to fill gaps where information cannot be gathered directly (and is more efficient than duplicating efforts), and is useful in order to triangulate information gathered directly.

375. **Quality of Data.** Quality of data is often hampered in stabilisation environments as the situation at the start of the intervention is likely to be non-permissive or relatively hostile, or there may be insufficient governance systems in place.



## Analysis Plan

376. **Analysing and Interpreting Data.** Analysis to support reviews and evaluations should focus not only on whether desired outcomes have been achieved but also on what other unintended consequences have occurred, while also assessing environmental changes. Data should also be used to regularly review the narrative and the commander's theory of change.

Questions to ask include:

- a. Have activities been carried out properly and outputs delivered?
- b. Have outputs led to outcomes being achieved and has the impact been as expected?
- c. If not, why not? For example, were assumptions in the plan wrong? Have any of the risks materialised? Have other unexpected events taken place, or has the environment changed?
- d. Have there been other unintended consequences as a result of the intervention?
  - (1) Has it done harm?
  - (2) Have other priorities/objectives been undermined?
  - (3) Have there been unintended positive consequences?

377. **Trends.** It is most useful to measure trends over time, comparing and contrasting, rather than spot analysis of specific numbers. Measuring trends over time and comparing across different areas is likely to be more useful than looking at specific numbers. Baselines are hard to establish, and may not be reliable; they should not be seen as absolutes but as comparators for trends. Particular findings may simply indicate that more research is required.

### **The Helmand Monitoring and Evaluation Programme Data Collection**

The Helmand Monitoring and Evaluation Programme (HMEP) is designed to collect/collate data and analyse qualitative/quantitative indicators to assess the impact of the Provincial Reconstruction Team (PRT) and DFID interventions in Helmand. To this end, HMEP helped the PRT to refine its measurement processes and indicator requirements, launched its own primary research, and expanded its collection and analysis of third party data-sets. HMEP's capabilities for data collection and analysis continues to increase as the project progresses.

- Assessment in Afghanistan, let alone Helmand, remains hampered by data gaps in light of non-existent or fractured government systems. While the Government of Islamic Republic of Afghanistan's (GIROA) statistical capacity has begun to recover, HMEP has had to supplement GIROA sources with its own, and third party, data sets.
- Quantitative indicators data such as numbers of police, schools, roads or civil service *tashkiel* have been drawn from GIROA, the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) and PRT/District Stabilisation Team sources. Where possible, data has been cross-referenced, but even these figures are subject to a fair degree of uncertainty and variation between sources and over time.<sup>9</sup>
- The HMEP survey is conducted by a leading Afghan surveying company, with a robust verification process, and validated by third party data sets. Over time, it should build up a detailed picture of public perceptions at the provincial and district level.

### **378. Means of Verification using Expert Opinion and Judgement.**

Data needs to be analysed with the benefit of expert opinion and judgement to ensure it does not stand alone but 'tells a story'. Local knowledge and understanding is essential, and engaging those involved in programme implementation will help to explain and contextualise findings. For instance, perceptions of security measured on a particular day may have been affected by a specific, one-off incident rather than representing

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<sup>9</sup> For example, numbers of police present for duty varies between ISAF reporting and provincial police chief reporting.

a general trend. Using *expert panels* is another possible means of verification and contextualisation.

379. **Data Collection.** Selecting how the data will be collected should be addressed in parallel with the selection of indicators; this will be an iterative process. There is an inevitable tension between the desire for the ideal collection of indicators with the practicalities of what can, and cannot, be measured. The aim should be to provide the most practical mix possible that achieves sufficient rigour while remaining achievable. Figures 3.5 to 3.7 summarise the most common approaches – listing their advantages and disadvantages.

380. **Literature Review.** Conducting a literature review will reveal conflicts in perceptions and pretext; this will enhance understanding.

Literature Review		
Type	Advantage	Disadvantage
<b>Literature Search</b> <sup>10</sup>	Economic and efficient way of obtaining information.	Difficult to assess validity and reliability from secondary data.
<b>Case Studies</b> <sup>11</sup>	Can provide a rich narrative and depth of understanding of a particular issue. Good for understanding processes and for formulating hypotheses to be tested later.	The choice of cases will influence the output. Large number of sources and perspectives will be required to ensure results not distorted. It may not be easy to make generalised conclusions without further evidence.
<b>Diaries</b> <sup>12</sup>	A rich and varied sources that can provide important insights into perceptions and explain why decisions were made and activities conducted.	Time consuming to analyse and unlikely to provide statistically valid data. Little control of the content.

