

GREATER THAN THE SUM OF ITS PARTS

Why is a triple nexus approach needed
for Finland's development cooperation,
humanitarian assistance and peace actions?

Analysis by the Development Policy Committee (DPC),
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DEVELOPMENT
POLICY COMMITTEE

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Summary

Prolonged and complex crises around the world pose a significant challenge to the functioning of communities and societies and the well-being/human security of their populations. Development cooperation, humanitarian assistance and peace actions must therefore also be able to provide a more coordinated, comprehensive and efficient response to the needs of people living amidst crises situations. This calls for closer collaboration between various aid actors.

The publication of the Development Policy Committee (DPC) looks to the background, need for and factors to be taken into account in implementing a *triple nexus* approach to collaboration, particularly in fragile contexts and protracted conflicts. Readers are also familiarised with the Development Assistance Committee (DAC) Recommendation on the Humanitarian-Development-Peace Nexus and the requirements set by it, published by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD). Finally, the publication provides recommendations on how collaboration and interlinkages in accordance with the triple nexus approach can be promoted more broadly in Finland's development policy and external relations. The analysis and recommendations were produced by an expert group composed of members of the DPC.

The triple nexus approach refers to measures that aim to strengthen coherence and complementarity of development cooperation, humanitarian assistance and peace actions. Its aim is to promote positive interlinkages between different actions and actors and to form a joint view among actors of the collective outcomes pursued by all through their respective activities. Collaboration with local actors and their commitment to the process also play a key role in this. When successful, this new and more coherent way of working can lead to sustainable peace through seamless and more appropriate actions, as viewed from the perspective of people in target countries and the realisation of their rights. This is the main objective of the triple nexus approach.

Implementing development cooperation, humanitarian assistance and peace actions is particularly challenging in the most fragile contexts, where the situation is inherently weak. Factors generating and maintaining fragility may include e.g. dysfunctioning of society's institutions, poverty, exacerbated economic inequality, political instability and armed conflicts. Growing proneness to conflict may ultimately trigger a broader collapse of the entire state system. Climate change and weakening biodiversity, forced migration and crises such as the COVID-19 pandemic in turn affect more stable areas, too.

A significant number of Finland's bilateral development cooperation partner countries are fragile states, such as Afghanistan, Ethiopia and Myanmar. Finland is further known as a committed provider of humanitarian assistance and as a peace actor. The preconditions for increased coordination and closer collaboration among humanitarian, development and peace actors are already in place, while the practical need for it is growing. The Finnish Government Programme also states that effective dealing with protracted crises requires coordination between peacebuilding, humanitarian assistance and development cooperation.

Pressure for reform arises from increasingly difficult operational contexts in which needs for humanitarian assistance, development cooperation and peace actions often coexist. In these situations, humanitarian needs are often prolonged and they have a tendency to re-emerge over time. It is thus important to engage simultaneously in what is more traditionally regarded as development cooperation – in fields such as education, sexual and reproductive health, and water and sanitation. The demand for various forms of peace action is equally determined by the specific characteristics and needs of each operating environment.

Despite the growing need, bolstering collaboration between development cooperation, humanitarian assistance and peace actions may be challenging. The DAC Recommendation serves in facilitating the change process by providing a compact guideline for the triple nexus approach and listing principles for actions required. Finland is also an Adherent committed to the DAC Recommendation, which is binding on DAC member countries.

The key aim is for development cooperation, humanitarian assistance and peace actions funded by Finland to be greater than the sum of its parts. The transition to the triple nexus approach will not, however, take place automatically or by making only minor adjustments to current ways of working. This is why a special aim of this

Pressure for reform arises from increasingly difficult operating environments often involving a coexistent need for humanitarian assistance, development cooperation and peace action alike.

publication is to spur the implementation of the DAC Recommendation on the Humanitarian-Development-Peace Nexus in the Finnish Foreign Service and to map out the basic prerequisites for successful operationalisation.

Finland is well-placed to strengthen its role as a triple nexus actor. This, however, requires stronger political will, determined leadership and goal-oriented policies supporting collaboration between sectors. For closer collaboration and joint objectives among development cooperation, humanitarian assistance and peace actions to become a reality, there is also a need for change in ways of thinking and working in both donor and recipient countries. Finland has yet to develop a jointly adopted triple nexus approach to guide its activities in fragile situations. In addition, aid and civil society organisations (CSOs) require more specific instructions on how and for which kinds of nexus-supporting activities Finnish government funding can be channelled.



1. A joined-up approach is needed for Finland's development cooperation, humanitarian assistance and peace actions

Assistance activities that are appropriate and effective in responding to people's needs call for closer collaboration between development cooperation, humanitarian assistance, and peace actions.¹ This publication of the Development Policy Committee (DPC) looks to the background, need for and factors to be taken into account in implementing a triple nexus approach to collaboration, particularly in fragile contexts and protracted conflicts. We will also familiarize readers with the Development Assistance Committee (DAC) Recommendation on the Humanitarian-Development-Peace Nexus and the requirements set by it, published by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD). Finally, we will provide recommendations on how collaboration and interlinkages following the *triple nexus approach* can be promoted more broadly in Finland's development policy and external relations.²

Complex conflicts require a new kind of approach

Protracted and complex crises, as well as growing proneness to conflict, challenge the capacity of individuals, communities, and societies around the world to function. This challenge is particularly evident in the most fragile³ contexts, where the situation is inherently weak. Factors generating and maintaining fragility may include incapacity of society's core institutions, poverty, and exclusion, exacerbated economic inequality, political instability, and armed conflicts. Arms export to conflict areas and conflicting parties further amplifies existing risks and makes it more difficult to solve problems.

Increasing conflict-proneness may ultimately trigger a broader collapse of the entire state system. This is most likely in contexts and situations with a history of extensive and recurrent violence. On the other hand, natural disasters, pandemics, or gradual environmental degradation may also lead to crises and increase the risk of violent conflicts.

- 1 The term 'peace actions' covers many kinds of approaches at all levels of society from the grassroots or community levels to international diplomacy. Process and project ownership by conflicting parties is crucial in all stages and at all levels of peace actions. The DPC has also used the term 'peace work' in its previous publications.
- 2 OECD/DAC Recommendation on the Humanitarian-Development-Peace Nexus (OECD/LEGAL/5019)
- 3 For a more detailed definition of fragility, see the OECD's States of Fragility 2020 report at <https://www.oecd-ilibrary.org/sites/ba7c22e7-en/index.html?itemId=/content/publication/ba7c22e7-en>

A significant number of Finland's bilateral development cooperation partner countries are fragile states, such as Afghanistan, Myanmar/Burma and Nepal in Asia or Mozambique, Ethiopia, and Somalia in Africa.⁴ Climate change and weakening biodiversity, forced migration and crises such as the COVID-19 pandemic, in turn, affect more stable areas, too.

Finland is also known as a committed provider of humanitarian assistance, which strengthens our country's foreign policy effectiveness. Besides, Finland's contributions to peace actions raise our international profile. The conditions for closer and more coordinated collaboration between these actions are in place, and the practical need for them is growing.

The Finnish Government Programme also states that effective dealing with protracted crises requires coordination between peace-building, humanitarian assistance, and development cooperation.

The most compelling pressure for reform arises directly from increasingly difficult operational contexts in which needs for humanitarian assistance, development cooperation

and peace actions often coexist. In these situations, humanitarian needs are often prolonged and they have a tendency to re-emerge over time. It is thus important to engage simultaneously in what is more traditionally regarded as development cooperation – in fields such as education, sexual and reproductive health, and water and sanitation. The demand for various forms of peace action is equally determined by the specific characteristics and needs of each operating environment. Sustainable development cannot be achieved unless the impacts of various types of crises, disasters and conflicts are minimized simultaneously.

Increasing conflict-proneness may ultimately trigger a broader collapse of the entire state system.

Finland too needs to improve the coordination of activities

It is important to identify suitable ways for Finland to be able to provide a more coordinated, comprehensive, and efficient response to the needs of people living in conflict-affected contexts while strengthening the stability, resilience, and sustainable development in societies in the long term. Finland's upcoming Africa strategy (due in 2021) emphasises efforts to increase resilience by joining up humanitarian activities, development cooperation as well as peace and security operations in various stages of conflicts and crises.

4 <https://fragilestatesindex.org/>; <https://um.fi/partners-of-finland-s-development-policy> (accessed 15.3.2021).

Finland is not alone in tackling this challenge, and the idea of coordinating activities is not new. International policy processes, such as the New Way of Working, the Grand Bargain, the UN Sustaining Peace Agenda, and the World Bank's Pathways for Peace have paved the way for close collaboration in recent years. The OECD Development Assistance Committee (DAC) raised the matter to a new level when its Member countries adopted the morally binding joint DAC Recommendation on the Humanitarian-Development-Peace Nexus in 2019. Finland is also committed to the DAC Recommendation, which aims to strengthen the coherence between humanitarian, development, and peace efforts and to achieve closer collaboration between actors to attain their common goals.⁵ Adherents of the DAC Recommendation are expected to do their utmost to fully implement it. The DAC Recommendation contains a set of 11 principles to guide activities, which require new ways of working in target countries as well as in Finland [see pages 24–25]. Among other things, humanitarian, development cooperation, and peace actors are advised to conduct joint analyses of operational contexts and use them to define more specific collective outcomes for each country and area. The DAC Recommendation also underscores the role of local actors. In the coming years, Finland's performance in implementing the DAC Recommendation in various roles will be evaluated as part of the OECD peer evaluation process. Finland acts both as a donor and an implementer of development cooperation and peace actions. In the case of humanitarian assistance, Finland's role is that of a donor whose possibilities to steer activities vary depending on each target of funding.

