

GUIDANCE NOTE
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The triple nexus and cooperation with fragile states and regions

Ministry for Foreign
Affairs of Finland

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1 Introduction

1.1 Background

It is vital to strengthen the coherence and complementarity of humanitarian aid, development cooperation and peace efforts, and ensure cooperation between the various actors involved. This will make it possible to better support people in need of assistance in various contexts, prevent the emergence of crises and conflicts, build peace and strengthen the resilience of nations and communities, and thereby promote sustainable development in accordance with Agenda 2030. This approach is especially important in states and regions suffering from fragility and violent conflict.

In February 2019, to ensure the effectiveness of humanitarian aid, development cooperation and peace efforts, the OECD DAC approved a recommendation known as the triple nexus. It aims to link together policy measures, operational measures and actors in the areas of humanitarian aid, development cooperation and peace in a coherent and complementary manner. The DAC Recommendation on the Humanitarian-Development-Peace Nexus covers the entire international donor community, including the multilateral system, civil society and the private sector. The Recommendation is aligned with the “leave no one behind” principle of Agenda 2030.

In the implementation of the Recommendation, the special expertise and strengths of humanitarian aid, development cooperation and peacebuilding actors will be utilised while respecting the basic principles and mandates of each actor. First and foremost, the triple nexus requires a change of mindset, the identification of interfaces between different areas, and the coordination of action. The triple nexus also requires flexible forms of funding to ensure timely funding in various situations.

The coordination of different forms of assistance is not a linear process. Instead, all aid instruments are often used simultaneously, also in conflict situations. Non-linear developments are typical particularly for post-conflict transitional contexts, as countries teeter between emergency and development, war and peace. Conflicts or crises may only be present in some part of a country, in which case development cooperation, for example, can still continue in other parts of the country. For this



reason, transitional contexts require flexibility from actors with regard to funding as well as operating methods.

The triple nexus approach is binding on all adherents

The Recommendation on the Humanitarian-Development-Peace Nexus by the OECD's Development Assistance Committee (DAC) is binding on all members of the OECD DAC. Its implementation is assessed in connection with peer reviews of DAC member countries. The Recommendation also leans heavily on the 2030 Agenda on Sustainable Development (Agenda 2030), which Finland has committed to promoting together with all UN Member States.¹

Objective and structure of this guidance note

The objective of this guidance note is to support the application of the triple nexus approach in the implementation of Finland's humanitarian aid, development cooperation, conflict prevention and peacebuilding. This guidance note has been prepared as a practical tool, particularly for use by the Ministry for Foreign Affairs, diplomatic missions and stakeholders. It covers bilateral and multilateral cooperation as well as cooperation with civil society and other actors, including public administration actors, universities and the private sector. All actors are encouraged to use this guidance note, where applicable, in incorporating the triple nexus approach into their activities. The guidance note has a particular focus on activities in fragile states and regions. The guidance note is part of the development cooperation support package of the Ministry for Foreign Affairs, and the plan is to update the guidance note based on the experiences accumulated from its implementation. Diplomatic missions are encouraged to report their experiences of using the nexus approach.

Section 1 includes an introduction that sheds light on the background of the triple nexus approach. It also discusses the significance of the triple nexus in fragile and conflict-affected contexts as well as peacebuilding as part of the implementation of the nexus. Section 2 sets out Finland's approach to the implementation of the

¹ The DAC Recommendation on the Humanitarian-Development-Peace Nexus has been applied in preparation of country strategies and programmes that steer cooperation with Finland's main partner countries. The strategies adopted in spring 2021 and the country programmes supporting their implementation have already striven to take into account the principles of the recommendation.



triple nexus and includes the key guiding principles pertaining to the triple nexus approach. It also addresses how the triple nexus should be incorporated into the planning, implementation and monitoring of operational activities. Funding practices that support the implementation of the triple nexus are also discussed. Section 3 addresses influence and advocacy efforts pertaining to the triple nexus from the perspective of bilateral and multilateral cooperation and discusses the role of civil society, private sector actors, public administration institutions and universities in the triple nexus. Section 4 discusses the human resource and training needs related to the implementation of the triple nexus, and section 5 describes the monitoring mechanism for the triple nexus. The practical application of the triple nexus approach is illustrated by case examples. The OECD DAC Recommendation behind the triple nexus approach and other commitments constituted by the international framework are described in an annex.

Above all, the triple nexus calls for new ways of collaborating, whether the actions in question are in the sphere of humanitarian aid, development cooperation or peacebuilding. The triple nexus is not a separate tool or a new funding instrument. The key concepts that help establish an understanding of the triple nexus approach are defined below:

Triple nexus: refers to the interlinkages between humanitarian aid, development cooperation and peace action.

Triple nexus approach: the aim to strengthen cooperation, coherence and complementarity in humanitarian aid, development cooperation and peace action. The approach seeks to capitalise on the comparative advantages of various functions in different operating environments in order to reduce vulnerability, respond to humanitarian aid needs, address the root causes of conflicts and strengthen risk management capacities.

Joined-up approach: the operating model necessary for operationalising the triple nexus, which requires coherent and complementary coordination, programming and financing of humanitarian, development and peace actions that are based on shared analysis, while ensuring that humanitarian action always remains needs-based and principled.

Collective outcomes: measurable results or development impacts agreed upon by humanitarian, development and peace actors, the achievement of which is promoted by enhancing the cooperation, coherence and complementarity of different actors and functions, with each operating within their respective mandates.



Resilience: the ability of households, communities and nations to absorb and recover from shocks, whilst positively adapting or transforming their structures and means for living in the face of long-term stresses, change and uncertainty. Improving resilience aims to address the root causes of conflicts while strengthening the capacities and resources to cope with risks.

Cooperation in transitional contexts: Development cooperation of limited scope and duration, where support is channelled, for example, through international organisations and civil society actors in a context where the partner country does not have an externally recognised government, development cooperation has been discontinued and support mediated by international development banks has been suspended. Cooperation in transitional contexts aims to achieve sustainable humanitarian impact.

Sustainable humanitarian impact: humanitarian action whose impact extends beyond meeting immediate basic needs, enabling the long-term fulfilment of people's basic needs and the realisation of their fundamental rights where the needs and rights have been chronically unmet, also including the mitigation or prevention of risks related to protection, particularly in the context of prolonged conflicts where development cooperation instruments are not available. The focus is on enhancing people's resilience and the functionality of vital services. The functions respect humanitarian principles, and support is independent and needs-based.

1.2 Fragile contexts at the core of the triple nexus

The Principles for Good International Engagement in Fragile States and Situations² approved by the OECD DAC in 2007 sets out 10 principles that should be observed when supporting national reforms to promote sustainable development. The principles are as follows: take context as the starting point; do no harm; focus on the building of democratic state institutions; prioritise the prevention of conflicts and crises; recognise the links between political, security and development objectives; promote non-discrimination; align support measures with local priorities; agree on

² <https://www.oecd.org/dac/conflict-fragility-resilience/docs/38368714.pdf>



cooperation and coordination at the local level; act fast but stay engaged; and avoid the exclusion from international aid of population groups, regions and countries.

In 2011, the g7+, a group of fragile and conflict-affected countries established at the International Dialogue on Peacebuilding and Statebuilding, approved The New Deal for Engagement in Fragile States³, which seeks to be more context-sensitive and country-led than traditional approaches to development, and aims to ensure mutual accountability between governments, civil society and donors.

The New Deal also lays out a set of principles to be adhered to when operating in fragile countries or conflict situations. The principles underscore the importance of commitment to peacebuilding and statebuilding, as well as dialogue between various actors, taking the local operating environment into consideration. The five key principles pertaining to peacebuilding and statebuilding are: legitimate politics, security, justice, economic foundations, and revenues and services. The New Deal also urges actors to focus on country-led planning and nationally defined priorities that are based on a comprehensive assessment of the country's state of instability that also includes the engagement of the country's citizens. The aim of the principles is to ensure that the measures taken by various actors are coherent and aligned with the "one vision, one plan" approach. The New Deal further aims to build trust between national and international actors by enhancing transparency, risk management, the development of capacities and the use of country systems in the delivery of external aid. The guiding principles for building trust are: transparency; risk sharing; the use and strengthening of country systems; strengthening capacity; and timely and predictable aid.

SUPPORT FOR FRAGILE STATES IN COOPERATION WITH THE G7+

The g7+ group was established in 2010 in response to the need to support conflict-affected countries through mutual peer support and learning as well as by strengthening capacity. The group currently includes 20 member states located in Asia, Africa, the Caribbean and the Pacific region. The UN General Assembly granted the g7+ Observer Status in 2019.

³ <https://g7plus.org/4/New-Deal-Implementation>



The g7+ group supports the implementation of the New Deal for Engagement in Fragile States as well as policy influence related to development cooperation in its member states and in fragile states in a broader sense. With regard to the implementation of Agenda 2030, the g7+ group focuses particularly on Sustainable Development Goal 16, which concerns peace and justice. The peer support of the g7+ countries is geared towards peacebuilding, the promotion of justice and the management of public finances and natural resources. In recent times, the g7+ group has also expanded its peer support activities to include non-member countries. The COVID-19 pandemic has increased the need to strengthen the resilience of fragile states, which is also reflected in the g7+ group's objectives. The g7+ is committed to increasing peer learning to strengthen institutions that play a key role in pandemic response and deepening cooperation with the g7+ member states and global actors with the aim of mitigating pandemic-related risks to peace and stability.

