# Applying conflict sensitivity at project and programme level

## Purpose of chapter

The three modules in this chapter explain how to integrate conflict sensitivity into projects and programmes at the following three stages of the project cycle:

- planning
- implementation
- monitoring and evaluation

## Who should read it

Practitioners involved in managing projects and programmes at all stages, whether working in the field or at headquarters, and regardless of whether they belong to civil society, government, international NGOs or donors.

## Why they should read it

All project interventions impact on and are impacted by the context in which they are situated. In a conflict-prone environment, a lack of conflict sensitivity can result in projects and programmes with unintended negative impacts, or which miss opportunities to contribute to peace. This chapter will help readers to build in conflict sensitivity during all three stages of the project lifecycle and, to the extent possible, anticipate their wider impact so as to minimise negative impacts and maximise positive ones.

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# Introduction

### Some definitions

*Conflict sensitivity*

This means an awareness of the causes of historical, actual or potential conflict, and of the likelihood of further conflict and its likely severity; and the capacity to work with all parties to reduce conflict and / or minimise the risk of further conflict. It involves:

- understanding the operational context
- understanding the interaction between an intervention and that context;
- the capacity to act upon this understanding to avoid negative impacts and maximize positive ones.

*Note: the word 'context' is used rather than 'conflict' to make the point that all socio-economic and political tensions, root causes and structural factors are relevant to conflict sensitivity because they all have the potential to become violent. 'Conflict' is sometimes erroneously confused with macro-political violence between two warring parties (as with a civil war between a national government and a non-state actor).*

*Interventions*

Interventions can be at a variety of levels: project, programme, sectoral (sector wide) and macro. Sectoral (sector wide) and macro levels will be discussed in **Chapter 4**. The primary aim of this chapter (modules 1 to 3) is to integrate conflict sensitivity in projects and programmes throughout the project/programme cycle. See also **Chapter 1**, Box 1.

*Programme*

A programme is a proposed plan with a medium to long-term horizon and possibly without a defined end, often incorporating strategic objectives, multiple projects and activities[1].

*Project*

A project is a set of time-bound activities typically contributing to a larger programmatic objective, which are *planned, implemented, monitored* and *evaluated* in relation to the issue or issues that they seek to address.[2]

### Conflict analysis

Conflict analysis (explained in detail in **Chapter 2**) is central to integrating conflict sensitivity into projects and programmes. The approach is summarised in Table 1.

**TABLE 1**
**The "What" and "How" of conflict analysis**

| What to do | How to do it |
|---|---|
| • Understand the context in which you operate | • Carry out a conflict analysis, and update it regularly |
| • Understand the interaction between your intervention and the context | • Link the conflict analysis with the programming cycle of your intervention |
| • Use this understanding to avoid negative impacts and maximize positive impacts | • Plan, implement, monitor and evaluate your intervention in a conflict sensitive fashion (including redesign when necessary) |

**The project cycle**

This comprises the following key stages:

- *planning*: the process whereby problems are identified, their causal linkages analysed, and effective solutions developed. The result of this process may be embodied in a project or programme with predefined objectives, activities, implementation plans and indicators of progress

- *implementation:* the process of realising objectives by enacting the activities designed in the planning process; it is the operationalisation of the proposal. Implementation involves regular progress reviews with adjustment of activities if necessary

- *monitoring*: the continuous process of examining the delivery of activity outputs to intended beneficiaries. It is carried out during the implementation of the activity, with the intention of immediately correcting any deviation from operational objectives. As such, monitoring reports generate data that can be used in evaluation

- *evaluation*: an assessment that takes place at a specific point in time – typically at the end of a project – in which objective procedures are used in a systematic way to judge the effectiveness of an ongoing or completed activity (eg project, programme, policy) its design, implementation and overall results. The evaluation concentrates on the relevance and fulfilment of defined objectives, developmental efficiency, effectiveness, impact and sustainability compared to a set of explicit or implicit standards.

These stages of the project cycle are represented in the diagram below, and situated within the conflict analysis (see **Chapter 2** for a more detailed explanation of the diagram).
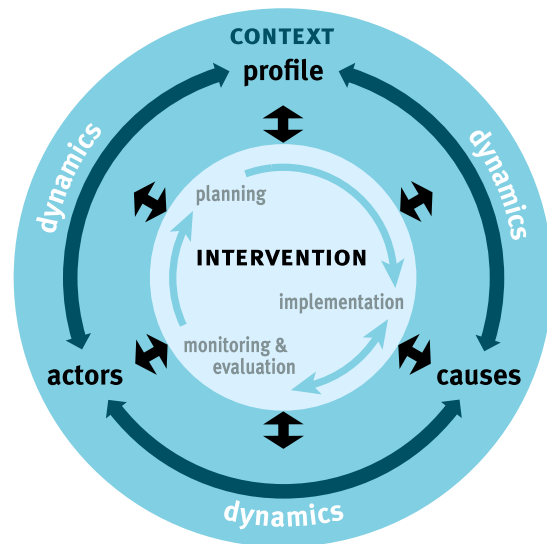


This chapter is organised according to these key stages in the project / programming cycle. The chapter explains both the key steps that must be taken to integrate conflict sensitivity into each project/programme stage ("what") and the process of implementing such steps ("how").

# Endnotes

[1]Adapted **www.osi.hu**

[2]Adapted from Local Government and Public Service Reform Initiative, "Glossary of Terms" **www.osi.hu** & Polaris Grant "Glossary" **www.polarisgrants.org**