The DAC Recommendation uses the Latin term *nexus* to refer to closer collaboration and interlinkages between actions. The term *triple nexus* is used in the framework of the DAC Recommendation to emphasise collaboration specifically between development, humanitarian, development, and peace sectors.⁶ We use the terms *triple nexus* and *nexus* as synonyms in this publication.

What is meant by the triple nexus?

The term triple nexus refers to interlinkages between humanitarian, development, and peace actions. The nexus approach aims to strengthen collaboration, coherence, and complementarity between actors and actions in view of achieving commonly agreed collective and measurable outcomes. It seeks to capitalize on the comparative advantages of each pillar - to the extent of their relevance in the specific contexts - to reduce overall vulnerability and the number of unmet needs, strengthen risk management capacities and address root causes of conflict.⁷

5 DAC Recommendation on the Humanitarian-Development-Peace Nexus (OECD/LEGAL/5019)

6 The term *nexus* is used broadly also in other contexts, such as in various sciences or societal debate to refer to interlinkages and interfaces between sectors and actors.

7 OECD/LEGAL/5019. See also <https://devinit.org/resources/questions-considerations-donors-triple-nexus-uk-sweden/>

Preparatory work underway, overall picture missing

Finland was actively involved in the formulation of the DAC Recommendation, and its national implementation is about to begin. Also, Finnish civil society organisations (CSOs) have in part already been implementing a nexus approach, particularly between development cooperation and humanitarian assistance [See pages 30–32]. Finland is thus well placed to expand the collaboration to also include peace actions and to make it a guiding framework for various actors in Finland, international advocacy efforts, and, above all, in target countries.

A Nexus Network was established at the Ministry for Foreign Affairs in 2019 to coordinate the implementation of the approach among different MFA departments and resulting in important preparatory work. At this point, however, Finland lacks a unified overall picture of how to fully implement the humanitarian-development-peace nexus. Further exploration is still required, especially concerning the role of peace actions in the equation and safeguarding the impartiality of humanitarian assistance in various stages of conflict and forms of collaboration. All of the various triple nexus actors must be included in the continued development process.

This publication, produced by an expert group of the DPC^{*}, aims to raise awareness of the triple nexus approach and its significance for efforts bridging together development cooperation, humanitarian assistance, and peace actions, and thereby leading to collective outcomes. We believe that, when working well, the nexus approach will strengthen the risk tolerance of fragile areas. It will also improve the capacity of actors to respond accurately to the needs of people affected by protracted

- * To prepare this publication, the DPC established an expert group that also includes members of the Nexus Network of the Ministry for Foreign Affairs.

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conflicts and facilitate support for their rights.

The transition to the triple nexus approach will not, however, take place automatically or by making only minor adjustments to current ways of working. This is why a special aim of this publication is to spur the implementation of the DAC Recommendation on the Humanitarian-Development-Peace Nexus in the Finnish Foreign Service and to map out the basic prerequisites for its successful implementation. Previous recommendations received by Finland regarding the nexus have been used as a basis of this analysis and we regard it important that they are heeded as part of the way forward.

The triple nexus calls for new, more comprehensive thinking and actions. It requires creative and even bold decisions, also concerning resource allocations. We, therefore, hope that this publication raises parliamentary interest in and support for the topic.

The next chapter provides a general presentation of the roles of development cooperation, humanitarian assistance, and peace actions as part of the triple nexus. It describes the interlinkages and challenges between the various parts and discusses the prerequisites for effective implementation of the triple nexus approach. This is followed by a discussion of Finland's preparedness to implement the nexus in view of fulfilling its commitments as an Adherent to the DAC Recommendation. As part of this, we present aspects of implementation that we find still require particular strengthening. Against this backdrop, at the end of the publication, we will outline the next steps and present a set of concrete recommendations for the promotion of the triple nexus approach in Finland.

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Fragile contexts: the furthest behind are being left further behind

A joined-up approach to development cooperation, humanitarian assistance and peace actions is increasingly necessary, as fragile contexts are falling more clearly behind the rest of the world in meeting the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

The OECD States of Fragility 2020 report points out that a declining trend was already to be seen before the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic. None of the fragile contexts were on track to meet the SDGs on hunger, health, and gender equality and women's empowerment. The situation in fragile contexts is further exacerbated by the pandemic.

A total of 460 million people live in extreme poverty in fragile contexts. The report estimates that the COVID-19 pandemic resulted in their number increasing by 26 million by the end of 2020. Currently three out of four of the world's people living in extreme poverty live in fragile contexts.

The more fragile the context, the more crucial the significance of development cooperation in meeting people's basic needs. OECD Development Assistance Committee (DAC) members spent USD 60.3 billion in ODA to fragile contexts in 2018. This accounted for 63% of total ODA.



2. The triple nexus connects actors together and challenges familiar ways of working

Despite the growing need, it may be challenging to bolster collaboration between development cooperation, humanitarian assistance, and peace actions. There may be obstacles slowing down the adoption of a new way of thinking and there are bound to be twists and turns in the journey from recommendations to actions. Identifying and addressing the challenges and obstacles will, however, pave the way forward. The OECD/DAC Recommendation on the Humanitarian-Development-Peace Nexus provides a compact guideline for the triple nexus approach, mainly listing a set of guiding principles. It is therefore important to clarify what the triple nexus approach consists of and what obligations it sets for the various actors. It is equally important to understand what the guidelines do not require or include.

We will begin by presenting the sectors of the triple nexus approach and providing some examples of interlinkages and challenges among them. We will then discuss the principles of effective implementation. These include coordination, complementarity, and coherence of collaboration. From principles we will move on to the ways of working specified in the DAC Recommendation, highlighting the aims of undertaking a joint analysis of conflict situations and attaining collective outcomes. We wish, furthermore, to draw particular attention to conflict sensitivity as the foundation for all triple nexus actions and explain why it is important. Conflict sensitivity refers to the

Despite the growing need, it may be challenging to bolster collaboration between development cooperation, humanitarian assistance, and peace actions.

ability of aid actors to understand their operational contexts and the latent and open conflicts within. It further entails adapting their programming and actions respectively to minimize doing harm and maximize positive contributions to sustainable peace.

Roles, linkages and challenges within the triple nexus

One of the most significant challenges related to the triple nexus is the fact that development cooperation, humanitarian assistance, and peace actions each have their respective mandates, goals, and principles.

Development cooperation and policy are part of Finland's external relations.

Involving long-term engagement primarily aimed at eradication of poverty and inequality, development cooperation and policy are guided on the one hand by the UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, and a set of international commitments and principles relating to aid effectiveness and *modus operandi* for aid, on the other. At best, development cooperation and development policy help to build the capacities of well-functioning and peaceful societies, increase crisis resilience and consequently, also reduce the need for humanitarian assistance. The benefits derived through development cooperation and policy have the most impact when the other fields of external relations and policy support development policy goals following the principles of sustainable development.

Humanitarian assistance in turn is an independent component of development policy. Its ethical foundation is the humanitarian imperative – the obligation to provide humanitarian assistance wherever (it is) needed. The objective of humanitarian assistance is to save lives, relieve human suffering and maintain human dignity in times of crisis. Assistance must be provided based on need alone. In other words, it may not be based on political or military reasons. Finland's humanitarian activities rest on a foundation of international humanitarian law, human rights conventions, and refugee law and on *humanity, neutrality, impartiality, and independence* as the humanitarian principles adopted by the UN.⁸

Peace actions are related not only to development policy but are also an integral part of foreign and security policy. The various elements of peace action – conflict prevention, peace mediation, and peacebuilding – are established ways of working within the international community.⁹ The Government Report on Finnish Foreign and Security Policy (2020) confirms Finland's commitment to the full spectrum of peace actions.

8 For a definition of the humanitarian imperative, see page 11 of the Guidelines on Finland's Humanitarian Assistance (2019).

9 The definitions of UN Peacebuilding are used broadly as the basis of the definition of *peacebuilding*. For more on the various forms of peace actions, see e.g. Ramsbotham et al (Contemporary Conflict Resolution, 4th Edition, Oliver Ramsbotham, Tom Woodhouse, Hugh Miall, ISBN: 978-0-745-68721-6 February 2016 Polity). The international community is currently engaged in an active debate on the increasingly significant role of conflict prevention in response to cyclical and protracted violent conflicts.