Finland has supported the g7+ group since 2019 with an emphasis on promoting the political participation of women, for example. Finland provides annual funding of EUR 250,000 to the g7+ group. Cooperation with the g7+ supports Finland's activities and objectives in the area of peace mediation. Cooperation with the g7+ also expands Finland's partnerships with African countries, as more than half (12) of the group's member states are located in Africa.

1.3 Peacebuilding as part of the triple nexus

A question that often emerges in the implementation of the triple nexus is the meaning of peace and how the different elements of peacebuilding are linked to humanitarian aid and development cooperation. Development cooperation and peacebuilding usually have a mutually supportive relationship. Successful development cooperation may halt trends that could otherwise lead to the emergence of violent conflict. Peace processes can support the transition to a more equal society. The relationship between peacebuilding and humanitarian aid, on the other hand, often involves more tensions. Peacebuilding requires understanding the goals and motivations of the parties involved in conflict as well as discussion and dialogue



with, and between, various actors. At the same time, the presumed or actual cooperation between humanitarian aid actors and different parties involved in a conflict, or political or security sector actors, may muddle the principles pertaining to the neutrality of humanitarian aid and compromise the successful delivery of aid as well as the personal safety of both beneficiaries and humanitarian aid actors. International humanitarian law cannot be compromised under any circumstances.

When working together, development, humanitarian and peace actors need to have a mutual understanding of the meaning of peace and peacebuilding in each context and in the different stages of the conflict in question. In the context of active armed conflict, peace can sometimes simply refer to the absence or end of acute violence, which can be supported through actions that increase stability and security in society. This, however, is only the first step. The implementation of the triple nexus is driven by the goal of sustainable peace. Maintaining or achieving sustainable peace also calls for addressing the root causes of conflict and the factors that fuel and trigger conflict.

In this guidance note, peacebuilding refers to all purposeful and goal-driven actions whose primary objective is to promote and maintain peace, including the prevention of violent conflicts and their peaceful resolution. These actions can include, for example, military crisis management or civilian crisis management; diplomatic peace mediation; the provision of expert assistance and/or effective services in relation to peace processes, national or unofficial dialogues, and the negotiation and implementation of armistices and peace treaties; policy influence, cooperation and support for other peace-promoting and peace-mediating actors (including the EU, international organisations, civil society actors); and peacebuilding, the aims of which include identifying and supporting structures and factors that reduce the risk of re-emergence of conflict and strengthen and stabilise sustainable peace.

Military crisis management and civilian crisis management are part of peace action. There may be different peacebuilding actions simultaneously under way in a conflict-affected country or region. Finland has consistently supported the division of labour and coordination between international actors, and as stated in Finland's Comprehensive Crisis Management Strategy, issued in 2009, military and civilian crisis management as well as development cooperation and humanitarian aid should be coordinated to achieve the best possible synergies and sustainable results. The nexus of peacebuilding, humanitarian aid and development cooperation



is also emphasised in the report of the Parliamentary Committee on Crisis Management⁴ issued in 2020.

As discussed above, peacebuilding encompasses a wide range of actions ranging from measures that increase trust to peace processes and post-conflict peacebuilding. The increasing complexity of violent conflict also requires partnerships and peacebuilding at all levels: local, national and international. In peace mediation and dialogue, for example, the aim is to use a multi-track approach, both to increase inclusivity and local ownership and to keep the process going at all times on at least one track. The high-level political process and efforts at the community level provide a more comprehensive picture of the root causes of the conflict and the views of different population groups.

FINLAND STRENGTHENS THE AU'S PEACE MEDIATION EFFORTS

Finland has supported the strengthening of the African Union's (AU) peace mediation support since 2009. During the period 2009–2019, Finland provided funding to the AU Mediation Support Capacity Project, the participants of which included the AU Commission, the Crisis Management Institute (CMI) and the civil society organisation ACCORD. The total amount of funding was EUR 7.8 million. In addition to the AU, the beneficiaries included Regional Economic Communities (RECs) in Africa as well as state-level, civil society and research sector actors in the AU Member States.

The project outcomes included support for the AU's peace mediation missions, training for peace mediators, the production of a handbook and other materials to assist peace mediators, the start of annual high-level retreats for peace mediators and establishing the AU Mediation Support Unit and the FemWise-Africa Network of African Women in Conflict Prevention and Mediation. The AU's peace mediation support structures were reinforced.

⁴ Effective crisis management: Recommendations of the Parliamentary Committee on Crisis Management on developing Finland's crisis management, VN 2021:18



Finland is continuing to cooperate with the AU Commission in the African Union Conflict Prevention and Mediation Support Capacities Project implemented by CMI. The Ministry for Foreign Affairs' funding for the project amounts to EUR 2.4 million during the period 2019–2022. The project is focused on developing the AU's support measures for preventive diplomacy and peace mediation, the FemWise network and information management pertaining to peace mediation.

Alongside funding, diplomatic dialogue is an integral part of Finland's influence and advocacy efforts. Finland has consistently highlighted the role of women in peace and security action in accordance with UN Resolution 1325. One of the outcomes is the formalisation of the FemWise network in the sphere of peace mediation in Africa. Over the past few years, another subject that has emerged as a prominent topic in the dialogue is the theme of youth, peace and security in accordance with UN Resolution 2250.

The significance of local communities in peace mediation in Africa is being increasingly emphasised. Eliminating tensions at the grassroots level serves conflict prevention and peacebuilding. It is a precondition for sustainable development.

WATER DIPLOMACY COMBINES PROACTIVE PEACE MEDIATION WITH THE DEVELOPMENT PRESSURES RELATED TO SHARED WATER RESOURCES

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Water is a key factor for peace, development and humanitarian aid. The management of water resources can be the seed of cooperation, but it often involves political ambitions and, consequently, conflicts between countries. Rules are necessary for mitigating water-related tensions between states and the different uses of water.⁵ Finland supports the UN conventions on transboundary

⁵ Water Scarcity Atlas 2021: <https://waterscarcityatlas.org>



watercourses⁶ and corresponding *transboundary watercourse cooperation* to reconcile needs (hydropower, agriculture, industry, etc.) as well as *water diplomacy* as a tool for proactive peace mediation in the context of geopolitical tensions and conflicts. In water diplomacy, Finland combines extensive natural resources capabilities with peace mediation expertise.

Water diplomacy is needed when the upstream and downstream states in transboundary river basins use water for different purposes: hydropower production upstream and agriculture and fishing downstream. Indeed, large hydropower dams are often the root causes behind conflicts between states and, through downstream food security, they are linked to national security. Water diplomacy is primarily a political and diplomatic process that aims to reduce water-related tensions through diplomacy, peace mediation, information concerning water and natural resources, development cooperation, and other methods.

One current example of water diplomacy comes from the Nile River, where the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam (GERD) is under construction. The dam is creating political tensions in the Eastern Nile and Red Sea region, and it is even linked to superpower politics. For Ethiopia, the dam represents a source of electricity to power the country's development, while the downstream Nile countries of Sudan and Egypt are concerned about its potential impacts on food security and water security. The prolonged negotiations concerning the GERD project have involved many parties: the African Union, the European Union, the United States, South Africa and the UN, even including the Security Council. At the technical level, it is possible to reach an agreement on everything. The problem is not the lack of technical understanding, but rather the challenge of finding political consensus. There is distrust and concern between the region's countries on how the dam and the related agreements could potentially change the regional power relations. Water diplomacy is the only way forward.

⁶ UNECE (1992). *The Convention on the Protection and Use of Transboundary Watercourses and International Lakes*, United Nations Economic Commission for Europe UNECE; UN (1997). *Convention on the Law of the Non-navigational Uses of International Watercourses*, United Nations UN.



2 The implementation of the triple nexus approach

Putting the triple nexus approach into action is ultimately a question of a change of mindset. The purpose is not to plan and implement nexus projects that cut across all of the pillars of the triple nexus, but rather to build a stronger understanding of how development cooperation, humanitarian aid and peacebuilding should be pursued in the same region and how they can support each other's goals. **The aim is primarily to identify the interfaces between the pillars and to reconcile activities within the triple nexus in accordance with the opportunities and needs associated with each context.**

2.1 Conflict sensitive and context-specific approach

The OECD DAC Recommendation calls on actors to take a conflict sensitive approach and adhere to the “do no harm” principle so that actions do not have the unintended consequence of exacerbating existing conflicts. A conflict sensitive approach refers to understanding the context and its prevailing latent and active conflicts, and adapting actions accordingly. Applying this approach requires both conflict analysis and ensuring transparency, predictability and neutrality in the programming and implementation of actions. The conflict sensitive approach and conflict analysis are useful in all contexts.

The implementation of the triple nexus in a partner country depends largely on the local context, the donors present in the country and the capacity of the implementing organisations to act in each context. The development of fragile and conflict-affected countries also involves significant instability, and major changes in the context can happen quite quickly.

The more difficult the context, the more important it is for actors to have the required experience and capacity to maintain peacebuilding, development cooperation and humanitarian aid. In difficult contexts, the actors need to have the systems and tools required by the context – such as funding systems, communication systems, risk management and security guidelines – as well as the ability to engage



in dialogue with all significant parties and stakeholders without the actors themselves becoming parties to political conflicts and power conflicts.