**Figure 3.5 – Advantages and Disadvantages of Researching Documents**

<sup>10</sup> Review existing related documentation.

<sup>11</sup> Investigate a contemporary event in its real life context.

<sup>12</sup> Can be written, audio or video and provide description of a personal experience. Can be structured so that individuals are focused on certain specific issues.

381. **Asking People.** Asking people can be as part of an interview or, part of a survey. There is a danger that respondents will simply tell the interviewer what they think they want to hear or that results may be affected by ‘socio-desirability bias’, for example, the tendency for people to refrain from criticising authority in front of the interviewer, or to refrain from talking about issues such as income or family affairs. Greater use of in-depth interviews (as opposed to those taking place in focus groups) can help overcome this. In all cases, careful design of the questions is vital.

Type	Advantage	Disadvantage
<b>Key Informant Interviews</b> <sup>13</sup>	Flexible, in depth, easy to implement.	Several individual interviews can be time consuming. Risk of bias, or following own agendas.
<b>Focus Group Interviews</b> <sup>14</sup>	Reasonable in terms of cost and time. Can be good for stimulating new ideas.	Requires skilled facilitator and safe environment. Risk of one-sidedness and strong individuals may dominate discussions; dissent from the majority may be difficult.
<b>Group Interviews</b>	Low cost and efficient. Direct contact with affected.	Susceptible to manipulation. Less suitable for sensitive issues.
<b>Structured Interviews</b> <sup>15</sup>	Easy to compare and contrast.	Inflexible, important nuances may be lost.
<b>Semi-Structured Interviews</b>	Flexible, richer, more varied insights	Less comparable and requires some skill in applying.
<b>Unstructured Interviews</b> <sup>16</sup>	Good for exploring opinions or uncovering issues.	Can be time consuming and difficult to compare and contrast.
<b>Surveys</b>	Good for large numbers. Provides valid data.	Time consuming; provides little about why things happen.
<b>Questionnaires</b>	Easy to administer. Can capture a wide population.	Must be statistically valid number. Question design is critical.. Poor questions undermine conclusions. Requires literate audience.

**Figure 3.6 – Advantages and Disadvantages of Asking People**

<sup>13</sup> Interview key individuals, e.g, a village elder or local official. Can be structured, semi-structured or unstructured.

<sup>14</sup> Best conducted with 6-8 people who have something in common.

<sup>15</sup> Scope of interview is pre-defined and a series of set questions asked.

<sup>16</sup> Interviewer guided only by assessment objectives. Interview will follow up emerging interests.

382. Questions can be open-ended or closed; open-ended questions such as ‘*How useful has the new school been to you?*’ allow people to report feelings, opinions and thoughts whereas closed questions such as ‘*How often do you go to school?*’ provide easily collated and analysed data but can limit responses and conceal nuances.

a. **Interviews.** Interviews vary in terms of the number and type of people interviewed, and the level of structure within the interview. In general, the more structured an interview, the more comparable the data. However, the more unstructured or open-ended the interview the more deeply interviewees’ feelings, understandings and perceptions can be ascertained.

b. **Surveys and Polls.** Surveys and polls comprise a focused set of targeted questions posed in a set sequence by a surveyor. They can provide a range of data rapidly from across a section of the population and are usually designed to provide statistically valid data.

Type	Advantage	Disadvantage
<b>Direct Measurement</b>	Precise, reliable and often requiring few resources.	Requires access. Provides little qualitative information.
<b>Direct Observation<sup>17</sup></b>	Can capture the experiences of minorities or women who may be unable to speak out due to cultural norms.	Observers need to be able to access the location either directly or via surveillance assets. The results depend on the observers’ training, understanding and interpretation. Presence of the observer may also influence the situation. Does not explain why things happen.

**Figure 3.7 – Advantages and Disadvantages of Observations**

<sup>17</sup> Atmospherics by watching and taking notes; recording specific actions such as behaviours, attitudes, who was included or excluded; and what interaction took place and between whom.

383. **Observations.** Alternatively, observers can be detached to observe activities on the ground. Observations may be of an ongoing process, ongoing activities or interactions, of the physical surroundings. Observation can help identify incorrect implementation of activities. It is also of use where security concerns make it difficult to interview people directly. It should be recognised that the presence of an observer, if known, will affect the situation and, therefore, what is being observed will no longer be 'pure'. The observer will also bring their own perspective and bias into the record.