Here, peace may mean the absence or termination of acute, open violence (negative peace) or, much more broadly, to a peaceful, sustainably, and equitably functioning democratic society (positive peace). Peace actions are implemented in various stages of conflict ranging from conflict prevention, crisis management, and peace mediation to post-conflict peacebuilding and reconciliation. The notion of *peace actions* covers several different types of approaches at all levels of society, from grassroots or community levels to international diplomacy. In this publication, we use the term *peace actions* to refer to all intentional and goal-oriented activities where the primary objective is to promote and maintain peace. This includes actions such as prevention of the occurrence, escalation, continuation, or recurrence of violent conflicts. It also includes efforts to solve root causes of conflicts and to weaken so-called conflict drivers/mitigate factors that exacerbate conflicts.¹⁰ Actions to promote negative peace, such as ceasefire agreements and peace agreements achieved through diplomatic efforts or peace mediation, reduce the occurrence of open, physical, and armed violence and therefore create space for humanitarian activities. They may also provide support for community-level and political peace processes and, in that way, support the building of positive peace.¹¹ An inclusive approach together with process and project ownership by conflicting parties is crucial in all stages and at all levels of peace actions. More broadly, *inclusivity* means the practice or policy of providing equal access to opportunities, resources, and activities for people who might otherwise be excluded or marginalized.¹²

According to the DAC Recommendation, the aim across the nexus is for actions to be coordinated and flexible, making use of the strengths and competencies of each sector or actor. This does not, therefore, mean the elimination of the differences between development cooperation, peace actions, and humanitarian assistance or mixing of mandates. Instead, the purpose of the approach is to strengthen interlinkages between actors and sectors as well as to increase synergies between actions and the generation of collective outcomes. This in turn requires coordination and

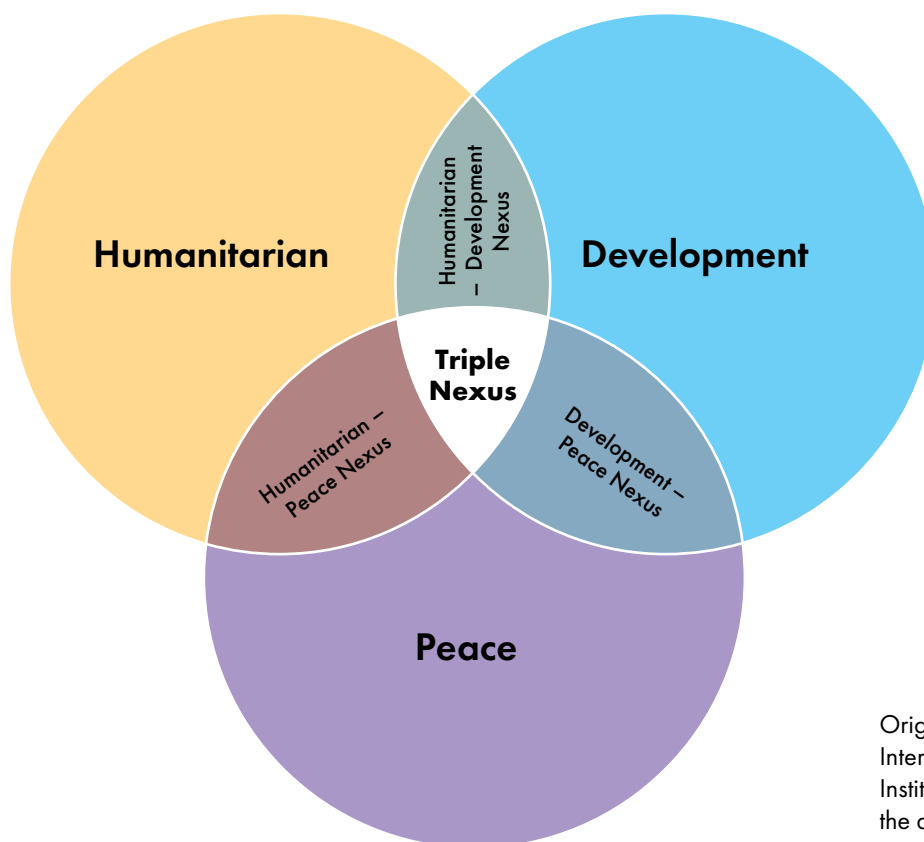
10 UN Secretary General, Remarks to the Human Rights Council. Ref. IASC (2020) Exploring Peace Within the Humanitarian-Development-Peace Nexus (HDPN).

11 The Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) of the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (IASC) has conceptualised the peace dimension of the triple nexus by distinguishing between 'peace with a little p' and 'Peace with a Big P'. In this differentiation, 'little p' actions are focused on building the capacity for peace at the community level and/or more broadly in society. 'Little p' actions are focused on agency and the transformation of relationships, building capacities for peace and for conflict prevention and management within institutions and the broader society, which includes building trust and social cohesion. 'Big P' interventions in turn support and maintain political solutions or aim at a securitised response to violent conflict. Such peace activities are often supported by a UN Security Council mandate and typically take place at the national or regional level. These interventions are generally more visible and employ considerable resources (often both military and civilian) on the ground. UN Peacekeeping and Special Political Missions are common examples of 'Big P' interventions.

12 In addition to the inclusion and participation of the various groups of people, in reference to peace actions *inclusivity* also refers to connections between multiple overlapping processes engaged in by multiple actors at various levels of society at the same time and in various geographical locations. See e.g. Does, Antonia (2013) *Inclusivity and Local Perspectives in Peacebuilding: Issues, Lessons, Challenges*, GSDRC Applied Knowledge Services <https://gsdrc.org/document-library/inclusivity-and-local-perspectives-in-peacebuilding-issues-lessons-challenges> (accessed 2 February 2021)

complementarity at the very minimum, but also coherence between the various dimensions of the triple nexus and their respective objectives.¹³ Consequently, the actors of each sector must have a clear role in their engagement as part of the humanitarian-development-peace nexus and its objectives. It is equally important to decide how, when and on whose terms each actor's competencies are utilised. This consideration applies both to policies outlined for different countries as well as to guidelines for implementation at the country or local level.

Some actors may also be multi-mandate actors by nature. The various departments of such organisations are tasked with development cooperation, humanitarian assistance, and peace actions. The Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland or large non-governmental organisations are examples of such actors. The challenge for this type of actor is to create the best possible practices within the organisation and in relation to local and other international actors. Correspondingly, actors whose main role is within one or two dimensions of the triple nexus need to create linkages for collaboration in a new way with actors of other sectors within the triple nexus in each operational context.



Original figure: Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, SIPRI (2019): Connecting the dots on the Triple Nexus

13 Development Initiatives (2020) Donors at the triple nexus: Lessons from the UK and Sweden. <https://devinit.org/resources/donors-triple-nexus/>

Humanitarian-development nexus

Particularly when crises become protracted, development cooperation inputs are required alongside humanitarian assistance. This enables longer-term support for people's lifecycle needs and the creation of opportunities for development and peace through, for example, education, promotion of gender equality, or access to basic livelihoods. Preceding the notion of a triple nexus approach, the linkage between humanitarian assistance and development cooperation was often referred to as a continuum. This was described as a transition from humanitarian assistance via reconstruction to development cooperation (or linking relief to reconstruction and development – LRRD). This approach entailed increasing preparedness to anticipate and respond to crises and disasters. In contrast, using the term nexus emphasises the fact that situational trajectories are not always linear. Instead, humanitarian needs, the prerequisites for development cooperation, and the necessity of peace mediation may coexist in the same situation. This is the description used in, for example, the Guidelines on Finland's Humanitarian Assistance (2019).

Development-peace nexus

Development cooperation priorities can be strengthened simultaneously through peace actions, for example by reinforcing the status and rights of women and girls or, even more broadly, the status and rights of all vulnerable groups. Research has shown, among other things, that the inclusion of women in peace processes improves the prospects of achieving a peace agreement and strengthens the solidity of the agreement and, consequently, the sustainability of peace. Making sure peace processes are inclusive, for example by supporting the participation of women, young people, and other marginalised groups, can also have broader impacts on the realisation of gender equality and human rights. On the other hand, development cooperation can help to boost increased trust between conflicting parties, which is an important prerequisite for building sustainable peace. Development cooperation can also support the basic pillars of peaceful and well-functioning societies, strengthen the accountability of rights-holders and

Development cooperation priorities can be strengthened simultaneously through peace actions, for example by reinforcing the status and rights of women and girls.

promote the rule of law. Regardless of sometimes fundamental disagreements concerning the root causes of conflicts, in some cases, the peace process can be initiated by conducting a dialogue on matters affecting all parties, such as issues relating to the environment, societal infrastructure, or the fight against a pandemic. Water and sanitation projects implemented by Finland in fragile and conflict-affected contexts are good examples of interventions involving the development-peace nexus.

Triple nexus collaboration strengthens the protection of Palestinian communities

The West Bank Protection Consortium (WBPC) is a programme supported by the EU Civilian Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations (ECHO) department and ten EU Member States. It provides humanitarian protection and strengthens the development of Palestinian communities in Area C controlled by Israel.

The programme is implemented by the Norwegian Refugee Council and four other international humanitarian organisations. Channelled through ECHO, Finland's funding to the programme totals EUR 800,000 for 2019–2021.

The Consortium aims for more comprehensive actions beyond traditional humanitarian assistance by recognising the chronic nature of humanitarian needs and addressing the root causes of vulnerability.

The focus of the programme is on supporting the 120 most vulnerable Palestinian communities. The comprehensive protection approach implemented in these communities includes provision of legal aid, building small-scale critical infrastructure as well as awareness raising among communities of their rights. Programme effectiveness is monitored on the basis of indicators such as the Protection Vulnerability Index (PVI), which measures the level of vulnerability in communities receiving comprehensive protection.

The legal support and advocacy measures of the WBPC programme have managed to prevent destruction of Palestinian infrastructure. Over 90% of the infrastructure built by the Consortium remains in place. Immediate humanitarian assistance is provided in response to Israeli settler violence or destruction of homes and other structures. Thanks to the work of the WBPC, violations of international law have gained increased attention. For example, the demolitions of Palestinian structures have been addressed by the UN Security Council on the basis of comprehensive monitoring and data production by the programme.