Another significant factor in the implementation of the triple nexus is having an understanding of international humanitarian law. It contributes to an actors' capacity to avoid becoming a party to conflicts, for example. The international humanitarian law dimension should be incorporated into the training of actors operating in fragile contexts to enhance understanding of that topic. This would give Finland an excellent opportunity to simultaneously strengthen cooperation across organisational boundaries and present itself as a capable actor.

The significance, roles, interlinkages and operational preconditions of humanitarian aid, development cooperation and peace mediation vary in different contexts. In some contexts, for example, development cooperation is not possible due to various international or national measures, decisions or restrictions. Operational preconditions are also affected by the extent to which Finland is positioned to support the different pillars of the triple nexus in the specific context. Indeed, it is necessary to weigh the resources available for the operationalisation of the triple nexus on a context-specific basis.

2.2 The human rights-based approach and the cross-cutting objectives of development policy

Finland's commitment to human rights-based foreign policy and security policy⁷ needs to be taken into account in the implementation of the triple nexus. Defending and promoting equality, the rights of the most discriminated population groups and gender equality are particular priorities in Finland's international human rights activities. The cross-cutting objectives that Finland promotes through its development policy include gender equality, the rights of persons with disabilities,

⁷ Human Rights Based Approach in Finland's Development Cooperation – Guidance Note 2015: https://um.fi/documents/35732/48132/human_rights_based_approach_in_finlands_development_cooperation_-_guidance_note_2015_pdf_32_pages_118_mb.pdf/cf2c5d8d-358d-717b-991b-0a4c5a7af2a2?t=1560452724451



non-discrimination, climate-resilient and low-emission development as well as environmental protection, with an emphasis on safeguarding biodiversity.

The application of the human rights-based approach and the cross-cutting objectives need to be adapted to each context. In the context of the triple nexus, applying the human rights-based approach and the cross-cutting objectives of Finland's development policy help draw attention to the issues of human rights violations, discrimination and inclusion that underpin conflicts, as well as operating practices and the accountability of states. Applying the human rights-based approach can be seen first and foremost as having a preventive effect: if all actions are planned in adherence to human rights norms and implemented in accordance with human rights principles, it can be assumed that development will be more fair and sustainable and benefit all population groups (including women, girls and persons with disabilities), which, in turn, reduces conflicts and perceived injustice in society.

Conflicts and crises have particularly significant impacts on persons and groups who are in a discriminated or vulnerable position to begin with. Gender inequality and discrimination are major vulnerability factors. Sexual and gender-based violence may destabilise communities and reduce trust in the state. Women's active social and political participation, in turn, strengthens the resilience of communities, enhances prevention and supports the sustainability of peace treaties. With this in mind, the implementation of the triple nexus must promote gender equality in order to be effective and sustainable. Echoing this view, a report published by the OECD DAC in 2021 urges DAC members to pay special attention to gender equality in the implementation of the nexus, strengthen messaging around the importance of gender within the nexus approach, and highlight the interlinkages between the Women, Peace and Security Agenda and the HDP nexus agenda to drive forward both agendas.

Persons with disabilities face significant risks in the context of humanitarian and armed conflict. In particular, women, girls and children with disabilities are subject to an elevated risk of gender-based and sexual violence. They also face significant obstacles with regard to accessing humanitarian aid. Within the nexus approach, it is important for humanitarian aid, development cooperation and peacebuilding actors to implement disabled inclusive operating models and strengthen their respective competencies concerning the rights and non-discrimination of persons with disabilities. The participation of persons with disabilities and disability organisations in preparedness and disaster risk activities needs to be taken into consid-



eration right from the start. As part of the triple nexus approach, it is also important to prevent multiple discrimination, address it within the framework of the activities in question, and to engage persons and organisations who represent different population groups.

Climate change affects the root causes of conflicts and can act as a multiplier of threats. The impacts of climate change and environmental degradation on living conditions, livelihoods, poverty, food security and health increase people's vulnerability. Failing to allocate resources to climate change adaptation, environmental protection and the sustainable use and management of natural resources may lead to the preconditions for peace and development being short-lived. In the triple nexus approach, environmental and climate issues need to be incorporated into peacebuilding, humanitarian aid and development cooperation.

2.3 The triple nexus in practice

The operationalisation of the triple nexus in the Ministry for Foreign Affairs can be promoted by enhancing coordination between actors and addressing the interfaces between the pillars of the nexus in analyses, the planning and implementation of interventions and operations, funding, and monitoring. It is also essential to promote the triple nexus approach by exercising influence in international organisations. It is important to consider Finland's positioning as an actor in each country with regard to these dimensions. To be a credible partner, Finland needs to position itself through strategic long-term participation in dialogue and through resource allocation, particularly in the sectors of peacebuilding and development cooperation.

2.3.1 Country-level cooperation between triple nexus actors

Enhancing cooperation between actors is one of the key objectives of the triple nexus approach. The prevailing country-level coordination challenges do not only concern Finland and interventions or actors funded by Finland. There are also deficiencies and bottlenecks in the operations of international actors. Country-level discussions and situation analyses pertaining to humanitarian aid, development cooperation and peacebuilding often take place in different forums.



From the perspective of ownership, sustainability and impact, it is important to ensure that the government of the partner country takes a leading role in coordination where possible. However, in conflict contexts, it should be noted that the government of the partner country may be one of the parties of the conflict, its legitimacy may be in question, or its role may otherwise be subject to dispute, and relying on the government is not necessarily possible. With this in mind, it is important to ensure ownership through the broader consultation of the representatives of the different parties involved and international actors to the extent allowed by the context. Participation, commitment and ownership by political parties and other political actors increase the sustainability of peace and enhance resilience. It is important to consider the prevailing power relations and seek to address those parties that may be excluded from opportunities for participation, paying particular attention to the gender equality and non-discrimination aspects relevant to the context.

There are various country-level coordination mechanisms to support coordination and the exchange of information between donors. These mechanisms can be led by the local government, the UN or the EU. In the field of development cooperation, examples of these mechanisms include Development Partners meetings, which bring together donors and development funding institutions more broadly, and the EU Member States' own Head of Cooperation (HOC) meetings, which are often also attended by other European countries. Conflicts and peacebuilding, in turn, are discussed in the EU's Head of Mission (HOMs) and Political Counsellors meetings. There are also coordination groups for humanitarian aid depending on the context and the nature of the crisis, and many of these coordination groups may be operational simultaneously.

It is important for diplomatic missions to regularly participate in these groups. In crisis contexts, it is essential to ensure communication between the groups. Exchanging information with potential crisis management operations in the region in question is also important, especially in crisis contexts. The exchange of information is important both during the planning of actions (both concrete interventions and advocacy efforts) and in the monitoring and evaluation stages. Coordination between the various actors involved should also be taken into account in development cooperation. The education and health sectors, for example, typically involve both humanitarian aid and development cooperation.

It is important for Finnish actors to be involved in peacebuilding and mediation processes. Participation in these processes is important for promoting peace, but,



at the same time, they also ensure access to confidential discussions on the direction of peace and the conflict in question as well as problems that can be potentially addressed through humanitarian aid or development cooperation resources.

The UN Resident Coordinator Office is usually responsible for the programming of UN actors at the country level, and it often has a natural role in coordinating country-level dialogue between donors and the peace process. With regard to the sustainable and impactful operationalisation of the nexus, it is important to support the capacity of local actors – such as the different branches of administration and civil society – to participate in joint analysis and coordinated implementation. This calls for joint support and advocacy efforts from donors.

Concrete actions:

- Where possible, support the realisation of the partner country's broad ownership in coordination
- Broadly consult the various parties and international actors involved to strengthen ownership
- Actively participate in EU coordination and country-level Development Partners meetings
- Promote dialogue between development cooperation, humanitarian aid and peace process coordination mechanisms and, where possible, promote the consolidation of coordination structures based on a joint background analysis and programme
- Participate in peacebuilding and mediation processes
- Strengthen local agency and the participation of underrepresented groups with the help of coordination mechanisms at the national and local levels
- Enhance the capacity of national and local actors to participate in joint analysis and coordinated implementation
- Coordinate military and civilian crisis management as well as development cooperation, humanitarian aid and peace mediation to achieve the best possible synergies and sustainable results.



WEST BANK PROTECTION CONSORTIUM

Triple nexus cooperation enhances the protection of Palestinian communities: The West Bank Protection Consortium is a programme supported by the European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operation (ECHO) and 10 EU Member States. It provides humanitarian protection and strengthens the development conditions for Palestinian communities in Israel-administered Area C. The programme is implemented by the Norwegian Refugee Council in collaboration with four international humanitarian organisations. Finland's annual funding for the programme amounts to EUR 1.5 million for the period 2022–2024 and is channelled through ECHO.

The West Bank Protection Consortium takes a more comprehensive approach compared to conventional humanitarian aid by recognising the chronic nature of humanitarian needs and influencing the root causes behind vulnerability. The programme is focused particularly on supporting the 157 most vulnerable Palestinian communities. The comprehensive protection implemented in the target communities includes legal aid, the construction of small-scale essential infrastructure, responding to immediate humanitarian protection needs, increasing the communities' awareness of their rights, and influencing the duty-bearers and third parties. The impact of the programme is monitored, among other tools, by a protection index used to measure the level of vulnerability in communities that are beneficiaries of comprehensive protection.