### Concepts of Analysis

384. **Ways of Analysing and Using Data.** The analysis methodology should be decided from the outset. If data does not effectively inform the assessment then it is inefficient to collect. Care must be taken that the data is not taken out of context and is not misused to show that objectives have been met. The challenge is to combine qualitative and quantitative data to demonstrate progress.

385. **Correlation.** Correlation is a tendency for 2 variables or events to change together; the stronger the correlation, the closer the variables co-vary. A strong correlation does not, however, necessarily mean that a cause and effect relationship exists. For example, a strong correlation between atmospheric CO<sub>2</sub> levels and crime levels does not mean that atmospheric CO<sub>2</sub> causes crime.

386. **Aggregation of Values.** Assessment should not blindly combine several statistics into one by mathematical aggregation. Instead, a logical thought process is required for that particular objective. For some objectives, all elements have to be of an acceptable standard; a single failure could mean that the whole objective has failed. For other objectives there is more tolerance for individual elements to be less successful. In each case the assessment should judge whether the overall objective is achieved. A numerical representation of dissimilar data sources is, in general, dangerous as it may imply a solely mathematical approach without context or understanding.

387. **Ownership of the Assessment.** The assessment should be regarded just like any other planning activity: as owned by the planning

staff in direct consultation with the commander. It should not be a separate activity conducted solely by specialists. However, specialists may have a role in facilitating the data collection and continually supervising the assessment.

388. **Flexibility.** Over time the situation will develop, and understanding of the environment, will improve. Elements of the assessment will no longer be relevant or be proved invalid, and new objectives will arise. The framework therefore needs to be flexible and adapt to new information and objectives, and discard or de-emphasise others. In addition to flexibility it is important to have sufficient data history to identify trends, and retain some core data collection throughout.

389. **Targets, Benchmarks and Thresholds.** Targets, benchmarks and thresholds should only be used when they add value, and sufficient understanding is available to use them effectively.

a. **Target.** Objectives need to be turned into targets. For some objectives it may be possible to pre-define the level an element must reach in order to be acceptable or no longer a problem. For example, in drought conditions a target of 15 litres of water per person per day may be an indicator that water deprivation is at tolerable levels. It would not be possible to pre-define a target level in all cases as life is too complicated and uncertain, especially at the early stages of a campaign intervention. In this instance the decision whether an objective has been achieved will require well-informed judgment.

b. **Benchmark.** A benchmark is a reference point against which progress or achievements can be assessed. For example, passing a landmark in a marathon. However, care must be taken not to extrapolate the same rate of progress to the final target as there is no underlying reason why progress would continue at the same rate.

c. **Threshold.** A threshold is a reference point that, when reached, triggers a reaction. This could be the beginning of the next phase of a plan or the activation of a contingency plan.

### **Extract from Kosovo Assessment Experience: Benchmarks for Progress**

In 2002, Kosovo adopted benchmarks for progress that described 8 standards by which Kosovo's progress would be measured including democratic political institutions, safe returns for minorities, and the establishment of the rule of law. The benchmarks were the first mission-wide attempt to assess the work of the UN Mission in Kosovo. They also became part of a political strategy: through the slogan '*standards before status*', the International Community postponed discussions of independence until Kosovo was ready for it.

As with all assessment tools, Kosovo's benchmarks served several purposes. Not only did they focus the international mission on key deliverables, they (albeit temporarily) brought the acquiescence of both the majority Kosovo-Albanian and minority Kosovo-Serb populations behind a shared programme. The benchmarks became the basis for the quarterly assessment of the UN's performance. They even formed the basis for large-scale publicity programmes, aimed at changing attitudes in the Province, where inter-ethnic hatred was still strong.

The benchmarks came into question following the riots of early 2004, when it became clear that standards would not be met. Some Kosovo-Albanians tried to reverse the international community's position, demanding '*status then standards*'; while others complained that they had not been consulted when the original list had been drawn up. The key targets had to be lowered, and '*standards-lite*' emerged. This never achieved its predecessor's prominence. The eventual decision to begin status talks was taken with minimal reference to the standards.

The benchmarks were always political, and they could only carry so much weight. Moving from a monitoring tool and a management aid to becoming the centrepiece of international policy was a move too far. There was a limit to their value, and it had been exceeded. The lesson from the benchmarks is that many assessment tools have their moment, after which their value diminishes. Benchmarks can unite political demands and drive technocratic progress, but when these 2 aims diverge any benchmark process risks becoming unsustainable.

King I and Mason W, *Peace at Any Price: How the World Failed Kosovo*, 2006.