The WBPC is unable to solve the underlying political problem, the addressing of which would require political courage from the international community. Nevertheless, the approach used by the Consortium represents nexus programming at its best, and is thus a good fit with Finland's objectives.

Humanitarian-peace nexus

The humanitarian-peace nexus is the most challenging component of the triple nexus approach. The challenge relates to tension between political aims promoting security and stability in peace actions and humanitarian assistance guided by impartiality and a needs-based approach. For example, humanitarian actors losing their reputation for impartiality in such collaboration may prevent their access to those in need. The Guidelines on Finland's Humanitarian Assistance (2019) speaks to this by stating that in view of ensuring the space for humanitarian actions and principled humanitarian assistance, close collaboration between humanitarian and peace actions is not always possible or even desirable.

On the other hand, impartial engagement and discussions on humanitarian needs help to open and maintain contacts with conflicting parties. This may subsequently open up avenues for other actors and for addressing issues other than those relating to humanitarian needs. Moreover, actors promoting positive peace usually endorse the principles of humanitarian assistance and also strive for their actions to comply with the *do no harm* principle. Humanitarian assistance actors participating in joint conflict analyses, conflict-sensitive programming, and cooperation and partnerships with peace actors – where appropriate – are means of potentially promoting and deepening interlinkages between humanitarian assistance and peace actions.

Implementing the triple nexus calls for strong local participation

The prerequisite for the triple nexus approach is to overcome the above-mentioned challenges and to bring the strengths of all three sectors together in a manner that is appropriate to contexts and their people. Listing these prerequisites on paper is easy but, in practice, implementing the triple nexus approach in highly challenging and constantly changing circumstances is anything but easy. This is why the starting points must be as clear as possible. In addition to clear policies and guidelines, translating the approach into practice among Finnish actors also calls for a coordinating party that has contacts with all relevant actors in the field as well as in operational leadership. The need for training and research is also obvious.


It is particularly important to ensure the participation of and strong ownership by local actors in triple nexus actions. It is only this way that the needs and inclusion of the various, especially the most vulnerable, groups can be taken into account as comprehensively as possible. Solid contextual understanding and knowledge of the needs of the people living there are vital for the implementation of a triple nexus approach. Inclusive collaboration with local actors and people and their commitment to the process play a key role in this.

When successful, this new way of working can be seen as seamless and increasingly appropriate specifically from the perspectives of the people in target countries and their rights as well as from the perspective of sustainable peace. This is the main objective of the triple nexus approach.

Key in terms of sustainable development and development policy is that the nexus approach promotes positive peace and addresses the root causes of conflicts instead of focusing merely on negative peace and security. Depending on the context, objectives supporting positive peace are usually well suited for the development cooperation framework and related ways of working. They are also easier to coordinate with humanitarian assistance. In other situations, the focus of actions aiming at conflict prevention and resolution is on other components, such as diplomatic measures and civilian crisis management. There is an apparent need for further information relating to this interlinkage both in Finland as well as internationally. We particularly need information about ways of working that promote peacebuilding as well as security and stability, which are essential for the triple nexus. There is an equal need for information on what kinds of interlinkages are not suitable. In addition, analyses are required on opportunities and constraints involved in the interlinkages between humanitarian assistance and peace actions.¹⁴

14 IASC (2020) Exploring Peace Within the Humanitarian-Development-Peace Nexus (HDPN).

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Collaboration securing water supply in the conflict in eastern Ukraine

Clean water is vital for life all over the world but securing water supply is particularly important for people living in conflict areas. Fighting that broke out in eastern Ukraine in 2014 between Ukrainian government forces and Russian-backed separatists threatened the water supply of hundreds of thousands of people in the Donetsk and Luhansk regions in 2017–2018. Water pipes were damaged by grenade attacks, and power outages stopped pumping stations.

Alongside humanitarian assistance, the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) maintains lines of communication with all of the conflicting parties so that the civilian population and the infrastructure serving it can be protected in compliance with international humanitarian law. To prevent water supply disruptions, the ICRC in cooperation with local authorities, identified critical points of the supply system as well as backup systems that could help to secure access to water regardless of damage caused by armed clashes. This was made challenging by the fact that the same water supply networks served areas controlled by the Government of Ukraine as well as those held by Russian-backed separatists.

The ICRC invited the Minsk Group of the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) spearheading the efforts to find a peaceful solution to the conflict in Ukraine to take part in the discussions.

An impartial initiative to mark crucial parts of the water supply system on the map generated a long-term dialogue between all parties concerning the need to protect the water supply. Attempts to reach an agreement on the sites to be protected failed on several occasions. In the end, a mutual understanding was reached on the most critical points in the water supply system. Most of the water infrastructure was spared from destruction, which in turn helped for example in preventing health-related problems.

A key prerequisite for success was the action taken by all the three parties – the humanitarian actor (ICRC), the provider of basic services (the local authorities) and the peace mediator (OSCE) – based on their complementary strengths in reaching a common goal. The discussions also helped the Minsk Group to more clearly establish a link between its work and people's concrete needs, the response to which calls for common understanding between conflict stakeholders.

The eastern Ukrainian example shows that synergy between humanitarian actions, development and peace is not always created merely through programming aimed at development and peace mediation. Humanitarian actors, too, can promote approaches safeguarding preventive and long-term development needs, and mobilise strategic parties to take relevant action.

Joint analyses and collective outcomes for successful triple nexus implementation

Following the DAC Recommendation on the Humanitarian-Development-Peace Nexus, humanitarian, development, and peace actors must strive for joint analyses of the operational context. Factors to be examined may include the (non-)realisation of human rights, gender equality situation, and environmental and climate issues. Poverty, socio-economic factors, and the political situation and dynamics of the area may also be examined. In conflict-affected areas, an important aspect of understanding the context has to do with its conflicts. Conflict analyses collect more specific information about conflicting parties and other key actors related to conflict and peacebuilding in the area, the issues of conflict, the ongoing processes affecting the conflict, and the local capacities for creating peace.

Conflict analyses examine conflict actors, causes, and dynamics both in terms of temporal aspects (the past, the present, the future) and at different levels (local, national, regional, international). Analyses required by conflict sensitivity are linked with analyses of the operational context and focus particularly on examining the two-way interaction between project activities and the context: how the context impacts the actions chosen and which intentional or unintended impacts these, in turn, have on the operating environment and any open or latent conflicts existing there.

The DAC Recommendation places joint analyses between actors at the core of the triple nexus. At the same time, it should be noted that, in practice, analyses must always be targeted and limited to specific issues and perspectives to reflect the level of the planned actions and programmes. It is not appropriate or even possible to analyse 'everything'. It may therefore be natural for the various actions and actors to undertake their own, parallel analysis that more specifically supplements their operational planning. In such cases, it may be beneficial to conduct joined-up as opposed to joint analyses. At times it must also be accepted that analyses may even contradict each other. In particular, there may be differences in views on factors affecting the conflict as well as on the root causes. This in itself may be a valuable observation generated by the analysis process. It is therefore important to emphasise the analysis processes, their inclusivity, and dialogue between the perspectives as well as the need to update analyses regularly in the light of new information.

The process of analysis is in itself important as it helps the various actors to form a common understanding of the most important objectives for each operational context and a vision of the *collective outcomes* pursued by all actors through their actions. The DAC Recommendation defines collective outcomes in a manner that can be described by borrowing from the familiar saying: the outcome is greater than the sum of its parts. Collective outcomes refer to commonly agreed measurable results or impacts enhanced by the combined effort of different actors, within their respective mandates, to address and reduce people's unmet needs, risks, and vulnerabilities, increasing the

resilience of communities and addressing the root causes of conflict. Collective outcomes are strengthened when actors from different sectors engage in joined-up actions following a joint vision while acting within their respective mandates and programmes. The UN and the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) also regard the pursuit of collective outcomes as a key tool for promoting triple nexus collaboration at the country level.

Conflict sensitivity – the principle guiding all activities

The conflict-sensitive approach can help to prevent unintentional negative impacts of activities and to promote positive impacts on building sustainable peace. Conflict sensitivity requires understanding the operating environment and its latent and open conflicts as well as adapting actions in relation to them. Additionally, actors need to monitor the continuous two-way interactions between their own actions and the context.

Accordingly, the DAC Recommendation on the Humanitarian-Development-Peace Nexus states that all actors should strive to prevent armed conflict and violence and to promote sustainable peace in line also with UN Security Council Resolutions and international law. At a minimum, a conflict-sensitive approach should be adopted as a principle guiding all activities.

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If conflict sensitivity is not prioritised, there is a risk of intensifying social tensions and exacerbating existing divisions. Activities may also generate new disputes and sources of conflict. The requirement to adopt a conflict-sensitive approach is based on extensive research and evidence that all actions taken in fragile and conflict-prone areas always and inevitably become part of the dynamics of the conflict. This is invariably the case when any material or immaterial resources are taken to a resource-poor operating environment.

What, then, are the consequences of ignoring the conflict-sensitivity requirement? The most common consequence is resources intended for assistance being stolen or otherwise ending up in the wrong hands, even for the benefit of armed groups. Resources brought in from external sources may also

increase consumer product or service prices or housing costs and, consequently, reduce access for local people to employment and income. On the other hand, increased demand for various products and services generated by assistance activities may also provide local actors with access to new income sources. In such situations, the conflict-sensitive approach means, among other things, critically assessing from whom and where the resources required for project activities are sourced. Will the procurements benefit the war industry and the economy fuelling the conflict or would it be possible to conduct procurements so that they concurrently promote the building of just, lasting, and sustainable peace?