Legal support and advocacy measures by the West Bank Protection Consortium have helped prevent the destruction of Palestinian infrastructure. Over 90 per cent of the infrastructure built by the consortium is in place. Immediate humanitarian aid is used in response to Israel's destruction of homes and other structures, and violence against settlements. The work of the West Bank Protection Consortium has further increased the visibility of violations of international law. For example, incidents of destroying Palestinian structures highlighted in the UN Security Council are based on the West Bank Protection Consortium's comprehensive monitoring and information production activities. The West Bank Protection Consortium is not able to solve the underlying political issue. Addressing that issue would require political courage from the international community. Nevertheless, the approach taken by the programme represents nexus programming at its best, and it also effectively supports Finland's objectives.



2.3.2 Coordination within the MFA and between Finnish actors

In the Ministry for Foreign Affairs, the use of development cooperation appropriations and peacebuilding are the responsibility of units under several different departments. Humanitarian aid is granted on a centralised basis by the Unit for Humanitarian Assistance. The Centre for Peace Mediation has been established to coordinate peace mediation efforts, while crisis management is led by the Unit for Security Policy and Crisis Management, which also maintains close contact with the Ministry of Defence, the Ministry of the Interior, the Finnish Defence Forces and Crisis Management Centre Finland (CMC).

From the triple nexus perspective, internal coordination in the MFA needs to be developed further and made more systematic to ensure that an overall picture is established of the objectives, roles, responsibilities and potential risks of the various actors involved. Coordination is particularly important with regard to programming and the allocation of funds. Complementarity and risk management improve impact. Regular reviews between regional departments and the Unit for Humanitarian Assistance, the Centre for Peace Mediation and the various units responsible for the administration of development cooperation instruments and crisis management can be considered a good operating practice.

The comprehensive country strategies approved in 2021 for Finland's long-term partner countries and regions provide an effective framework for coordination. The country strategies examine the scope of Finland's (not just the MFA's) activities in a specific country, and they can also include definitions of shared objectives that promote the mutual complementarity of development cooperation, humanitarian aid and peacebuilding.

When the country strategies were drafted, extensive internal and external consultations were carried out with regard to the analysis of the operating environment and Finland's objectives, incorporating the perspectives of humanitarian aid, development cooperation and peacebuilding. The country strategies and, as part of them, development cooperation country programmes provide the opportunity to address prolonged crises in particular. Rapidly emerging crises, in turn, require flexibility and adaptability from the country strategies and programmes. Stakeholder engagement should continue in the monitoring of the country strategies and the updating of analyses as necessary. The monitoring effort can take advantage of country forums that bring together Finnish actors cooperating with a specific partner country.



Annually convened country forums are particularly important in countries where Finnish humanitarian aid and peacebuilding organisations operate in addition to humanitarian aid efforts.

Concrete actions:

- Develop the MFA's internal coordination, and make it more systematic, from the triple nexus perspective
- Apply the triple nexus approach in country strategies
- Utilise analyses from the different pillars of the triple nexus in the drafting and interim review of country programmes
- Organise regular reviews with regional departments, the Unit for Humanitarian Assistance, the Unit for Civil Society and the Centre for Peace Mediation
- Annually coordinate the allocation of funding with different departments
- Promote information sharing between humanitarian, development cooperation and peacebuilding actors by taking advantage of country forums, for example

2.3.3 Joint analysis by triple nexus actors

The improved coordination, coherence and complementarity sought by the triple nexus approach require a shared understanding and situational awareness of the context, which also supports the defining of collective outcomes. The point of departure is the utilisation of diverse actors – representing different sectors and different pillars of the triple nexus – in information sharing and involving them in a joint analysis process regarding the prevailing or impending conflict and its underlying causes, the needs and vulnerabilities of the parties involved, and the risks associated with the situation.

Particular attention should be paid to the views of local government, civil society and the academic community. It is further recommended that UN entities, development funding institutions, international NGOs, research institutions and the diplomatic missions of other countries are utilised in compiling joint country-level



information and analyses. Information produced by crisis management actors should also be utilised in risk analyses, for example. Tacit knowledge collected through various channels is often also significant in addition to the actual formal analysis. Particularly in crisis contexts, the preparation of comprehensive formal analyses may take time, and it is important to establish diverse contacts and compile tacit knowledge as an input for joint discussion and potential decision-making.

Analyses should be based on the expertise of specialists in humanitarian aid, development cooperation and peacebuilding. In practice, however, expertise in different fields and related processes is often dispersed between multiple groups. Analytical frameworks and methods have been developed for humanitarian aid, development cooperation, peacebuilding and crisis management to address the particular characteristics of each area. Analyses of humanitarian needs usually take advantage of the comprehensive regional analyses produced by UN/OCHA, for example. The reports and recommendations of the UN's human rights mechanisms are of key importance with regard to the human rights-based approach. Non-governmental organisations and academic entities also prepare analyses of their own. In the guidance concerning development cooperation – for example, in the drafting of country programmes with long-term partner countries and in project and programme cooperation – each form of cooperation has its own guidelines, which cover the analyses to be used in that area of cooperation, including various context analyses, human rights analyses and analyses pertaining to the cross-cutting objectives of Finland's development policy and the capacity of partners. In peacebuilding, in addition to the aforementioned analyses, various conflict analyses, peace mediation initiatives and mediation processes are also of key importance, although the analyses produced by these initiatives and processes are not always publicly available due to their confidentiality.

With a view to the human rights-based approach, it is important to ensure that the analysis identifies the parties to the conflict as duty-bearers and rights-holders, and that their obligations and rights are recognised. In analyses that support the triple nexus, special attention should also be paid to the rights of women, girls and persons with disabilities. Environmental and climate risks also need to be addressed as part of the planning of activities.

Conflict sensitive and context-specific consideration is crucial. In promoting the triple nexus approach, it is important to compile the available analyses based on context-specific and case-specific needs.

**Concrete actions:**

- In analyses, pay particular attention to the views of local government, civil society and the academic community, including analyses by local human rights, development and peace organisations, analyses concerning gender equality and/or the inclusion of persons with disabilities, and analyses pertaining to environmental and climate risks
- Utilise PEA (Political Economy Analysis) analyses and other analyses by the international community (especially the UN and the EU)
- Bring together special expertise in the different pillars of the triple nexus
- In analyses of the operating context, aim for conflict sensitivity and make use of existing conflict analyses
- Promote the production of joint analyses by the international community (UN, EU).

2.3.4 Planning and implementation of interventions

When planning individual interventions (projects, programmes, allocations, participation in operations), it is necessary to take into account their potential links with other pillars of the nexus and, where necessary, incorporate flexibility and maintain information sharing with the relevant actors. Particularly when operating in conflict-affected or fragile contexts, it is important to pay attention to the triple nexus even in the planning of individual projects, programmes or participation in operations. However, the manner in which the triple nexus is addressed in programming is always context-specific.

Conflict sensitivity should be incorporated into the planning of interventions (development, humanitarian, peace) regardless of whether the country in question is in the midst of active armed conflict. In project planning stages, where possible, existing joint analyses should be utilised along with tacit knowledge from diverse relevant sources (see previous paragraph). If the risk of a humanitarian crisis is obvious or the project is related to peacebuilding, the MFA's Unit for Humanitarian Assistance and/or Centre for Peace Mediation needs to be consulted. In planning humanitarian aid and peace mediation projects, it is also important to consult



country teams and, where necessary, the Unit for Humanitarian Assistance or the Centre for Peace Mediation, and the potential cooperation risks and/or opportunities relevant to the nexus should be assessed.

Where possible, long-term actions should be linked to advancing the partner country's human rights commitments, with the starting point being the urgency of human rights issues and the capacity of duty-bearers and rights-holders. In rapidly deteriorating or unstable contexts, it may be necessary to allocate support not only to the government and public authorities but also, on a temporary basis, to other actors that may take the role of service provider, for example. Nevertheless, it is important to keep in mind that the responsibility for the realisation of human rights obligations always lies with the state and the public authorities. Support for other actors needs to be linked to enhancing the capacity of state authorities and emphasising their obligations whenever possible.

Operating in a conflict context often requires elevated risk tolerance. Sometimes, taking no action constitutes the greatest risk, which is why risks related to funding are consciously accepted. Efforts can also be made to manage risks through collaboration; for example, in various jointly funded interventions. Active influence, political dialogue, local ownership and engagement, and coordination and cooperation between actors can also reduce conflict-related risks to activities. With that in mind, opportunities to incorporate these into the planned intervention should be considered. The sustainability of development cooperation in a conflict context may be challenging, which makes peace action particularly important, for example. At the same time, humanitarian action may be necessary to create the conditions for promoting peace or development. In some situations, the context can turn out to be so challenging that support actions are primarily aimed at preventing the escalation of the situation or other negative developments. Achieving sustainable development impacts is tremendously difficult without resolving the underlying conflict.

It should be noted that, in the planning and selection of interventions, Finland positions itself in the field of the conflict and may affect the dynamics of the conflicts, which underscores the importance of conflict sensitivity and understanding the conflict. It may be necessary to incorporate opportunities for flexibility in interventions on a case-specific basis. Changes in activities, project priorities, approaches or budgets may be necessary due to a humanitarian crisis or conflict, for example.