## SECTION VII – STEP 5: ASSESSMENT MANAGEMENT AND REVIEW

### Reporting and Exploitation

390. **Battle-Rhythms.** The assessment does not end with a presentation to the commander and his subsequent decision. The assessment, and its endorsed recommendations will need to be implemented. Assessors should ensure that time for analysis and re-planning is built into 'battle rhythms' and decision-making cycles.

391. **Presentation.** In presenting the findings it is important to design the products so that they are appropriate for the audience and purpose. Understand how the client likes to receive information and the types of visualisation they prefer. Consider to what extent you will need to 'sell' the conclusions and design the presentation appropriately. There is likely to be a tension between the desire to present simple, clear messages and properly acknowledging the complexities and limitations of the assessment.

392. **Results Presentation Methods.** Results can be presented in different ways. Popular methods include dashboards, scorecards and traffic lights to show progress against indicators. Care must be taken to find the right balance to avoid over-simplification or detracting from the results' value. For example, traffic lights are useful for providing a snap-shot of where the operation currently stands. However, what they do not convey is the cause and effect, or the trend. Trend analysis deepens a commander's understanding.

### Reviewing and Adapting

393. Assessment must remain core to campaign management. This will require regular reviews to examine internal performance, process and structures to ensure that it remains agile and sensitive to the environment.

394. **Regular Reviews.** In addition to continuous or regular monitoring activity, substantial reviews and campaign trend analyses will enable strategic discussions and debate.

395. **Evaluating and Lessons.** The evaluation and lessons process must be ongoing. The ultimate impact of the campaign may not manifest for many years. Therefore, independent, comprehensive and transparent records of context, assessments and decisions will be required to inform lessons and necessary accountability.

## **Succession Planning**

396. **Handover of Assessment Framework to Host Nation.** It is vital to consider succession planning as early as possible for both planning the handover to successor headquarters and the transition of assessment activities to other actors, ultimately to the host nation.

397. **Outline Assessment Framework.** An outline assessment framework covering these 5 Steps is at Annex 3E. It is not exhaustive and should not be treated as an exact science, but should provide the planner with a resume of some of the considerations and factors needed to formulate an assessment framework within the integrated campaign plan.



## **ANNEX 3A – TYPICAL CONFLICT SENSITIVITY QUESTIONS<sup>1</sup>**

### **3A1. What influence does assessment have on conflict dynamics?**

Consider potential 'winners and losers' in any evaluation and the impact this will have on the conflict:

- a. Can timing, place and manner in which results are announced impact on conflict dynamics? Political events or historical anniversaries can act as triggers and evaluators which will need to be considered.
- b. Can evaluation results be abused? If so, by whom and how?
- c. Are the questions we pose likely to raise unrealistic expectations?
- d. Does the coverage for data collection matter? One-sided data collection from groups with a bias may not just influence the evaluation result, but also raise fears of, and anger about, exclusion.

### **3A2. Does assessment put the people it is to benefit at risk?**

- a. Does the timing and place of collection put certain groups or individuals at risk? For example, those being interviewed or co-operating with us?
- b. Can we maintain participants' confidentiality? We need to prevent inadvertently compromising individuals in local settings where it is relatively easy to work out who may have said what.
- c. Can questioning individuals make recalling painful or distressing events reignite psychological trauma?

### **3A3. Are evaluation questions and methods conflict sensitive?**

- a. Are we asking the right questions?

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<sup>1</sup> Further resources on conflict sensitivity can be found at: [http://www.conflictsensitivity.org/resource\\_pack.html](http://www.conflictsensitivity.org/resource_pack.html) .

- b. Are questions culturally sensitive? Seek cultural advisor guidance.
- c. Can questions polarise populations in a manner that may reinforce divisions and grievances?
- d. Do questions address topics that are considered taboo and that should not be asked, or may need to be asked in a particular way?
- e. Are questions formulated in a manner that betrays a certain perspective, thus influencing responses?
- f. Are questions formulated in a manner that uses meaningful terminology, thus getting at the core issues?
- g. Does it matter who collects data? Uniformed, civilian, aid worker, local, male or female. Individuals may respond differently.