Ignoring conflict sensitivity may deepen existing tensions between groups of people and conflicting parties. This may happen if projects are targeted at specific beneficiaries while others are left out. Any unfair distribution of employment or sales income may also deepen tensions between groups. The conflict-sensitive approach makes it possible to ensure that project activities do not unintentionally favour specific parties to a conflict or, on the other hand, marginalise people whose position is already weaker or more vulnerable, to begin with.

Further, a strong and clearly visible presence of armed security for project activities may be perceived as being insensitive to conflict. It may communicate that the use of weapons is acceptable and that the possession of weapons means power. Within a conflict-sensitive approach, security issues are organised appropriately and, where necessary, using also armed security, while at the same time taking into account how such preparedness is perceived externally.



The 11 principles of the triple nexus

The Development Assistance Committee (DAC) of the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) has adopted a Recommendation on the Humanitarian-Development-Peace Nexus emphasising better coordination, programming and financing across the nexus. Under these three core elements, the Recommendation provides a set of 11 principles that enable Adherents to better respond to the risks and vulnerabilities of fragile, conflict-affected and crisis contexts. The DAC Recommendation pays particular attention to the significance of prevention in reducing the need for assistance and reaching those furthest behind.

Coordination

‘Better coordination’ required by the DAC Recommendation means that Adherents should:

1. Undertake joint risk-informed, gender-sensitive analysis of root causes and structural drivers of conflict. It is also important to examine positive factors of local resilience as a part of the analyses. The aim is to identify collective outcomes incorporating humanitarian, development and peace actions pursued by all actors through their respective activities. This calls for support (by Adherents) for joined-up humanitarian, development and peace planning and programming on the basis of a joined-up or joint multi-stakeholder analysis of the risks, needs, vulnerabilities and root causes of conflict for the context.
2. Provide appropriate resourcing to empower leadership for cost-effective coordination across the humanitarian, development and peace architecture at global, regional, national and local levels.
3. Utilise political engagement and other tools, instruments and approaches at all levels to prevent crises, resolve conflicts and build peace.



Programming

'Better programming' referred to in the DAC Recommendation means that Adherents should:

4. Prioritise conflict prevention, mediation and peacebuilding, investing in development whenever possible.
5. Put people at the centre, tackling exclusion and promoting gender equality.
6. Ensure that activities do no harm, and are conflict sensitive to avoid unintended negative consequences and maximise positive effects across humanitarian, development and peace actions.
7. Align joined-up programming aiming at collective outcomes and based on joint analyses with the risk environment by ensuring that programming is flexible and avoids fragmentation.
8. Strengthen national and local capacities through their actions.
9. Invest in learning and evidence across humanitarian, development and peace actions as well as gathering and promotion of best practice and innovative approaches.

Financing

'Better financing' referred to in the DAC Recommendation means that Adherents should:

10. Develop evidence-based humanitarian, development and peace financing strategies at global, regional, national and local levels.
11. Use predictable, flexible, multi-year financing wherever possible.

3. Finland as a nexus actor: good starting points but coordination still lacking

The nexus approach means measures that aim to strengthen collaboration, coherence, and complementarity between humanitarian assistance, development cooperation, and peace actions. This applies to Finland, too. The aim is to promote positive interlinkages between actions and actors and to form a joint view among the actors of the collective outcomes pursued by all through their respective activities.

There is a need in Finland to promote this entity on multiple fronts: a) within the Foreign Ministry/Service and in the various sectors through instruments and guidelines, b) more broadly in Finnish society and among decision-makers by increasing awareness, c) at the country level in collaboration with local actors and the international community in those operating environments where Finland is involved, and d) through policy influencing within to the international community and as part of multilateral cooperation and international policies.

Finland began the implementation of closer collaboration between development policy, humanitarian assistance, and peace actions as soon as the DAC Recommendation on the Humanitarian-Development-Peace Nexus entered into force in 2019. An internal Nexus Network of the Ministry for Foreign Affairs consisting of representatives of the various departments was appointed to coordinate the work.¹⁵ The Department for Development Policy was assigned as the temporary home base for the network, which was led during its first year by a senior adviser and member of the management of the Department. The network has set itself the objective of creating closer collaboration between development cooperation, humanitarian assistance, and peace actions, strengthening its capacities, such as information flow and mutual understanding

15 The following departments have participated in the activities: Department for Africa and the Middle East, Department for the Americas and Asia, Department for Russia, Eastern Europe, and Central Asia, Political Department, Development Evaluation Unit, and Department for Development Policy.

between departments, and creating joint ways of working at different levels. The network has also ensured the inclusion of nexus thinking and the invitation for closer collaboration in Finland's policy instruments ranging from the Government Programme to policies of nexus actors.

The approach is taken into account and referred to in the Guidelines on Finland's Humanitarian Assistance published in December 2019, in development cooperation country programme reforms and priorities-related work, and updates to multilateral policy and influencing plans. Following the country programme reform, two steering documents are now produced in long-term partner countries: a country strategy covering Finland's relations in the country in a comprehensive manner and a country programme concerning development cooperation. As regards the nexus approach, the country strategy is particularly relevant. In addition to development cooperation, the strategy maps out and describes Finland's other activities in the country. The importance of the triple nexus is particularly apparent in the country strategies for conflict-affected countries and areas. Finland's Development Policy and Development Cooperation in Fragile States – Guidelines for Strengthening Implementation of Development Cooperation¹⁶ already contains many aspects included in the DAC Recommendation on the Humanitarian-Development-Peace Nexus. The Guidelines emphasise ownership by the partner country and the agreement concluded with the partner country on actions, which in turn is not always possible in particularly fragile contexts, such as Syria. The Guidelines are due for an update by the end of 2021.

In recent years, the European Union (EU) has also sought to make its approach more comprehensive when acting in fragile areas and conflict situations.¹⁷ At the EU level, Finland strives to exert consistent influence in the Council of the European Union to further develop EU development policies so that the promotion of the triple nexus approach is taken into account. Finland has emphasised this particularly in actions taken by the EU against the COVID-19 pandemic. The EU targets its actions to fight the pandemic, particularly at vulnerable partner countries. COVID-19 response actions form an entity referred to by the EU as the Team Europe approach. The most important elements of COVID-19 response are related to emergency relief, support for health care systems in the crisis, and economic support measures. New Council conclusions concerning Team Europe response are being negotiated, with Finland advocating the triple nexus approach and enhanced coherence in the EU's external action while respecting humanitarian principles. Over the longer term, Team Europe's action is related to the EU's future funding instrument for external relations. In that context, Finland supports solutions for greater coherence, consistency, flexibility, and efficiency. This is highly important as more than a fifth of Finland's development funding is channelled via the EU.

Both the Guidelines on Finland's Humanitarian Assistance and the Government Report on Development Policy discuss the nexus of development cooperation, humanitarian assistance, and peace actions in separate paragraphs but not yet systematically as a foundation bringing these sectors together. The triple nexus is also included in the

16 Suomen kehityspolitiikka ja kehitysyhteistyö hauraissa valtioissa – toimintaohje kehitysyhteistyön toimeenpanon vahvistamiseen.

17 EU:n integroidusta lähestymistavasta ks. <https://data.consilium.europa.eu/doc/document/ST-5413-2018-INIT/en/pdf>

upcoming Government Report on Development Policy Across Parliamentary Terms (2021). During the drafting phase, there has been an emphasis in the report on joint analysis conducted between development cooperation, humanitarian assistance and peace actions, improved complementarity, and effectiveness.

The COVID-19 pandemic and the need to respond rapidly have accelerated flexibility between development cooperation financing and humanitarian assistance. This has been reflected especially in CSO funding, but efforts are being made to also promote it more comprehensively in the country programmes guiding Finland's bilateral cooperation. Guidelines are being prepared for more flexible use of financing, for which there is a clear need. The planned guidelines will cover development cooperation and humanitarian assistance but not the peace dimension.

Teams appointed for operational planning have increasingly included specialists in development policy, humanitarian assistance, and peace actions alike. Finland has also been an active supporter of nexus thinking in the International Network on Conflict and Fragility (INCAF) of the OECD Member countries and the EU. At the same time, Finland has advocated for the preservation of the humanitarian space and impartiality in a consistent and determined manner.

According to the current Government Programme, a stronger priority will be placed on conflict prevention, peace mediation, and peacebuilding in Finland's foreign policy. Finland participates actively in multilateral forums [EU, UN, Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE)] to strengthen the normative and institutional foundation of peace mediation. The long-term priorities of Finland have included actively promoting UN Security Council Resolution 1325 – the Women, Peace and Security Agenda – and its implementation per Finland's National Action Plan both nationally and internationally. Finland has also taken initiative and been a frontrunner in the promotion of UN Security Council Resolution 2250 on Youth, Peace and Security. Finland is known for its extensive peace mediation activities in the UN, the African Union (AU), and the EU. Developing the peace mediation capacity of the AU and supporting the Pan-African Network of Women in Conflict Prevention and Mediation (FemWise) and the Network for Religious and Traditional Peacemakers are examples of Finland's peace engagement. Also, Finnish CSOs are engaging in peace actions around the world. Other thematic

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priorities include water diplomacy, i.e. making use of Finland's water-related competencies in conflict prevention and resolution, and the potential available in new technologies for peace actions (PeaceTech).