Interventions that are aligned with the triple nexus approach can be planned in a number of ways depending on the context-specific needs and objectives. A project can serve as an instrument of influence and advocacy, and it can also be an important source of information. At the intervention level, it is possible to plan actions that actively promote coordination, information sharing and cooperation between the various triple nexus actors in the field. In some cases, it may be sensible to promote concrete cooperation between interventions around a particular theme. Some interventions may simultaneously have elements of humanitarian aid, longer-term development cooperation, peace action and influencing the conflict. Actions in interventions may be supported from different funding sources, in which case humanitarian funds, development cooperation funds and peacebuilding funds are used to finance the same intervention.

In increasingly complex operating environments, it is important to focus on crisis and conflict communications to ensure reliable access to information and keep the objectives of the actions clear for all of the parties involved. Furthermore, mitigating hazards caused by disinformation and polarised hate speech will require increasing attention going forward in order to ensure the safety and operating capacity of the actors involved.

Concrete actions:

- Conflict sensitivity should be incorporated into planning regardless of whether the country in question is in the midst of active armed conflict
- Take advantage of existing joint analyses in the project planning stage
- In the planning stage, consult the relevant departments and units depending on factors such as the risk of crisis
- Where possible, incorporate governance structures in the intervention that enable flexible programming and changes in response to context-specific needs



- Incorporate the human rights-based approach and cross-cutting objectives in planning at the earliest possible stage⁸.
- On a case-specific basis, incorporate influence and advocacy efforts, information production or the promotion of coordination at the local level into the intervention

UNFPA'S WOMEN AND GIRLS FIRST (WGF) NEXUS PROGRAMME IN MYANMAR

Finland has supported Phase II of the Women and Girls First programme in Myanmar since 2020. The programme operates in the country's conflict-affected regions, providing support services to victims of gender-based violence. UNFPA is particularly well-suited to operate in conflict-affected regions due to its dual mandate. As a humanitarian actor under UN, UNFPA has the opportunity and the capacity to operate in the middle of conflict, flexibly monitoring humanitarian needs and prioritising aid. At the same time, within the framework of its development mandate, UNFPA has the role of ensuring the Myanmar government's ownership of the development outcomes related to the programme, enhancing the capacity of critical entities and increasing awareness in communities.

Indeed, the project has a strong "double nexus" character. On the one hand, it seeks to save lives and reduce distress in the midst of a long-term and worsening conflict in the here and now. On the other hand, it aims to strengthen the sustainable capacity of actors and public authorities to provide services and increase community awareness concerning the reduction of violence. Phase II of the project has involved a shift towards the triple nexus by strengthening the link with peacebuilding. UNFPA supports the government in the implementation of UN Resolution 1325 (Women, Peace and Security) and UN Resolution 2467 (Conflict-Related Sexual Violence). At the local level, the project supports communities with the aim of ensuring that the rights of vulnerable members of communities are also

⁸ Human Rights Based Approach in Finland's Development Cooperation – Guidance Note 2015: https://um.fi/documents/35732/48132/human_rights_based_approach_in_finlands_development_cooperation_-_guidance_note_2015_pdf_32_pages_118_mb.pdf/cf2c5d8d-358d-717b-991b-0a4c5a7af2a2?t=1560452724451 & Guideline for the Cross-Cutting Objectives in the Finnish Development Policy and Cooperation: <https://um.fi/documents/35732/0/Guideline+for+the+Cross-Cutting+Objectives+in+the+Finnish+Development+Policy+and+Cooperation.pdf/e9e8a940-a382-c3d5-3c5f-dc8e7455576b?t=1618230452564>



realised with regard to sexual and reproductive health and rights as well as gender-based violence. UNFPA also participates in the country-level coordination of both development aid and humanitarian aid.

While the states in which the programme operates have been affected by conflict for decades now, the situation has worsened further due to the military coup and the subsequent increase in armed clashes. The context for development cooperation is currently closer to humanitarian circumstances where, instead of the development of systems, the focus is on saving lives and maintaining the conditions for life through temporary solutions. The shared political stance of donors is to not support the military government in any way and to refrain from all action that could be interpreted as confirming the legitimacy of the military government. For this reason, UNFPA has discontinued technical support to increase the capacity of the authorities, and connections with the federal and state levels are only maintained in permit-related and logistical matters. As the humanitarian aid effort can continue and UNFPA can exceptionally engage in humanitarian aid cooperation with the parties to the conflict, continuing the programme at the local level in conflict-affected regions is possible.

2.3.5 Flexible funding – what does it mean and what does it require?

For the triple nexus, the OECD DAC recommends flexible, predictable and multi-year funding for humanitarian aid, development cooperation and peace action. Flexibility is particularly important in conflict and crisis contexts, as circumstances and needs can change very quickly. The goal is to improve the effectiveness and impact of aid in conflicts and in fragile countries that are recovering from crises. The need to link various forms of support, financial instruments and political dialogue increases particularly when conflicts and crises become prolonged, during the subsequent periods of recovery and transition and in the context of major natural catastrophes. At the same time, it is important to maintain the independence of the forms of funding, particularly to ensure resources for humanitarian aid.

The Ministry for Foreign Affairs can grant multi-year funding to all pillars of the triple nexus in accordance with their respective operating principles. Funding for development cooperation is, as a rule, long-term by nature, but in the Ministry for Foreign Affairs also concludes multi-year agreements on general financial aid



for international organisations in the sphere of humanitarian aid, and the Ministry for Foreign Affairs can grant two-year project funding for Finnish NGOs operating in the context of prolonged crises. Flexibility has been improved over the past few years in order to respond to prolonged or sudden crises.

Developing the predictability and flexibility of funding is vital for the successful implementation of the triple nexus. Siloed funding mechanisms that are linked to the individual pillars of the triple nexus, and their mutual inflexibility, have an adverse effect on cooperation between humanitarian aid, development cooperation and peacebuilding actors in the field. For this reason, there is a need for new, innovative solutions that support synergies and complementarity between different forms of action while enabling the adaptation of programming and implementation according to the needs emerging in each specific context. Various joint funding mechanisms, for example, provide more room for manoeuvre in the implementation of the triple nexus compared to pillar-specific budgets. The OECD DAC calls for the preparation of global, regional and local financing strategies that cover the different pillars of the nexus in order to ensure the timely allocation of financing for different needs. The Recommendation also promotes transitioning to the use of multi-year, predictable and flexible financing mechanisms whenever possible. Indeed, Finland is committed to granting multi-year flexible financing, also with regard to humanitarian aid. To support the implementation of the triple nexus, in May 2021 the Ministry for Foreign Affairs adopted new guidance concerning different funding mechanisms. The guidance aims to increase the flexibility of funding when responding to funding needs caused by humanitarian aid, development cooperation or prolonged and sudden crises. Due to the crisis caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, the Finnish Parliament approved a principle in spring 2020 that allows the flexibility and predictability of funding to be increased as one way of responding to the COVID-19 pandemic. The second supplementary budget, which was approved in spring 2020, stated the following:

“It is particularly important to increase the flexibility and multi-year nature of funding for humanitarian aid and development cooperation. Flexibility is also needed in responding to sudden humanitarian crises and crises caused by global health threats. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, appropriations under item 2 (country-specific and region-specific development cooperation) and item 8 (support for non-governmental organisations’ development cooperation and development cooperation communications as well as development cooperation by the municipal sector) can be allocated to humanitarian aid to manage prolonged crises or sudden crises and catastrophes in countries or regions as well as the prevention of, and recovery from, such crises and catastrophes.”



Appropriations can also be allocated to humanitarian aid to manage prolonged crises or sudden crises and catastrophes in countries or regions as well as the prevention of, and recovery from, such crises and catastrophes in accordance with Finland's national policy decisions.

Appropriations granted to organisations receiving programme-based support can also be allocated to humanitarian aid in accordance with Finland's national policy decisions when a partner country or region faces a sudden crisis or catastrophe.”

The new guidance has increased the flexibility of the Ministry for Foreign Affairs' decision-making procedures pertaining to the granting and allocation of funding, but the development of funding mechanisms to ensure the implementation of the triple nexus will continue.

Concrete actions:

- Prioritise multi-year funding
- Continue to incorporate flexibility into responding to funding needs caused by humanitarian aid, development cooperation or prolonged and sudden crises
- Develop the flexibility and predictability of funding

NON-EARMARKED GENERAL FINANCIAL AID FOR HUMANITARIAN ACTORS

Over 40 per cent of Finland's humanitarian aid is general financial aid based on multi-year agreements. Flexible funding enables humanitarian organisations to better predict and plan their operations. One of the actors receiving multi-year general financial aid is the UN's Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF). The Fund enables both quick reactions to crises and support in response to prolonged situations. Support can be granted not only to UN organisations but also indirectly to civil society actors, the Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and the state administration.



