



# MONITORING AND EVALUATION

## ADDRESSING CLIMATE-FRAGILITY RISKS

LINKING PEACEBUILDING, CLIMATE CHANGE ADAPTATION,  
AND SUSTAINABLE LIVELIHOODS



*This M&E note supports the monitoring and evaluation of strategies, policies and projects that seek to increase resilience by linking climate change adaptation, peacebuilding, and sustainable livelihoods. It accompanies the guidance note which is focused on policy, strategy and project development. Chapter 1 explains the importance of M&E and lays out the basic principles of conflict- and genders-sensitive M&E. Chapter 2 explains how to measure results and impacts putting a special focus on climate change adaptation and peacebuilding results. Chapter 3 provides guidance on how to develop indicators and how to approach your baseline. A number of checklists and sets of guiding questions throughout the note help readers to put the concepts and approaches described into action.*

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# 1 Introduction

## 1.1 When you should monitor?

Monitoring and evaluation are critical elements of successful project planning and implementation. They serve two central objectives: accountability and, often underappreciated, learning. M&E frameworks are usually developed during the planning stage of a project, alongside a theory of change. In many cases, an evaluation is then undertaken mid-term and/or at the end of the programme. We suggest that you **continually monitor and evaluate** your project across all stages of the project cycle. This will enable you to identify challenges and adapt your project accordingly. You should also aim to continue M&E beyond the lifespan of your intervention (ideally at least 3 – 5 years after it ends, longer if possible). This will allow you to capture the longer-term impacts of your intervention on peace and resilience – and to prove their sustainability or learn from shortfalls. These costs should be included in your budget from the outset.

It is important to ensure that programming changes are being made in response to findings from M&E processes, and to continue monitoring the outcomes of those changes. These programmatic changes should also be clearly communicated to project staff, partners, and donors.

## 1.2 Who to involve?

It is good practice to actively engage the beneficiaries and other stakeholders such as government officials or academic institutions in the M&E process. This involvement goes beyond data gathering. It also means that as much information as possible is shared with all stakeholders, albeit with an eye to political risks. Thus, you may need to provide ‘safe spaces for certain parts of M&E, so that stakeholders do not (have to) fear backlash for unwelcome responses.

This process of stakeholder engagement normally includes:

- Explaining and discussing the reasons for M&E: Why are we conducting monitoring and evaluation? What do we want to learn? Who will use the information generated and for what?
- Discussing and choosing the M&E questions and indicators
- Deciding who will implement M&E: Monitoring, especially with regard to natural resource management, often involves the beneficiaries such as farmers or fishers. Make sure that monitoring activities can be included in their daily activities.

Make sure that you allocate enough time and resources to build the necessary capacities and to negotiate different interests. It is often better to start with a simple system that can be expanded as the process develops and skills are built. Understand your role primarily as a facilitator and do not try to impose your ideas of what would be useful indicators or methods. Instead, focus on technical support and training, quality control and making sure that the process is inclusive.

It is key to involve conflict and peacebuilding as well as climate change adaptation expertise as part of your technical team from the beginning of the process. This could

be one person that has experience in both fields, but normally means involving at least two experts with different backgrounds. One critical element for success is integrating the monitoring of indicators along both of these dimensions.

### **1.3 Conflict- and gender-sensitive monitoring**

Conflict- and gender-sensitivity are key elements of successful monitoring and form the basis of the approach laid out in this document.

#### **Conflict-sensitive monitoring**

Conflict sensitive monitoring is critical for making sure that a strategy, policy, program or project does no harm, i.e. does not contribute to existing or create new conflict or fragility risks (see guidance note for a general introduction into conflict sensitivity). It includes reflecting on the interaction between the intervention and the context as part of the broader intervention monitoring plan. A key objective of conflict-sensitive monitoring is to help adapt strategic and operational plans where necessary. For example, the results of context and conflict-sensitive monitoring are often reflected upon in weekly project staff meetings or regular strategy workshops.