Established in conjunction with the Ministry for Foreign Affairs in October 2020, the Centre for Peace Mediation is an important actor for a closer linkage of peace actions in the triple nexus context. The Centre is tasked with building Finland's national peace mediation competencies and capacities. It coordinates and systematises the Ministry's peace mediation activities and collaboration with CSOs and other actors. Within the Ministry, a key role is coordination and collaboration with the geographical departments with whom the geographical priorities are defined. The Centre also seeks to comprehensively harmonise peace-promoting actions with humanitarian assistance and development cooperation to enable efficient and sustainable response to conflicts.

Finland's preparedness to strengthen the interlinkages between development cooperation, humanitarian assistance, and peace actions has been reviewed in a variety of evaluations. The relevant recommendations provided by the evaluations are utilised in this publication, too. The key ones of these are the Evaluation on Forced Displacement and Finnish Development Policy (2019) and Adapting for Change: Country Strategy Approach in Fragile Contexts (2020). In addition, the Ministry has mapped out best practices and lessons learned in nexus activities by Sweden and Norway (The Humanitarian-Development-Peace Nexus: Best Practices and Lessons from Norway and Sweden, Doty & Makweri 2019) and consulted DAC expert assessments of Finland's starting points. A particular challenge is the role of peace and peace actions in this equation, with debate on the topic still at an early stage. Finland's approach not yet being conflict-sensitive enough has also been identified as a challenge by previous evaluations and reports. In other words, the understanding of conflicts, analyses of the operating environment and interaction between actions and context as well as competencies relating to ways of working in fragile contexts should be strengthened. The various collaboration forms of the nexus approach do not currently complement each other in the best possible way, either. Results-based management and new administrative models should be developed. Moreover, capabilities and potential available for peace mediation should be taken into use more broadly. For this to take place, leadership and special expertise are required at the various levels of administration.

To summarise, Finland is well-placed to strengthen its role as a triple nexus actor. This, however, requires a stronger political will, strong leadership, and goal-oriented policies supporting collaboration between the sectors. Also required is a change in ways of thinking and working in financing and target countries alike so that closer collaboration and joint objectives between development cooperation, humanitarian assistance, and peace actions can become a reality. Finland currently still lacks a specifically worded and jointly adopted triple nexus approach guiding activities in fragile situations. Aid organisations and CSOs also require more specific instructions on how and for which kinds of nexus-supporting activities Finnish government funding can be channelled.

How are CSOs implementing the triple nexus in practice?

For this publication, the triple nexus expert group was asked to provide case examples of work carried out by Finnish civil society organisations (CSOs) applying the nexus approach. The responses received show a strong principled commitment to the triple nexus thinking and approach among CSOs. This is not surprising, as many Finnish CSOs have gained significant experience of working in areas affected by protracted crises. CSOs know that acute humanitarian needs are not isolated from broader development problems in their operating areas or from efforts to achieve sustainable and just peace. All these coexist in a very real manner – not as a tidy continuum but in most cases parallel to and overlapping each other in highly complex situations.

Examples of long-term CSO engagement in fragile and conflict-affected areas include the work of the Abilis Foundation in Somalia and Somaliland and the programmes of World Vision Finland in Northern Uganda and Rwanda. Similar examples include the activities of Finn Church Aid in Uganda, South Sudan and Mozambique, and the work carried out by partners of Västöliitto, the Family Federation of Finland (Marie Stopes International Reproductive Choices (MSI) and the International Planned Parenthood Federation (IPPF)) in, for example, Afghanistan.

Common to all seven of the case examples collected for this publication is the fact that they seek to respond both to acute humanitarian needs as well as to longer-term development objectives. The cases feature activities that were usually started in response to urgent basic human needs created by crisis situations. Measures supporting the long-term development needs of the operational context have been integrated into or launched after humanitarian assistance efforts. For example, Finn Church Aid (FCA) initially worked under humanitarian funding with refugees from the Democratic Republic of Kongo in Rwamwanja, southwestern Uganda, providing them with emergency relief and enabling access to education following entry into the country. Since 2015, FCA has continued work under development cooperation funding on vocational skills training programmes that are based on the Ugandan national curriculum and respond to employer needs, with refugees accounting for 70% and local Ugandans for 30% of the participants. Work carried out by World Vision (WV) Finland in North Uganda is another example of activities responding simultaneously to refugee needs and the needs of local residents. This has taken place through water and sanitation projects implemented inclusively and involving close collaboration with the local government. The FCA and WV projects have both paid particular attention to targeting of activities equally at people with a refugee background and at members of the local



population. Both organisations present this as an approach in line with triple nexus thinking, and that has helped to prevent the creation of tensions and contradictions in the area and to support coexistence between population groups. WV Finland has also included activities in its programmes aimed at enabling community dialogue, such as youth peace groups and various forms of advocacy. The purpose of these, too, is to promote peaceful coexistence in the area.

Working in the field of sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR), the engagement of MSI and the IPPF also features a strong interlinkage between humanitarian assistance and development cooperation. In the spirit of the nexus, the work of both organisations is based on solid knowledge of the operating environment, collaboration and partnerships with local health care actors and authorities and on an inclusive approach. For the Abilis Foundation, inclusivity is at the core of its activities. In its work, the double nexus has become a reality in reverse order: disability CSOs themselves have first become empowered thanks to development cooperation, after which they have been able to strengthen the inclusivity of the work of humanitarian assistance organisations.

Although the CSOs assure their commitment specifically to the triple nexus, a concrete peace dimension is slimmer and more difficult to define in their work. Conflict sensitivity does, however, emerge, either as defined as an explicit approach or by reading between the lines, as a key means of strengthening the positive impacts of development cooperation and humanitarian assistance on peacebuilding.

The restrictions and constraints of funding available for humanitarian assistance and development cooperation are mentioned by the CSOs as being among the key challenges in implementing a triple nexus approach. Another hurdle yet to be overcome is the fact that the current funding architecture remains largely siloed along humanitarian, development and peace lines. This challenges the planning and implementation of holistic responses. A more comprehensive approach in funding would enable various actors to plan for and implement a coordinated response by means of parallel and complementary processes to meet both humanitarian needs as well as development and peacebuilding objectives. The CSOs also call for flexibility in financing to better enable agile retargeting of actions in response to sudden changes in the context. On the other hand, actors focusing on strengthening local CSOs express the wish for access to non-earmarked funding so that funds could be allocated flexibly for supporting and strengthening the work of local actors where appropriate.

The CSOs are already working hard to join up humanitarian assistance and development cooperation. Nevertheless, they still perceive a need to link the humanitarian-development nexus more closely with national and regional peace efforts, too. So

far, these links and coordination between the three sectors of the nexus are not yet systematic. In addition to systematising conflict sensitivity, one of the solutions proposed by the CSOs is comprehensive joint planning of programming at the regional and country levels, which would cover all forms of assistance. Means that could be employed for this include conducting inclusive context analyses and needs assessments, taking both immediate needs and well as longer-term objectives into account. Other ways of promoting the implementation of the triple nexus mentioned by the organisations include supporting the building of partnerships between actors representing different sectors. This would enable collaboration and peer learning among them.

The text is based on the following case examples:

Abilis Foundation – general description/Somalia & Somaliland

Finn Church Aid (FCA) – three examples/Uganda, South Sudan & Mozambique

World Vision Finland – two examples/Uganda & Rwanda

Väestöliitto, the Family Federation of Finland – two more general descriptions of partner CSOs' approaches (MSI & IPPF)

4. Towards the triple nexus: the next steps and recommendations for Finland

The purpose of this final chapter is to offer concrete tools for achieving closer collaboration between development cooperation, humanitarian assistance, and peace actions as well for the coordination of steering relating to this collaboration in Finland's development policy and external relations. We intend to clarify the thinking relating to the triple nexus and to spur concrete measures both in the Foreign Service, more broadly in Finnish society and among decision-makers as well as in collaboration in target countries and as part of the work of non-governmental organisations. Our observations and recommendations are based on the OECD/DAC Recommendation on the Humanitarian-Development-Peace Nexus, with the main points of the triple nexus recommendation mirrored against the current strengths and challenges of Finland.

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Our aim is for Finland to be known as a country whose development cooperation, humanitarian assistance, and peace engagement and financing is greater than the sum of its parts: that the elements are coherent, build positive interlinkages and complement each other and produce measurable outcomes, also through collective effort. Collaboration needs to generate added value for people in the target areas and their pursuit of sustainable peace and development.

We have grouped the next steps as follows: we start with the cornerstone principles of a well-functioning triple nexus and then move towards more detailed recommendations for the Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland concerning practical coordination, programming, and financing.

I. Finland's triple nexus approach must be built on shared values and principles

The triple nexus approach must be rooted into the shared value base of Finland's sustainable development, foreign and security policy as well as development policy. Its common denominators are human rights, the rule of law, democracy, peace, freedom, and gender and other equality.

The principle underpinning sustainable development – leave no one behind – must be an integral component of the triple nexus approach. In its development policy and humanitarian assistance, Finland emphasises the promotion of gender equality, strengthens the participation and voice of young people, and pays special attention to multiple forms and bases of discrimination and, in particular, the status of people with disabilities as well as members of indigenous peoples and sexual and gender minorities. This must materialise into more than mere words. The perspective and active role of the beneficiary needs to be visible in practice.