## ANNEX 3B – USEFUL SOURCES OF ASSESSMENT ADVICE

Types of Advice	MoD	UK Government	Wider	Target Population
Human Context	Defence Intelligence Human Factors Cultural Advisors Defence Intelligence Regional Desks Land Warfare Centre (LWC) COIN Centre Land (and other) Intelligence Fusion Centre 15(UK) PSYOPS Group Dstl Strategic Analysis and Human Systems Groups	Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) Department for International Development (DFID) Intelligence Agencies Defence Cultural Specialist Unit, Cultural Advisors, Political Advisors, Defence Attaches, Local Embassy staff	Intergovernmental Organisations (IGO)s (for example, UN agencies, International Committee of the Red Cross, World Bank). Non-governmental Organisations (NGO)s (both large and local) Academics (both individual subject matter experts and regionally focused research centres) Wider military (for example, US Human Terrain Teams, US Civil-Military Fusion Center)	Direct engagement with local population, leaders, influencers (including use of surveys, focus groups etc) Indirect engagement (for example: via Diaspora; traditional and social media)
Stabilisation and Development Approaches	Stabilisation Unit LWC Afghan COIN Centre DCDC Dstl Defence Policy Analysis group	DFID FCO	IGOs NGOs Research Centres	
Assessment	Dstl Support to Operations Group	DFID	IGOs and NGOs Think-tanks	



## ANNEX 3C – THEORIES OF CHANGE

This selection of generic theories of change is extracted from a number of sources. They are not universal, are context specific, and must be considered on a case-by-case basis.

- **Public Attitudes.** War and violence are motivated by prejudice, misperceptions and intolerance. Use the media, etc. to change public attitudes and build greater tolerance.
- **Mass Attitudes.** If enough people's attitudes change they will prefer key actors to seek peaceful solutions and resist violence.
- **Healthy Relationships and Connections.** Peace emerges from a process of breaking down polarisation and prejudice between groups.
- **Community Based Reconciliation.** If belligerent groups are given opportunities to interact they will better understand and appreciate one another, thereby preferring to resolve conflicts peacefully.
- **Institutional Development.** Peace is secured through the development of stable and reliable social institutions that guarantee democracy, equity, justice and fair resource allocation.
- **Elite Motivations.** If incentives facing elites can be changed so that peace becomes more acceptable, and violence less so, then the elites will accept peace.
- **Withdrawal of Resources for War.** Withdrawing resources and human capital required to sustain wars will cause it to stop.
- **Economics.** If economic institutions produce reasonable livelihoods/quality of life for all, then the extent of core grievance would alleviate misperceptions and intolerance. Use the media etc. to change public attitudes and build greater tolerance.



- **Negotiated Settlement.** If we can establish space and mechanisms for negotiation between leaders of belligerent parties then they can be led gradually through a series of steps to cease violence and negotiate peace.
- **Reduction of Violence.** Peace occurs as level of violence reduces.
- **Root Causes/Justice.** Addressing the underlying grievances will take away the motivation for conflict.
- **Security/Judicial.** If security and justice institutions protected everyone and enforced laws equitably, the extent of core grievances decline.
- **Public Attitudes.** War and violence are motivated by prejudice, misperceptions and intolerance. Use the media etc. to change public attitudes and build greater tolerance.
- **Political Elites.** Peace comes when it is in the interests of political and other leaders to take crucial steps.
- **Key-Actor Attitudes.** If key-actor attitudes change then they will seek peaceful solutions to conflicts.
- **Individual Change.** Peace comes through transformative change in attitudes and behaviour of a critical mass of individuals.

## ANNEX 3D – QUICK LOOK REFERENCE GUIDE FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

### Recommended Reading – Top Document

- **UK Stabilisation Unit Guidance Note:**  
<http://www.stabilisationunit.gov.uk/attachments/article/523/Interim%20Guidance%20Note%20-Measuring%20and%20Managing%20for%20Results%20in%20Conflict-Affected%20and%20Fragile%20States%5B1%5D%5B1%5D.pdf>
- **OECD/DAC *Evaluating Conflict Prevention and Peace building Activities*,**  
[http://www.oecd.org/secure/pdfDocument/0,2834,en\\_21571361\\_34047972\\_39774574\\_1\\_1\\_1\\_1,00.pdf](http://www.oecd.org/secure/pdfDocument/0,2834,en_21571361_34047972_39774574_1_1_1_1,00.pdf)

### Assessment Manuals/Guidance

- ***Measuring Progress in Conflict Environments: Metrics Framework***, USIP, <http://www.usip.org/publications/measuring-progress-in-conflict-environments-mpice-0>
- **NATO Civil-Military Fusion Centre.** Excellent source of country information – currently coverage focuses on Afghanistan and Libya.
- **UK Approach to Stabilisation:** <http://www.stabilisationunit.gov.uk/>
- **Helmand Monitoring and Evaluation Programme:**  
<http://www.stabilisationunit.gov.uk/stabilisation-and-conflict-resources/web-links/49-afghanistan.html>
- **UN Development Programme (2009), *Handbook on Planning, Assessment for Development Results*.**  
<http://stone.undp.org/undpweb/eo/evalnet/Handbook2/documents/english/pme-handbook.pdf>