Conflict-sensitive monitoring involves three key elements:

1. monitoring the conflict context
2. monitoring the effects of the conflict context on the intervention
3. monitoring the effects of the intervention on the conflict context

Monitoring findings may for example reveal that resilience-strengthening activities are unintentionally triggering tensions or reinforcing divisions in the community, that underlying tensions in the target groups are hindering participation in activities and that there is a need to better understand and address those tensions to achieve progress, or that additional opportunities for reinforcing community cohesion or dialogue between divided groups through project activities exist and could be capitalised on.

The risks and assumptions column in an M&E Logframe is a good place to identify where a project might interact with conflict. From this, it is good practice to build in mitigation activities/outputs in response to risks identified. A key difference from a standard logframe is that the risk column will focus not only on risks to the project, but also include acknowledgement of potential risks that the project might have on the context.

Conducting conflict-sensitive monitoring also means that the monitoring itself is carried out in a conflict-sensitive way. M&E processes are typically extractive processes, where evaluators or interviewers are soliciting information from respondents, and may not be able to immediately respond to the issues that are emerging. Conflict-sensitive monitoring is being mindful in the way questions are being asked to not exacerbate any grievances or tensions or create expectations that will not be met.

#### **Gender-sensitive M&E**

Collecting gender disaggregated data is not an end in itself. Gender-sensitive M&E should involve looking at gender as one of a number of identity factors which interact

to form an individual's resilience. An effective M&E framework should measure the extent to which a strategy or project affect the relationships between different and linked identity groups (e.g. religious groups, class, caste, gender, age).

Gendered outcomes and related indicators need to be clearly defined at the outset of a project to determine the data that is needed and how it will be collected and disaggregated by gender. A baseline survey carried out at the beginning of a project that documents men's and women's (as well as boy's and girl's) roles, needs, vulnerabilities and capacities followed by collection and analysis of disaggregated data throughout the programme is key to assess the impact of interventions on people's resilience and transformations of unjust power relations.

### **M&E Framework Checklist**

- Does your M&E framework capture the effects that the project will have on conflict and fragility, and impacts that the conflict and fragility dynamics could have on the intervention?
- Are M&E considerations integrated across the project cycle?
- Are all important stakeholders involved in the M&E process? Is the data and information gathered being made available to all stakeholders?
- Does the M&E framework capture all intended outcomes while still being broad enough to capture unintended negative and positive impacts?
- Do your M&E systems capture changes in relationships between conflicting groups, as well as changes in levels of insecurity? As different groups are affected differently by the context, you need to ensure that you disaggregate data. Do not assume that groups such as 'community', 'women', and 'men' are homogenous.
- How will analysis from monitoring be used to make adjustments to the project?
- Do you have all necessary baseline information?
- Did you consider whether the findings from your assessment can contribute to your baseline for the project's M&E? If that's required, you might need to add questions to get information relevant for a baseline.

## 2 Measuring results

While an M&E framework has to be simple and should not overburden a project, it also needs to be broad enough to capture the different dimensions that resilience building activities against climate-fragility risks entail, namely peacebuilding, climate change adaptation and development impacts in terms of sustainable livelihoods.

### 2.1 Capturing unintended and intangible impacts

Some outcomes (such as increased well-being or relationships between groups) will be intangible, and based on perceptions. However, these are no less important to capture within an M&E process. You should take note of both positive and negative unintended impacts. Feedback mechanisms should be designed open and broad enough that they allow capturing such unintended impacts: These can, for example, include community score cards, citizen report cards, complaints and grievance mechanisms, story-telling, and perception surveys. It is key to also ask open-ended questions, with a range of targeted and non-targeted groups, and to provide safe spaces for staff and for communities to engage in open and honest dialogue on challenges and conflict issues.

Assessing intangible outcomes, which are often highly subjective, requires trust and will require triangulation of data points along with observational data collection. This means, for example, that the views and opinions of a number of diverse stakeholders should be identified and assessed. There is always the risk that the views of dominant individuals or groups receive disproportionate attention. It is therefore important that the views of 'silent' groups are included. For example, when measuring the relationship between different social groups, it is critical to not only include the views of leaders within those groups, but also other, potentially marginalised groups, such as women and older members.<sup>1</sup>

Where eliciting information directly from project beneficiaries or other stakeholders might be problematic, it is nevertheless important to consider these questions and attempt to answer them through other channels, for example through observations, expert interviews or stakeholder consultations.