PROGRAMME-BASED SUPPORT FOR NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANISATIONS IS FLEXIBLE MULTI-YEAR FUNDING

Multi-year programme-based support for Finnish non-governmental organisations enables the NGOs to promote the triple nexus principle in their operations. Programme-based support is multi-year funding that, due to its nature and duration, provides opportunities for flexibility and room for manoeuvre to help recipients adapt their operations in fragile and conflict-affected contexts. Programme-based support for the support period 2022–2025 includes an option of 10 per cent flexibility in budgeting. The MFA’s current practice also facilitates flexibility in funding by permitting reasoned changes in the purposes of funding from development cooperation to humanitarian aid. Exercising the flexibility options is subject to separate approval by the Ministry for Foreign Affairs and reasoned proposals concerning the changes.

In the 2021 round of applications for programme-based support, a total of EUR 276 million in funding was granted for the period 2022–2025. In the overall assessment of the applications, relevance and added value in relation to the nexus approach were considered in addition to other criteria. Many of the non-governmental organisations that received funding addressed the triple nexus in their programmes for the period 2022–2025.

In the programme of the Finnish Red Cross, for example, the double nexus is one of the four focus areas. The Finnish Red Cross seeks to strengthen linkages between humanitarian and development action in its activities and the activities of its local associations, with the aim of achieving positive outcomes particularly in fragile contexts characterised by recurring or long-term crises.

The Abilis Foundation aims to support people with disabilities, and related organisations, in all circumstances, also during and after conflicts. The Abilis programme for the new programme period includes an entirely new thematic sub-programme, “Resilience of Persons with Disabilities in Crises”, which seeks to promote development processes pertaining to the nexus and disability mainstreaming in all international affairs.

The programme of the Finnish Refugee Council is in the nexus of humanitarian aid and development cooperation. The programme supports the resilience of groups subject to multiple discrimination in prolonged refugee contexts and in fragile



contexts involving forced migration. The programme's third primary result area concerns peace action at the community level.

The development cooperation programme of the YMCA of Finland recognises the interlinkages between humanitarian, development cooperation and peace action, takes them into consideration and aims for cooperation with other actors throughout the programme. Peace is one of the programme's three primary result areas.

The Finnish Evangelical Lutheran Mission, together with its partners, is a local actor that has the capacity to help respond to sustainable development, peace and humanitarian needs, depending on the context, in adherence with the triple nexus approach. The Finnish Evangelical Lutheran Mission and its partners operate on a context-specific basis, with a focus on the needs and resilience of the local community.

2.3.6 Monitoring

Key considerations in the monitoring of the triple nexus include ensuring adherence to the principle of "do no harm" and the conflict sensitivity of operations. The purpose of monitoring is to ensure that negative impacts are avoided and positive impacts are maximised. Cooperation within the Ministry for Foreign Affairs is important, but so is cooperation with other actors. Continuous dialogue is a precondition for the success of the triple nexus approach. The aim is to maintain shared situational awareness, an understanding of the assumptions and risks, in order for operations to be risk-aware and flexible.

Joint monitoring trips by different departments and/or units should be developed in order to promote systematic and coordinated cooperation in the monitoring and reporting of projects and programmes for which different actors hold primary responsibility. Joint monitoring trips also serve as an instrument for dialogue. One way to improve joint monitoring is to establish broader country-specific discussion forums (country forums) that bring together humanitarian aid, development cooperation and peacebuilding experts at regular intervals to discuss the achievement of jointly set objectives.



The aim of monitoring and reporting is to improve joint learning. Joint analyses, field monitoring and dialogue can be used to share best practices and develop innovative solutions, for example to collect monitoring data – including statistics and monitoring data disaggregated by gender, age and disability – and data disaggregated by group that best supports the objectives, effectiveness and complementarity of triple nexus actions. In monitoring, the common denominators of projects include the cross-cutting objectives of Finland’s development policy (gender equality, non-discrimination and the inclusion of persons with disabilities, climate resilience, low-emission development as well as environmental protection, with an emphasis on safeguarding biodiversity), the human rights-based approach and conflict sensitivity. The sharing of reports between the Ministry for Foreign Affairs and other nexus actors supports shared situational awareness and a coherent approach. Similarly, joint evaluation helps establish and maintain a shared understanding of the context and objectives, and improves accountability.

Concrete actions:

- Conduct joint monitoring trips by development cooperation, humanitarian aid and peacebuilding experts
- Regularly update risk analyses (including risks related to the realisation of the rights of women, girls and persons with disabilities, and environmental and climate risks)
- Report on the implementation of the triple nexus approach and share best practices and innovative operating methods
- Disaggregate monitoring data by gender, age and disability
- Conduct joint evaluations as necessary and where possible



3 The triple nexus in a playing field consisting of various actors and stakeholders

The DAC Recommendation on the Humanitarian-Development-Peace Nexus covers the members of the OECD Development Assistance Committee and the entire international donor community, including the multilateral system, civil society, private sector stakeholders, public administration institutions and higher education institutions.

However, the implementation of the triple nexus between actors with different mandates and principles involves many challenges related to coordination, joint programming and financing mechanisms. Humanitarian, development cooperation and peacebuilding actors have divergent mandates, priorities, target groups, operating cultures, planning and implementation schedules, financing instruments and so on, which complicate their mutual cooperation. The activities of private sector stakeholders are often closely linked to the objectives of development cooperation, but the nature of their operations differs from development cooperation in many ways.

Enhancing the mutual coherence of different actors in practical operations is also influenced by the fact that some actors have a broader mandate that covers multiple dimensions of action, which gives them a better capacity to respond to various needs for assistance. Many multilateral actors and the EU have already confirmed their adherence to the Recommendation.

Local partners play a vital role in the implementation of the triple nexus, as humanitarian work, development cooperation and peace action always takes place in a specific context, together with local actors, and under the leadership of local actors. The local partners' capacity and familiarisation with the guiding principles and practices of the triple nexus approach is a key condition for the implementation of the triple nexus.

The challenge is to establish new practices that support the nexus approach and take into account the diversity of the international donor community, partners and



contexts. Ensuring the complementarity of humanitarian aid, development cooperation and peace action, and the achievement of joint objectives, require a comprehensive and shared view of the context as well as collective operating practices.

Finland's objective is to promote the implementation of the triple nexus in both bilateral and multilateral activities. Diplomatic missions are encouraged, within the limits of their resources, to participate in the coordination of humanitarian aid, development cooperation and peace action in all partner countries regardless of Finland's funding decisions. In contexts where Finland has the role of funding partner, diplomatic missions are encouraged to consistently promote cooperation, coordination and complementarity between different actors to enhance synergies. Promoting the implementation of the triple nexus is already a key focus area in multilateral and EU influence and advocacy efforts in several diplomatic missions, and it will need to be consistently taken into consideration in all influence efforts in the future.

Civil society stakeholders play a key role in the implementation of the nexus. Many non-governmental organisations operate at the interfaces of development cooperation, humanitarian aid and peace action, and they have taken a pioneering role in drafting guidance concerning the implementation of the OECD DAC Recommendation and the practical implementation of the nexus. The strengths of non-governmental organisations include familiarity with the operating environments, experience in operating in fragile contexts, cooperation with different actors and stakeholders, supporting the engagement of local actors, strengthening capacity and systematically taking vulnerable people into consideration.

The work done by civil society stakeholders have diverse multiplier effects. For example, people's awareness of their rights and the capacity to take action for their rights is a very significant enabler of sustainable outcomes. The strengthening of civil society has also created strong links and networks between non-governmental organisations and civil society. In crisis contexts, this promotes access to information, international attention, influence and support and, in some cases, concrete protection for the local civil society and people.

Responding to the needs of beneficiaries in an effective and meaningful manner, and taking context-specificity into consideration, are key aspects of the implementation of the triple nexus. In their work, non-governmental organisations can define their objectives for the implementation of the nexus based on the starting point of their activities, whether they are implementing the double nexus or the triple nexus. The work done by civil society to promote the triple nexus provides



vital support to the achievement of the objectives of development cooperation, humanitarian aid and peacebuilding in fragile contexts. The effectiveness of the work is illustrated by the outcomes achieved.

Agenda 2030 emphasises the importance of private sector stakeholders as independent actors, cooperation partners and financing partners in the effort to achieve the sustainable development goals. The OECD DAC Recommendation refers to the private sector primarily as a financing partner. The OECD DAC Recommendation underscores the need to prepare comprehensive financing strategies to ensure funding for the different pillars of the nexus and improve the flexibility of financing mechanisms. The Recommendation also urges the use of predictable, multi-year and flexible financing mechanisms that bring together humanitarian, development and peace stakeholders and the identification of opportunities for private sector engagement in financing. In addition to playing a role in financing, private sector stakeholders also hold a key role in the implementation of the nexus as sources of new solutions and innovations, developers of technology, enhancers of capacity and creators of jobs. For this reason, it is important for private sector stakeholders to commit to the nexus approach in their activities. The triple nexus should also be taken into consideration in Finland's broader commercial-economic relations. The guiding principles of the triple nexus approach – particularly conflict sensitivity, context-specificity and human rights – and the goal of strengthening the interlinkages between humanitarian aid, development cooperation and peacebuilding also apply to private sector stakeholders.

Public administration institutions and higher education institutions are relevant actors for the triple nexus with regard to the strengthening of capacity as well as research partnerships (including development research, conflict and peace research and research activities by sector-specific state research institutes). Development research, conflict and peace research and sector-specific state research institutes, for example, produce valuable data on both operating environments and operating practices. In addition, partnerships with local public institutions or higher education institutions can serve as instruments of stabilisation. Finnish partner universities can help strengthen academic freedom and integrity, and promote the freedom of expression and freedom of thought more broadly.