- ***NATO Operations Assessment Handbook***  
<https://www.mccdc.usmc.mil/OperationsAnalysis/files/20101101%20NATO%20Operations%20Assessment%20HB.pdf>

## Websites

**GSDRC**      <http://www.gsdr.org/>

**OECD**      <http://www.oecd.org/dataoecd/23/27/35281194.pdf>

[www.oecd.org/dac/evaluationnetwork](http://www.oecd.org/dac/evaluationnetwork)

**SIDA**      [http://www.sida.se/shared/jsp/download.jsp?f=SIDA1489en\\_web.pdf&a=2379](http://www.sida.se/shared/jsp/download.jsp?f=SIDA1489en_web.pdf&a=2379)

**UN**      [www.un.org/peace/peacebuilding/pdf/Monitoring\\_Peace\\_Consolidation.pdf](http://www.un.org/peace/peacebuilding/pdf/Monitoring_Peace_Consolidation.pdf)

**UNFPA**      <http://www.unfpa.org/monitoring/toolkit/5data.pdf>

<http://www.unfpa.org/monitoring/toolkit.htm>

**USAID**      <http://www.usaid.gov/policy/ads/200/203.pdf>

**USIP**      [www.usip.org/files/resources/MPICE%20Aug%2008.pdf](http://www.usip.org/files/resources/MPICE%20Aug%2008.pdf)

[www.fundforpeace.org/cast/pdf\\_downloads/castmanual2007.pdf](http://www.fundforpeace.org/cast/pdf_downloads/castmanual2007.pdf)

## ANNEX 3E – OUTLINE ASSESSMENT PLAN FRAMEWORK

### Step 1 – Setting the Scene

#### *Understanding and Conflict Sensitivity*

- **Understanding the Operating Environment**
  - **Objectives Led.** Understand the political end-state, national and coalition goals.
  - **Framing Commander's Assessment Requirements.** Frame the commander's assessment within campaign or mission context.
  - **Conflict Sensitivity.** Analyse, set assumptions and hypotheses.
    - Conflict Dynamics: what is happening and the causes of conflict.
    - Implicit Logic: the theory behind conflict helps develop logic.
  - **Collaborative and Complementary Working.** Integrated approach.
  - **Limitations.** Imperfect to start with, but important to establish.
- **Ensure Assessment Effort Considers Conflict Sensitivity**
  - **Unintended Consequences.** Consider unintended negative consequences that might aggravate grievances or perpetuate conflict in some way.
  - **Minimise Impact of Negative Consequences.**
  - **Use SMEs.**
- **Understand the Solution - The Theory of Change**
  - **The Theory of Change.** Understand logic flow from 'a to b' etc.
  - **Developing a Theory of Change.** Set out why certain activities are expected to lead to future desired conditions. Include: aim; inputs, processes and outputs; logic; evaluation approach and assessment.

- **Understanding the Intervention Logic.** Initial assessment efforts can help inform and develop the intervention logic.
- **Articulating the Logic.**
  - Planning. Reveal hidden assumptions, inconsistencies and gaps.
  - Assessment. Understanding of mission and objectives provides starting point against which evaluators can make judgement.
- **DFID's Logframes *Results Chain*.** Logical frameworks and narrative description.
- **Linking Campaign and Mission Planning to Assessment**
  - **Generating the Assessment Process.** Articulate relationship between assessment and campaign objectives.
  - **MOD Campaign Planning Process.** Hierarchical relationship between campaign objectives, decisive conditions and supporting effects.
  - **Stabilisation Unit's Joint Stabilisation Planning Process.** Hierarchical relationship (pyramid) between strategic vision, stabilisation aim, stabilisation objectives, operational objectives, operational output and activity.

## Step 2 – The Purpose of the Assessment Effort

### *Use*

- **Who is the Primary Audience?**
  - **Stakeholder Analysis.** Understand who assessment is for.
- **What Do We Want to Find Out and Why?**
  - **Clarify primary aim of assessment** – ensure it is unambiguous.
- **What is it the Specific Purpose of the Assessment Effort?**
  - **Outcome Focus.** Intervention logic assessing accuracy of causal links.
    - Impact Analysis: explore positive (intended) and negative

(unintended) effects.