### 2.2 Measuring peacebuilding and adaptation results

The difficulty of identifying indicators that measure results and produce evidence which identifies effective interventions is a major challenge of successful peacebuilding and climate change adaptation. The actions taken often produce results that are often less tangible and more difficult to measure than many other development interventions, for example efforts to change perceptions, attitudes and behaviour. It is hard to build resilience in fragile contexts, and some projects will likely fail due to circumstances beyond their control. And for successful interventions, it is almost impossible to demonstrate the counterfactual – what would have happened without the intervention. Often, peacebuilding and adaptation measures have a very long time frame or address potential impacts that may not materialise for years or

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<sup>1</sup> DFID 1999, Section 3.5

decades to come, e.g. drought resilience or sea level rise. Where activities have such a long timeframe, it is obviously difficult to assess their full impact in the short term.

Another major challenge lies in the uncertainty of how conflict and the impacts of climate change will develop in specific locations. For example, we know that there will be more severe weather events globally, but there is little certainty on when, where and with which force these events will exactly unfold. In this context, one might be confronted with the difficulty of measuring non-events if, for example, adverse weather events do not occur during the project time and measures cannot be adequately 'tested'. For example, the impacts of project that aims to improve adaptive capacities to flooding cannot be thoroughly validated if floods do not occur during the project's timeframe. Similarly, in the context of a locality suffering from drought, a project that 'only' helped to maintain but not improve a community's water security may have difficulties in convincing donors that this is a relevant achievement. To really demonstrate that, without the intervention, water security would have decreased dramatically in the case of a heavy drought would require a suitable control group, which is rarely an option.

Measuring peacebuilding and climate change adaptation impacts and outcomes therefore requires robust theories of change. Your M&E framework has to be comprehensive and flexible enough to capture results on different levels (output, outcome, impact) and in different ways (qualitative and quantitative indicators). In particular, make sure your M&E captures the interlinkages that your theory of change targets: if your activities seek to contribute to peacebuilding through climate change adaptation, your M&E should be able to pick up the relationship between adaptation 'inputs' and peacebuilding outcomes.

The theory of change will drive your research questions. For example, if your project aims at improving rural livelihoods and adaptive capacities through better farming practices, there are many ways of measuring your results. Ideally, you would have a number of quantitative indicators such as the change in soil erosion, changes in crop yields, and changes in household incomes or nutrition levels that are complemented by qualitative indicators such as how the community perceives changes in their livelihoods (better or worse) or how insecure they perceive their livelihoods to be. Complementary to that, context indicators, e.g. on temperature or rainfall, can be used. In addition, you can try to identify proxy indicators. One success factor for successful adaptation measures is the inclusiveness of management structures. Thus, you could decide to measure how inclusive the management structures you are developing are and whether different groups feel well represented.<sup>2</sup>

If your theory of change is that 'if two groups are provided with new agricultural instruments that they have to share, they will begin to communicate across lines of conflict because their concerns for their own individual economic benefit will take priority over political and ideological concerns', your indicators should allow you to answer the following questions:

- Did the two groups use the shared agricultural instruments?
- Were mechanisms established between the two groups for facilitating the use of the agricultural instruments?

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<sup>2</sup> Bours, McGinn and Pringle 2014; and Coast Adapt 2017



- What was the level and type of communication that occurred between the groups?
- What economic benefit was created for the groups, and did both groups perceive that they received a fair share?
- Did political and ideological divisions change and, if so, to what extent?<sup>3</sup>

### Lessons learned from evaluating peacebuilding and adaptation projects

While resilience M&E is still a relatively new field, there are other areas of development cooperation that have built up a vast body of knowledge and best practice:

- **Capturing unintended impacts:** It is important to leave space within M&E frameworks to capture information on unintended or unforeseen impacts - both positive and negative unintended impacts. Most M&E systems only capture intended and positive impacts, a practice that inhibits understanding the full implications of an intervention on peace and resilience.