IN SEEKING TO ENSURE THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE TRIPLE NEXUS IN A PLAYING FIELD INVOLVING VARIOUS ACTORS, IT IS IMPORTANT TO CONSIDER THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS IN PARTICULAR:

Coordination: Do all of the actors have a shared objective? Are the different actors aware of each other's activities? What information sharing practices are used? Who is in charge of the different aspects of the jointly agreed-upon programme? In what way has the need for humanitarian aid, and the actors involved, been taken into account in the country analysis or conflict analysis?

Programming: Has the crisis prevention dimension of the planned project/programme been evaluated? Is the actor in question prepared to commit to long-term cooperation? Does the cooperation support the strengthening of national mechanisms?

Funding: Is funding predictable, flexible and multi-year?

BUSINESS CONTINUITY IN CONFLICT CONTEXTS

Conflict in Ethiopia escalated in 2021. Finnfund provides funding in Ethiopia to EthioChicken, a poultry company that has operations in several states, including the conflict-affected Tigray Region and parts of Amhara and Oromia.

Uncertainty created challenges in conflict-affected regions with regard to market access and personnel. Although certain business functions and telecommunications connections were disrupted at times, EthioChicken's nationally strong market position and the geographical diversification of its production facilities around Ethiopia allowed the company to maintain its profitability and stability throughout the conflict. EthioChicken's strong market position and diversified production base also enabled the company to mitigate the impacts of the conflict on its employees.

While the macroeconomic and political environment in Ethiopia remains unstable, EthioChicken has demonstrated significant resilience in a challenging situation and is prepared to execute its plan for future growth.



TRIPLE NEXUS ACTION IN SOMALIA

Somalia is in a period of rebuilding after a prolonged conflict. The country is fragile, with parts of it controlled by al-Shabaab. In addition to facing a poor security situation, the country suffers from ongoing humanitarian crises.

The objective of Finland's development cooperation country programme for Somalia is strengthening statebuilding and the social contract between citizens and the state. This goal is pursued by promoting the national reconciliation process and strengthening the inclusivity of governance and the capacity to provide services. In a context of prolonged conflict, a poor security situation and ongoing humanitarian crises, the triple nexus plays an integral role in the implementation of the country programme, and the country programme aims to promote sustainable peace, development and resilience.

Finland supports the peace process by promoting the implementation of a nationally approved reconciliation framework at different levels of governance. This takes place through a project coordinated by Finn Church Aid. Supporting the establishment of new, democratically elected municipal governments and the reconciliation of disputes at the local level are important aspects of the project.

To maintain the legitimacy of local government and in simultaneously transitioning from promoting reconciliation and democracy to focusing on the country's development and the provision of services, it is important to ensure that the new municipal governments have the resources to begin, even at a small scale, the implementation of infrastructure projects and the provision of basic services. Finland supports the strengthening of municipal governance capacity through a fund administered by the World Bank. Preparations are under way for new support for developing local governance.

Strengthening resilience to crises plays an important role in the programmes supported by Finland. Efforts are being made to shift the provision of services – which has been largely dependent on NGOs – more systematically to the sphere of national systems and strengthen their operating capacity even in crisis conditions. The programmes also include opportunities to adapt activities in response to humanitarian crises and conflicts.

To prevent the escalation of humanitarian crises, the international community aims to ensure the implementation of timely and adequate humanitarian interventions in such a way that the ongoing development and reconciliation projects can move



ahead at the same time. In addition to support granted by Finland to UN organisations, Save the Children Finland, among other NGOs, has engaged in humanitarian child protection efforts funded by Finland in Somalia. Humanitarian funding has been granted for periods of two years at a time, enabling the beneficiaries to transition to a social security system supported by development cooperation funds following the acute crisis stage. In addition, the Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement has used funding from Finland to help families suffering from humanitarian crises to restore their livelihoods and ensure that their basic needs are met. Where possible, existing mechanisms are used to ensure that medical care and financial support reach the beneficiaries. Developing financial flows related to social security and using them to implement humanitarian financial flows is another form of concrete action in the triple nexus.

Finland also participates in the EU's crisis management operations in Somalia, namely the European Union Training Mission in Somalia (EUTM Somalia) and the EUCAP Somalia civilian crisis management operation. The aim of the EU's military training mission is to support the development of Somalia's security forces through training and advisory activities. EUCAP Somalia supports the capacity building of the Somali Coast Guard. By participating in the EUTM operation, Finland supports the EU's comprehensive action in the Horn of Africa region.



4 Resources for the implementation of the triple nexus

The implementation of the triple nexus requires not only a change of mindset, a change in operating methods and practices, but also capable personnel and training. The use of research data and the critical assessment of the implementation of the triple nexus can also support the development of the approach. While the Ministry for Foreign Affairs has limited opportunities to recruit additional personnel for the implementation of the triple nexus, the goal should be to recruit personnel with the required special expertise to work in the regional departments or alternatively to recruit regional specialists. The primary task of the senior specialists would be to support those responsible for programming with the integration of the triple nexus approach in different stages of programming, as well as strengthen coordination with various cooperation partners. The Ministry for Foreign Affairs should also focus on the training of personnel and incorporate the implementation of the triple nexus into the Ministry's normal internal training activities. The training opportunities should also be made available to NGOs and other key partners.

The implementation of the triple nexus can also be supported by means of communication. It is important to communicate information on Finland's commitment to the nexus approach and encourage all actors to adhere to the nexus principles in order to achieve sustainable development impacts.



5 Monitoring the implementation of the triple nexus

The successful implementation of the DAC Recommendation on the Humanitarian-Development-Peace Nexus is driven by a shared objective and a long-term development effort. To support the development effort, it is necessary to create a mechanism for collecting information, experiences and lessons learned as regards progress made in the implementation of the triple nexus and any problems that may have been identified. Instead of establishing overlapping mechanisms, the monitoring mechanism should be linked to the existing country-specific and project-specific processes that produce information on the progress of projects and programmes. It is also important to monitor the progress and development of the triple nexus in international forums, particularly in the UN, OECD and EU, and actively adopt best practices for use in Finnish activities.

The guidance note on the triple nexus will be updated based on the lessons learned and the experiences accumulated from its implementation.



6 Annex

OECD DAC RECOMMENDATION ON THE HUMANITARIAN-DEVELOPMENT-PEACE NEXUS (2019) ⁹

The OECD's Development Assistance Committee (DAC) adopted the Recommendation on the Humanitarian-Development-Peace Nexus in February 2019. The Recommendation is aligned with the "leave no one behind" principle of Agenda 2030 and calls on different actors to contribute to the achievement of the shared goal in accordance with their respective strengths and mandates. The implementation of the triple nexus approach also requires flexible forms of funding to ensure timely funding in various situations.

To enhance the coherence of humanitarian aid, development cooperation and peace action, the Recommendation on the HDP Nexus sets out development proposals for the renewal of different actors with regard to 1) coordination, 2) programming and 3) funding.

1. To improve **coordination**, the Recommendation urges humanitarian aid, development cooperation and peacebuilding actors to undertake joint gender-sensitive analyses to assess the context-specific risks, root causes and structural drivers of conflict and factors that strengthen the resilience of the population. Identifying collective outcomes and/or long-term development objectives constitutes part of the joint analysis. Enhancing the management of coordination processes and utilising political engagement through various means to prevent crises and conflicts and build peace are also highlighted as ways to improve coordination.
2. To develop **programming**, the Recommendation urges the various actors involved to prioritise prevention, mediation and peacebuilding, as well as invest in development whenever possible while ensuring that immediate humanitarian needs continue to be met. The starting point for action must be the people and population groups in need of support ("put people at the centre"), promoting gender equality, as well as addressing and preventing

⁹ <https://legalinstruments.oecd.org/public/doc/643/643.en.pdf>



discrimination. All activities must be conflict sensitive and adhere to the “do no harm” principle to ensure that activities do not have unintended negative consequences and that the positive effects of humanitarian aid, development cooperation and peace action are maximised. The Recommendation emphasises the need to strengthen the capacity of partners at the national and local levels, as well as increase data collection, data sharing and joint learning across humanitarian, development and peace actors.

3. To ensure better **financing** for the implementation of the triple nexus, the Recommendation advises preparing global, regional and local financing strategies that cover the different pillars of the nexus in order to facilitate the timely allocation of financing for different needs. The Recommendation urges the use of predictable, flexible and multi-year financing whenever possible.

The Recommendation is binding on all OECD DAC members and its implementation is monitored within the framework of the mechanisms of the DAC *International Network on Conflict and Fragility* and in connection with the peer reviews of DAC members. A report on the implementation of the Recommendation will be delivered to the DAC no later than five years following its adoption.

KEY COMMITMENTS RELATED TO THE NEXUS APPROACH

The triple nexus approach is aligned with the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, as the interlinkage between sustainable development and peace is one of the cornerstones of Agenda 2030. This is reflected particularly in Sustainable Development Goal 16, which concerns promoting peaceful and inclusive societies, and Sustainable Development Goal 17, which concerns promoting partnerships and reducing the siloing of actors. The implementation of the triple nexus supports the achievement of all of the SDGs in fragile contexts.