- Effectiveness: assesses intervention objectives achieved on time.
- **Implementation.** How well is intervention logic and the plan implemented:
  - Efficiency: compares outputs versus inputs and how inputs transformed into outputs.
  - Process Appraisal: examines merits of particular processes.
- **Factors to Consider.** Quality of intervention logic, looking 'outside and beyond the shape'.
  - Relevance: extent objectives/activities respond to critical issues.
  - Sustainability: extent intervention generates results that endure.
  - Coherence: how intervention fits host nation's & international community's goals/objectives.
  - Coverage: how far intervention reaches, & who is affected by it.
  - Appropriateness: assessment tailored to local needs/external perceptions.
- **The Purpose of Monitoring**
  - **Purpose.** Purpose of monitoring effort, specifying measurements and indicators to track changes to variables for 4 main purposes:
    - Baseline Assessment. Monitoring to populate or backfill baseline where missing or incomplete (inside and outside the shape).
    - Progress Monitoring. Tracks changes to higher level objectives (outcomes and impacts).
- **Implementation Monitoring.** Tracks changes to lower level variables and objectives (input activity, output).
- **Assumption and Environment Monitoring.** Monitors changes to external factors that risk invalidating logic of plan.

### Step 3 – The Scope of the Assessment Effort

#### *Ensure the Assessment Effort is Achievable*

- **What Parts of our Plan and Reality Do We Need to Examine?**
  - **Scope.** Determine the scope and focusing assessment on what is important.
- **Assessment Design.** Could be a combination or single approach.
  - **Partial or Systemic?** Determine if assessment approach is system-wide or focuses on particular part.
  - **Horizontal or Vertical?** Key specific causal links/comprehensive perspective.
  - **Immediate or Long Term?** Identify time horizon to be looked at.
- **Assessment Priorities.**
  - **Priorities.** Linked to parts of plan most likely to threaten success:
    - Assessing progress towards difficult and challenging objectives.
    - Near-term objectives.
    - Objectives where there is limited situational awareness.
- **Being Efficient in Assessment.**
  - **Efficiency.** Clear idea what assessment efforts should achieve and specific questions to be most relevant and useful.
    - Achievable: what is realistically achievable?
    - Required: what is essential, not just nice to have?
    - Appropriate Risk: what is acceptable risk to data collectors?
- **Collaboration.**
  - **Avoiding Duplication and Exploiting Synergies.** Explore other assessment efforts underway.
  - **Benefits of Joint Assessments.** Can encourage a more

coherent response to shared assessments.

- **Risks of Cooperation.** Ensure variations in data reflect reality rather than assessment methods.
- **Risks of Shared Data.** Essential to compare 'like for like'.
- **Participation.** Decide early and be part of discussions on collaboration.
- **Timing, Duration and Frequency.**
- **Assessment Timing.** Dependent on purpose, scope & approach to assessment.

## Step 4 – Assessment Framework

### *Ensure the Assessment Effort is Valid*

- **Data Collection Plan**
  - **Ensuring Assessment Methods Generate Valid Results.** Reliable findings and recommendations.
  - **Qualitative and Quantitative Approaches.** Understand differences.
  - **Qualitative Approach.** Good for understanding attitudes and beliefs but rarely statistically valid.
  - **Quantitative Approach.** Precise and statistically valid but can be misleading.
  - **Encourage Qualitative and Quantitative Mix.** Useful to test hypothesis and aids review and adaptation.
- **Select Variables of Interest**
  - **Observable Variables – Direct Measurements.** Easy to track activities, inputs and outputs.
  - **Unobservable Variables – Indicators.** Changes to these might be observable in principle, but not in practice.
- **SMART Measurements and Indicators.**



- **Inclusion.** Involve stakeholders in identification and selection.
- **Partnerships.** With other key organisations and establishments.
- **Triangulation.** Combine different methods and several measurements/indicators for each variable.
- **SMART Indicators.** Specific/Simple, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, Time bound.
- **Filtration.** Indicators filtered against priorities.
- **Unintended Incentives.** Incentives indicators might create for subordinates.
- **Identify Indicators (Measures).**
  - **The *Why* and the *What*.** Changes are easy to track.
  - **Changes in Perceptions, Attitudes and Relationships.**
  - **Timescales.** Address different timescales; near/far-term etc.
  - **'Early Warning' Thresholds.** Numbers or levels of, violence in protests.
  - **'Good Enough' Evidence.** Decide who will use assessment framework and degree of good enough.
  - **Realistic, Actionable, Robust Evidence.** How realistic indicators are.
- **Gathering Data.**
  - **Reliable Data.** Indicators need to be supported by reliable data.
  - **Data Capture Sensitivities.** Consider insecurity and political sensitivities.
  - **Quality of Data.** Often hampered in stabilisation environments.
- **Analysis Plan.**
  - **Analysing and Interpreting Data.** Focus on desired outcomes, why and what other unintended consequences have occurred.
  - **Trends.** Trends over time more useful than specific numbers.