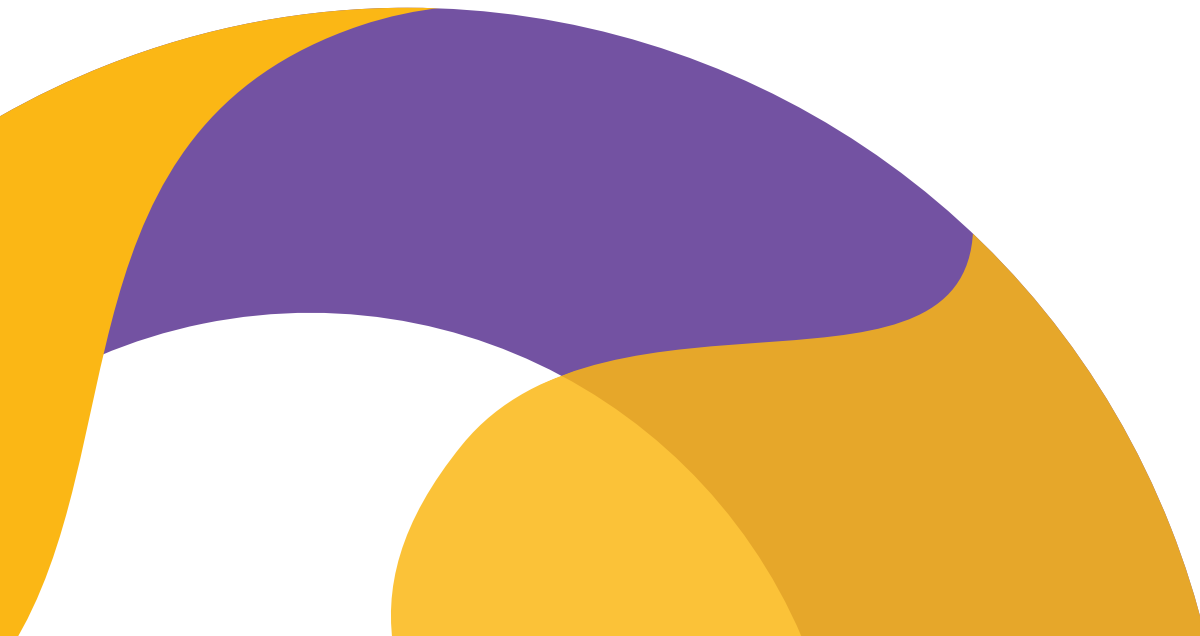
- Finland must specify the values and principles of a people-centred approach and broad inclusivity and establish these as the joint foundation for the triple nexus. This includes working against discrimination and exclusion, promoting gender equality, and ensuring accountability to beneficiaries by strengthening the transparency and inclusivity of activities.
- Peace actions must be defined clearly as part of the triple nexus. This involves defining the concept of *peace* (broad *positive peace* and more narrow *negative peace* referring to the termination of violence) as well as the various forms of peace actions (including the notions of *conflict prevention*, *peace mediation*, and *peacebuilding*).
- The aim specified for the triple nexus must be the pursuit of positive peace where, in addition to non-violence, the capacities of peaceful and democratic societies that function in a sustainable and just manner are promoted.
- Strong local ownership of development and peace processes is a vital prerequisite in the triple nexus approach.
- Finland must refrain from arms exports to conflict areas in the interests of consistency.



II. The triple nexus must be based on the strengths of each sector and on the identification of collaboration opportunities and challenges

The triple nexus approach brings together development cooperation, humanitarian assistance, and peace actors as representatives of the respective strengths and expertise of their sector. Each sector is guided by a set of international standards and best practices. In addition, the OECD/DAC Recommendation on the Humanitarian-Development-Peace Nexus provides each sector with new perspectives to take into account.

- For the DAC Recommendation on the Humanitarian-Development-Peace Nexus to be implemented in activities also supported by Finland, more analytical and increasingly systematically produced data is needed concerning the positive interlinkages between the three sectors of the nexus. It is also equally important to gain more information about the challenges and obstacles to the implementation of the triple nexus.
- Finland must allocate sufficient resources to the production and reviews of information relating to the triple nexus.
 - The theme must be included more strongly in foreign, security, and development policy research.
 - The opportunities and obstacles relating to the humanitarian-peace nexus must be studied and conveyed to decision-making and actors to support them. This must include exploring good practices and well-functioning examples of networking and partnerships between humanitarian assistance actors and those engaging in actions for positive peace.
 - Finland must invest in and create incentives for target-oriented peer learning and conceptualisation of best triple nexus practices between humanitarian assistance, development cooperation, and peace actors.



III. Closer collaboration aiming at complementarity, coherence, and collective outcomes

The triple nexus approach requires that actors in the different sectors provide their respective contributions in a complementary and coherent manner for the achievement of the jointly adopted collective outcomes.

- Complementarity calls for good knowledge of the development and peace processes and the humanitarian assistance actions taking place in the operating environment as well as of the actors involved in these. Finland must require that the actors it provides financing for submit a description of the manner in which complementarity and coherence are ensured.
- Finland must develop its ways of working as a provider of finance so that the programming of humanitarian assistance, development cooperation, and peace actions financed by Finland is based on joint analyses and aims at collective outcomes. Finland must also adapt to changing circumstances and strive to avoid fragmentation.

IV. The triple nexus starts with joint analysis

Complementarity and coherence cannot be created without a common understanding of the operating environment. Key means of creating a common understanding include joint analyses of contexts, conflicts, and risks as well as joining up analyses conducted by different actors. The aim is to identify the joined-up collective outcomes for humanitarian assistance, development cooperation, and peace actions that the various actors pursue through their respective activities. As regards Finland, analyses can be participated in or conducted on at least three different levels: 1) as part of internationally coordinated joint and joined-up analyses taking place at the local or country level, 2) in Finland as part of country programme and strategy planning, and 3) between Finnish actors operating in the same geographical areas.

- As part of Finland's triple nexus approach, special attention must be paid in analyses to the following aspects at all three levels:
 - root causes of conflicts and fragility
 - factors maintaining and escalating or deepening conflicts (conflict drivers)
 - local prerequisites for sustainable positive peace
 - factors promoting local resilience
 - gender-sensitivity of analyses
 - inclusivity of analyses and taking the local perspective into account
 - conflict-sensitivity of analysis processes.

- As part of country programme and strategy planning:
 - analyses must take broadly into account the perspectives of various reference groups and actors, including the various central government sectors, civil society actors, research community as well as the international aid community, and the results of analyses conducted at the country or local level;
 - those operating in the same areas must be encouraged to bring their analyses to a shared table to facilitate country programmes and strategies being based in part also on joined-up analyses;
 - context analyses can make use of analytic frameworks of other donor countries (for example, Sweden and the UK).
- As part of the collaboration of Finnish actors operating in the same geographic areas:
 - commonly adopted models and practices for the coordination of analyses must be developed for possible joint analyses. Further, joining up analyses conducted by different actors calls for coordination;
 - all actors must take information, analyses and other material produced by other actors into account as extensively as possible and seek to avoid overlaps;
 - the important link to analyses behind Finland's country programmes and strategies must be taken into account;
 - the Ministry for Foreign Affairs as a provider of funding should create incentives for joint and joined-up analyses as part of financing mechanisms and application processes.



V. A conflict-sensitive approach must be required in all actions implemented or financed by Finland in fragile contexts

Conflict sensitivity requires the ability to understand the operating environment and its latent and open conflicts as well as adapting actions in relation to them. In addition, it is important for actors to monitor the continuous two-way interactions between their activities and their operational context and to adapt activities so that they reflect the observations. The aim is to minimise the negative impacts of the activities on the context and maximise the positive impacts on the creation of sustainable positive peace.

- Finland must determine conflict sensitivity as a mandatory quality requirement for all humanitarian assistance, development cooperation, and peace actions.
- Finland must require that the planning and implementation of humanitarian assistance (supported by Finland) meets the minimum requirement of the *do no harm* principle in that it at least does not deepen the root causes underlying crises and conflicts. Humanitarian assistance following with the triple nexus approach must be based on conflict analyses.
- Finland must emphasise a solid knowledge of the operating environments in all areas of external relations and broader partnerships, such as in relations under the Africa strategy. Solid contextual knowledge and conflict sensitivity are essential also as regards Finland's commercial aspirations concerning fragile contexts.
- Finland must formulate guidelines on conflict sensitivity, and training and opportunities for peer learning between various actors must be provided concerning conflict sensitivity.
- Conflict sensitivity must be entered and specified in concrete terms into Finland's Development Policy and Development Cooperation in Fragile States – Guidelines for Strengthening Implementation of Development Cooperation, which will be updated during 2021.

VI. Conflict prevention and peace mediation must be a priority

Violence and armed conflicts affect all people at all levels of society. Preventing them is our shared and global responsibility. As violence occurring in fragile contexts is often cyclical and persists for a long time, it is important to focus on its prevention. This saves human lives, reduces human suffering, and also reduces the need for international assistance.

Eradication of structural injustice, conflict prevention, and peace mediation can reduce the need for humanitarian assistance and help to strengthen the capacity of

local actors and institutions to respond to crises.