Finland’s participation in the implementation of the triple nexus is also guided by several other international commitments adopted by the UN, including UN Security Council Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security¹⁰, UN Security Council Resolution 2250 on Youth, Peace and Security¹¹, UN Security Council Resolution 2475

¹⁰ <https://documents-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UN-DOC/GEN/N00/720/18/PDF/N0072018.pdf?OpenElement>

¹¹ <http://un.org/wp-content/uploads/SCR-2250.pdf>



on Protection of Persons with Disabilities in Armed Conflict¹² and the obligations of UN Member States to protect citizens from genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity (Responsibility to Protect, R2P)¹³.

The triple nexus is also aligned with a number of documents adopted by the EU that guide the actions of EU Member States. Adopted in 1996, the Commission Communication on Linking Relief, Rehabilitation and Development (LRRD)¹⁴ represented a change in approach from the previous, somewhat linear view of the link between humanitarian aid and development cooperation, establishing a foundation for the emergence of a new frame of reference. Examples of key EU documents with regard to the development of the nexus approach include the following: *The EU Global Strategy for Foreign and Security Policy*¹⁵, *The New European Consensus on Development*¹⁶, *Communication on a Strategic Approach to Resilience in the EU's External Action*¹⁷ and *The Integrated Approach to External Conflicts and Crises*¹⁸. Commission Communication on the EU's humanitarian action: New challenges, same principles¹⁹, published in 2021, calls on the EU to enhance the interlinkages between humanitarian aid, development cooperation and peacebuilding. The Council Conclusions that followed the Communication confirm the need for the more effective and coherent implementation of the approach.

The implementation of the triple nexus is guided by international human rights, international humanitarian law and humanitarian principles. International human rights and international humanitarian law are mutually complementary and together set out the rights of rights-holders and the obligations of duty-bearers. While many human rights may be restricted in exceptional circumstances subject

¹² <https://documents-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UN-DOC/GEN/N19/186/60/PDF/N1918660.pdf?OpenElement>

¹³ <https://www.un.org/en/genocideprevention/about-responsibility-to-protect.shtml>).

¹⁴ <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:51996DC0153&from=IT>

¹⁵ https://eeas.europa.eu/archives/docs/top_stories/pdf/eugs_review_web.pdf

¹⁶ <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/media/24011/european-consensus-for-development-st09459en17.pdf>

¹⁷ <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:52017JC0021&from=en>

¹⁸ <https://data.consilium.europa.eu/doc/document/ST-5413-2018-INIT/en/pdf>

¹⁹ <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:52021DC0110&from=EN>



to certain conditions, non-derogable human rights – including non-discrimination and the prohibition of the death penalty, torture and treatment violating human dignity – cannot be derogated from even during a conflict. International humanitarian law treaties and conventions aim to limit the impacts of armed conflict as well as methods of warfare and the use of weapons. The treaties and conventions protect persons who are not participating in hostilities: civilians, particularly women and children, as well as wounded and surrendered soldiers. To prevent negative environmental impacts, the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) has published the document “Guidelines on the Protection of the Natural Environment in Armed Conflict: Rules and Recommendations Relating to the Protection of the Natural Environment under International Humanitarian Law, with Commentary”²⁰.

Finland’s humanitarian action is also based on international humanitarian law, human rights conventions and refugee law, as well as the humanitarian principles confirmed by the United Nations (UN), which are humanity, neutrality, impartiality and independence. Furthermore, Finland is committed to the principles of Good Humanitarian Donorship, which have been collectively agreed upon by donors and approved by the EU, the OECD DAC and the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC).²¹

Commitments concerning aid effectiveness also influence the implementation of the nexus approach, as the nexus involves ensuring the complementarity of, and synergies between, functions. The Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness (2005), the subsequent Busan Partnership for Effective Development Cooperation (2011) and the resolutions of the post-Busan follow-up meetings include commitments related to key principles for the implementation of the nexus. Ensuring ownership, focusing on results, inclusive development partnerships, transparency and accountability of all parties are key principles related to aid effectiveness.

²⁰ https://www.icrc.org/en/download/file/141079/guidelines_on_the_protection_of_the_natural_environment_in_armed_conflict_advance-copy.pdf

²¹ Finland as a donor of humanitarian assistance, Ministry for Foreign Affairs 2019



CHECKLIST FOR TRIPLE NEXUS ACTIONS

The key actions pertaining to the implementation of the triple nexus approach presented in this guidance note are listed below in the form of a checklist. The categorisation of the actions reflects the structure and headings used in this guidance note.

Country-level cooperation between triple nexus actors (section 2.3.1.)

- 1.** Where possible, support the realisation of the partner country's broad ownership in coordination
- 2.** Broadly consult the various parties and international actors involved to strengthen ownership
- 3.** Actively participate in EU coordination and country-level Development Partners meetings
- 4.** Promote dialogue between development cooperation, humanitarian aid and peace process coordination mechanisms and, where possible, promote the consolidation of coordination structures based on a joint background analysis and programme
- 5.** Participate in peacebuilding and mediation processes
- 6.** Strengthen local agency and the participation of underrepresented groups with the help of coordination mechanisms at the national and local levels
- 7.** Enhance the capacity of national and local actors to participate in joint analysis and coordinated implementation
- 8.** Coordinate military and civilian crisis management as well as development cooperation, humanitarian aid and peace mediation to achieve the best possible synergies and sustainable results

Coordination within the MFA and between Finnish actors (section 2.3.2.)

- 9.** Develop the MFA's internal coordination, and make it more systematic, from the triple nexus perspective
- 10.** Apply the triple nexus approach in country strategies



- 11.** Utilise analyses from the different pillars of the triple nexus in the drafting and interim review of country programmes
- 12.** Organise regular reviews with regional departments, the Unit for Humanitarian Assistance, the Unit for Civil Society and the Centre for Peace Mediation
- 13.** Annually coordinate the allocation of funding with different departments
- 14.** Promote information sharing between humanitarian, development cooperation and peacebuilding actors by taking advantage of country forums, for example

Joint analysis by triple nexus actors (section 2.3.3.)

- 15.** In analyses, pay particular attention to the views of local government, civil society and the academic community, including analyses by local human rights, development and peace organisations, analyses concerning gender equality and/or the inclusion of persons with disabilities, and analyses pertaining to environmental and climate risks
- 16.** Utilise PEA (Political Economy Analysis) analyses and other analyses by the international community (especially the UN and the EU)
- 17.** Bring together special expertise in the different pillars of the triple nexus
- 18.** In analyses of the operating context, aim for conflict sensitivity and make use of existing conflict analyses
- 19.** Promote the production of joint analyses by the international community (UN, EU)

Planning and implementation of interventions (section 2.3.4.)

- 20.** Conflict sensitivity should be incorporated into planning regardless of whether the country in question is in the midst of active armed conflict



- 21.** Take advantage of existing joint analyses in the project planning stage
- 22.** In the planning stage, consult the relevant departments and units depending on factors such as the risk of crisis
- 23.** Where possible, incorporate governance structures in the intervention that enable flexible programming and changes in response to context-specific needs
- 24.** Incorporate the human rights-based approach and cross-cutting objectives in planning at the earliest possible stage²²
- 25.** On a case-specific basis, incorporate influence and advocacy efforts, information production or the promotion of coordination at the local level into the intervention

Flexible funding – what does it mean and what does it require? (section 2.3.5.)

- 26.** Prioritise multi-year funding
- 27.** Continue to incorporate flexibility into responding to funding needs caused by humanitarian aid, development cooperation or prolonged and sudden crises
- 28.** Develop the flexibility and predictability of funding

²²Human Rights Based Approach in Finland's Development Cooperation – Guidance Note 2015: https://um.fi/documents/35732/48132/human_rights_based_approach_in_finlands_development_cooperation_-_guidance_note_2015_pdf_32_pages_118_mb.pdf/cf2c5d8d-358d-717b-991b-0a4c5a7af2a2?t=1560452724451 & Guideline for the Cross-Cutting Objectives in the Finnish Development Policy and Cooperation: <https://um.fi/documents/35732/0/Guideline+for+the+Cross-Cutting+Objectives+in+the+Finnish+Development+Policy+and+Cooperation.pdf/e9e8a940-a382-c3d5-3c5f-dc8e7455576b?t=1618230452564>



Monitoring (section 2.3.6.)

- 29.** Conduct joint monitoring trips by development cooperation, humanitarian aid and peacebuilding experts
- 30.** Regularly update risk analyses (including risks related to the realisation of the rights of women, girls and persons with disabilities, and environmental and climate risks)
- 31.** Report on the implementation of the triple nexus approach and share best practices and innovative operating methods
- 32.** Disaggregate monitoring data by gender, age and disability
- 33.** Conduct joint evaluations as necessary and where possible

The triple nexus in a playing field consisting of various actors and stakeholders (section 3)

- Coordination:** Do all of the actors have a shared objective? Are the different actors aware of each other's activities? What information sharing practices are used? Who is in charge of the different aspects of the jointly agreed-upon programme? In what way has the need for humanitarian aid, and the actors involved, been taken into account in the country analysis or conflict analysis?
- Programming:** Has the crisis prevention dimension of the planned project/programme been evaluated? Is the actor in question prepared to commit to long-term cooperation? Does the cooperation support the strengthening of national mechanisms?
- Funding:** Is funding predictable, flexible and multi-year?