- **Analysis using Expert Opinion and Judgement.** To ensure data does not stand-alone but 'tells a story'.
- **Data Collection.** Selection of how data collected.
- **Researching Documents, Asking People, Observations.** Different methods.
- **Concepts of Analysis.**

**Ways of Analysing and Using Data.** Establish what data means and what the implications are.

  - **Correlation.** Tendency for 2 variables or events to change together.
  - **Aggregation of Values.** Awareness that these tend to raise complexity of problem.
  - **Ownership of the Assessment.** Conducted and owned by central staff and not solely by specialists.
  - **Flexibility.** Assessment framework needs to evolve and adjust as the situation and understanding of environment improves and changes.
- **Targets, Benchmarks and Thresholds.** Consider each type

## Step 5 – Assessment Management and Review

- **Assessment Effort as an Integral Part of Planning**
  - **Integral to Planning.** Assessment is an essential element of planning and informs re-planning in all campaigning.
  - **Understanding & Prioritising.** Consider at highest level and from the outset.
- **Assessment Coverage – Assessment Plan**
  - **3 Core Elements.** Assessment Plan include elements that focus on:
    - Objectives and links within logical assessment framework.
    - The wider environment and associated risks.

- Assessment assessing own adaptability.
- **Different and Complex Theories of Change.** May be more than one theory of change.
- **Reporting and Exploitation**
  - **Exploitation Plan.** Allow time for re-planning in *battle rhythms*.
  - **Presentation.** Design presentation products appropriate for audience and purpose.
  - **Results Presentation Methods.** Combine diagrammatic results with narrative.
- **Reviewing and Adapting**
  - **Regular Reviews.** Evaluation plan should include elements that focus on 3 areas.
  - **Retain Consistent Approach.** Consistency important, but cautious change acceptable.
  - **Conflict Sensitivity.** Continually review, highlight any change and adjust plan as necessary.
  - **Risk Management.** Continually review risk register and update.
  - **Evaluating and Lessons Learned.** Provide evidence for future assessment planning and efforts.
- **Succession Planning**
- **Handover Assessment Framework to Host Nation.**

# LEXICON

## PART 1 – ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

COMISAF	Commander International Security Assistance Force
DFID	Department for International Development
FCO	Foreign and Commonwealth Office
GIRoA	Government of Islamic Republic of Afghanistan
HMEP	Helmand Monitoring and Evaluation Programme
HMG	Her Majesty's Government
ISAF	International Security Assistance Force
JDN	Joint Doctrine Note
JDP	Joint Doctrine Publication
JFC	Joint Forces Command
JTFHQ	Joint Task Force Headquarters
MOD	Ministry of Defence
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
NSC	National Security Council
NSC(O)	National Security Council (Officials)
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
OECD (DAC)	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (Development Assistance Committee)
OGD	Other Government Departments
PJHQ	Permanent Joint Headquarters
PRT	Provincial Reconstruction Team
SPG	Strategic Planning Group

## **PART 2 – TERMS AND DEFINITIONS**

### **Assessment**

The evaluation of progress, based on levels of subjective and objective measurement in order to inform decision-making. (JDP 01 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition)

### **Campaign Effectiveness Assessment**

The evaluation of campaign progress, based on levels of subjective and objective measurement in order to inform decision-making. (JDP 01 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition)

### **Evaluation**

The ongoing systematic and objective assessment of what has been achieved against objectives. (JDN 2/12)

### **Measurement of Activity**

The assessment of the performance of a task and achievement of its associated purpose. (JDP 0-01.1 8<sup>th</sup> Edition)

### **Measurement of Effect**

The assessment of the realisation of specific effects. (JDP 0-01.1 8<sup>th</sup> Edition)

### **Monitoring**

Monitoring is the systematic collection of data to provide those involved in a campaign or mission with adequate information to track progress against objectives and outcomes. (JDN 2/12)