- Finland must prioritise and develop activities that prevent conflicts and promote peace mediation. This must be reflected in both targeting of financing as well as in resourcing for research and development to identify good practices.
 - Finland must explore ways of encouraging the allocation of development cooperation appropriations increasingly to fragile and conflict-prone environments.
 - Development cooperation and peace actors must be encouraged to find ways of focusing in their work on structural factors that create or deepen conflicts and injustice in the light of, for example, the human rights or democracy situation.
 - All nexus actors must be encouraged to identify transparently the needs they seek to respond to through their engagement. Furthermore, measures and indicators that can help to reduce the need for humanitarian assistance must be determined collectively and prioritised.
 - All actors must be encouraged to think and act also beyond state structures and borders and to identify and support the resources and competencies of communities and civil society for the prevention of conflicts.

VII. The role of local actors must be placed at the core of the triple nexus

Identifying and strengthening local-level actors must be at the core of Finland's triple nexus. The planning, implementation, and monitoring of actions involve continuous dialogue between the different levels, such as the local and international level, and Finland's national steering.

- The triple nexus must be built from the beneficiary perspective. The primary purpose of the closer collaboration is to develop Finland's seamless engagement specifically from the viewpoint of beneficiaries. The approach must emphasise flexibility and ability to adapt to the local context.
- Finland must through its contributions ensure that it always strengthens national and local resources and capabilities. Moreover, local leadership must be supported in internationally recognised coordination mechanisms. Where necessary, financing must be targeted at local organisations that are already in place when crises break out. Finland must also require a similar approach from international aid actors that it finances.
- Finland must identify the key actors and underline impartial inclusion, taking the dynamics of the operating environment into account. Human rights organisations,

religious and traditional actors and leaders, as well as young people play a special role in this.

- In line with the Grand Bargain initiative, financing and capacity building must be targeted at local actors to empower them – as local as possible, as international as necessary.
- Meeting the needs of vulnerable groups can be ensured in particular via support to human rights organisations, such as organisations working to support the rights of people with disabilities, gender equity, and those promoting family planning. It is these types of local organisations that are usually present and active on the ground already before the onset of crises, who are there amidst the crisis, and will remain there in the aftermath thereof. At the same time, eventual risks must be taken into account and the impartiality of humanitarian efforts must be safeguarded.

VIII. The triple nexus must be integrated more systematically also into international influencing activities

Finland must integrate the triple nexus into the objectives of its international advocacy efforts concerning bilateral cooperation countries, multilateral organisations, and the EU. Here, Finland would be well-placed to tap into its reputation as a strong and committed peace actor and promote the triple nexus approach between the various actors following the OECD/DAC Recommendation on the Humanitarian-Development-Peace Nexus.

- Finland must make use of the means of policy dialogue and advocacy as well as the available aid instruments at all levels of activity for conflict prevention and resolution and peacebuilding. This calls for a coordinated and coherent approach between diplomatic, stabilisation and civilian security interventions, while respecting humanitarian principles and ensuring that humanitarian access to people in need is protected.



IX. The triple nexus approach requires broad-based support and investments and must extend across parliamentary terms

Making the triple nexus a firmly rooted approach calls for broad-based ownership by all groups of actors relevant to the triple nexus in Finland as well as in target areas and within multilateral cooperation. Moreover, information and goal-oriented capacity building is required in Finland's national decision-making. The Finnish Parliament, parliamentary groups and members of parliament play a key role in achieving political endorsement and support for the nexus. Parliamentary support creates incentives for developing the work of the Ministry for Foreign Affairs on the theme. Civil society inclusion is also important at all levels. Achieving all this also calls for sufficient resources.

- Finland must formulate a national triple nexus strategy and allocate sufficient resources to its formulation. The strategy must be anchored in the OECD/DAC Recommendation on the Humanitarian-Development-Peace Nexus and must include a description of Finland's own nexus approach as well as a schedule and key measures for putting the approach into action.
- All groups of triple nexus actors must be included in the debate on Finland's nexus efforts, in the formulation of the strategy, and in how the nexus will be taken into account in actions financed by Finland and in Finland's international policy dialogue and advocacy efforts.
- The triple nexus approach extends across individual government terms. The need for updates will be assessed at the beginning of each government term. The approach must be developed continuously in the light of research, peer learning and lessons learned from activities. Understanding and competencies relating to the triple nexus and more generally to ways of working in fragile and conflict areas must be strengthened throughout the spectrum of actors.

X. The Ministry for Foreign Affairs must develop its strategic guidance, leadership, and ownership

- For the national strategy, Finland must define its triple nexus approach in accordance with international commitments, primarily the OECD/DAC recommendations. The approach must feature a clear definition of what is meant by the triple nexus, what its aim is, why it is important, who (which policy sectors and actors) it applies to and how it must be implemented.
- Rooting the triple nexus as an approach bringing together the various sectors calls for the coordination of existing elements and leadership at the highest levels of decision-making. Comprehensive steering authority must be ensured for Finland's triple nexus approach, and this must be coordinated with current documents and policies

concerning humanitarian assistance, development cooperation, as well as peace and security actions.

- The Nexus Network of the Ministry for Foreign Affairs must see to the Ministry's internal coordination and the implementation of (future) policies and guidelines throughout the Ministry's departments as well as missions abroad. Leadership of this coordination plays a visible role in the organisation structure and represents competence in issues relating to development cooperation, humanitarian assistance, and peace actions.
- Finland must designate the Ministry for Foreign Affairs as the formal strategic 'home base' for the triple nexus and assign the leadership, coordination, and participation roles representing other ministries as well as relevant stakeholders. Political ownership, as well as ownership by the most senior management of ministries, must be strengthened. The current Nexus Network of the Ministry for Foreign Affairs must be made into a permanent collaboration structure, and clear measurable objectives must be set for its activities.
- Ownership by the most senior officials of the Ministry for Foreign Affairs must be ensured by creating a rotating responsible lead role for advancing the agenda between representatives of the three pillars of the nexus (humanitarian assistance, development cooperation, and peace actions).
- The triple nexus approach must be integrated uniformly into all relevant high-level policies and guidelines with de facto steering and management authority. These include in minimum:
 - The Government Report on Development Policy Across Parliamentary Terms (2021), where the triple nexus must be seen as a foundation for bringing together various elements coherently, complementarily and aiming at collective outcomes;
 - The upcoming update of Finland's Development Policy and Development Cooperation in Fragile States – Guidelines for Strengthening Implementation of Development Cooperation (2021);
 - Finland's Africa strategy (2021);
 - The next update of the Guidelines on Finland's Humanitarian Assistance;
- In addition to clear policies and guidelines, translating the approach into practice among Finnish actors also calls for a coordinating party that has contacts with all relevant actors in the field as well as in operational leadership.
- The Ministry for Foreign Affairs must increase awareness among public officials of the triple nexus at all organisational levels and within all three sectors of the nexus.

XI. Making the triple nexus approach an essential element of programming

- The Ministry for Foreign Affairs must make the triple nexus of development cooperation, humanitarian assistance,, and peace actions a regular part of country and regional programme work. At the same time, any obstacles to the approach in current financing architecture, processes and practices must be identified and tools for eradicating them must be created.
- The country and regional teams must be specified as a permanent structure with representatives from all three sectors of the triple nexus. The status of the teams should be strengthened and established as part of joint analyses and financing decisions based on them.
- There must be a specific place for the definition of the triple nexus approach as part of country strategies and country programme documents.
- Guidelines, criteria, and examples of efficient ways of integrating the nexus into strategies and programmes must be provided in view of defining the approach as part of country and regional programmes.
- Programming aimed at collective outcomes must be coordinated with risk assessments carried out for each operational context.

XII. Long-term approach and flexibility must be increased further in financing

- Finland must develop an evidence-based comprehensive plan for a financing reform that establishes a synergy between the three dimensions of the nexus. This calls for courage and creativity to rethink the whole from a genuinely new perspective and preparedness to modify the financing architecture (including principles, instruments, and allocation mechanisms) – even radically, if necessary.
- Finland must map out ways to improve the predictability and flexibility of financing and to increase the amount of long-term financing. The aim is to ensure support allocations that genuinely respond to the needs of the operating environment as well as adaptability to unforeseen changes in the operational context that are typical in fragile contexts. Clear guidelines, conditions, and criteria must be defined for flexibility.
- The predictability of humanitarian assistance in protracted crises must be developed. International humanitarian law (IHL) does not make a distinction between the duration of humanitarian assistance and its contents. In protracted crises, assistance must be provided for as long as it is needed. This is why immediate efforts must be made to increase a long-term approach and flexibility. The financing application process cycle must also be improved to reflect the changing needs. Efforts must be

made to increase the duration of financing for humanitarian projects financed by Finland to multiple-year periods.

- The strengths, weaknesses, and flexibility potential of the mechanisms and instruments of the current financing architecture must be analysed and the needs for changes necessary for the nexus approach must be identified.
- Lessons must be learned and information about strengths and weaknesses must be sought as regards financing instruments and mechanisms as well as funding allocation processes employed by other donors.
- Those administering the current financing instruments of the Ministry for Foreign Affairs must be assigned the responsibility for more efficient coordination, and their shared understanding of the nexus approach must be strengthened.
- Project plans must include a description of the implementation of the triple nexus approach as part of the other processes taking place in the operating environment and the collective outcomes determined for them. Moreover, it must be specified more generally in project plans how the project will comply with the triple nexus approach.