**There are natural tensions between accountability and learning which should be recognized and considered.** The two central objectives of M&E are learning and accountability. These are emphasised to different degrees in different applications, depending on the organisation(s) implementing the project and the donor(s). M&E systems have traditionally stressed accountability to identify results, reporting to funders and reporting to stakeholders. When focusing on accountability, M&E can often be seen as having an audit function especially when funding is dependent on showing particular results and value for money. However, research carried out by the World Bank has shown that a more flexible approach to learning-by-doing which includes making errors and even failing, might support long-term success more effectively than a traditional accountability approach. A learning approach requires support for programme adaptation that may include, for example, testing promising innovations which might fail and experimenting with high-risk, high-return strategies.<sup>4</sup> On a practical level, a project could distinguish between internal and external reporting formats, to allow for internal information to be more open and concretely used by project staff for learning and project adjustments, whereas external information focuses on serving accountability functions.

<sup>3</sup> Care International 2012

<sup>4</sup> Williams 2016

**Lessons learned from evaluating peacebuilding and adaptation projects (Cont.)**

- **It is easy to overcomplicate M&E systems.** Experience from several climate finance institutions (including GEF, Adaptation Fund and PPCR), has demonstrated that complicated systems are burdensome and impractical and that the outcomes do not justify the investment.
- **Relying on ‘best practice’ from other organisations is not enough.** Many organisations are replicating M&E frameworks that follow the models provided by leading institutions, including indicators from early implementers such as the GEF and the Adaptation Fund. However, these organisations are still learning themselves when it comes to monitoring and evaluation. Implementing organizations should therefore explicitly provide space for learning from their own experience and making improvements to current thinking.
- **Assess outcomes not outputs:** To really engage with underlying theories of change, M&E practice needs to shift from output to outcome orientation. This means shifting emphasis from monitoring implementation to monitoring results. An output from the example in the text above is the use of the newly provided instrument, whereas an outcome is a change in behaviour or situation of the target group, e.g. an increase in agricultural productivity or, ultimately, more positive inter-group perceptions and/or a decrease in inter-group violence.<sup>5</sup> Note that your M&E system should also warn you of unintended outcomes, e.g. new intra-group grievances if community elites collude in capturing the benefits of the new instrument.

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<sup>5</sup> World Bank 2013

### 3 Developing indicators

One way of measuring resilience is along the sustainable livelihoods framework introduced in the guidance document as part of the resilience assessment. Following this framework, resilience is understood and measured against its five dimensions. The following table provides sample indicators to measure the different dimensions of resilience and vulnerability.

There may be conflict between different livelihood outcomes, e.g. when increased livelihood security for one particular group is achieved through practices which are detrimental to the natural resources upon which the livelihoods of another group depend. There is no simple solution to these dilemmas, but an effective M&E plan will at least provide a structure for acknowledging them and assessing their implications on conflict.

Interventions should be assessed on whether they contribute to the achievement of the livelihood outcomes that people consider important. One way of ensuring this is to negotiate indicators with particular groups and to draw these groups into monitoring processes.

From a peacebuilding perspective, the social dimension is particularly important, as are all indicators that measure the relationships between different groups, communities and/or the government. From a climate change adaptation perspective, there are entry points in each dimension, for example adaptive capacities in the human dimension, better institutional mechanisms for ensuring protection of natural resources in the social dimension, better natural resource management in the natural dimension, more resilient infrastructure in the physical dimension or access to micro-insurances for drought in the financial dimension.

Indicators should draw upon quantitative and qualitative data. Perception-based indicators can be especially useful, since it is often people's perceptions about the context, and their position within it (rather than any 'objective' truth) that drive conflict. This would include questions that begin 'what do you believe/think/feel...' relating to their personal experience and perceptions of risks and resilience.

#### Examples of indicators based on the sustainable livelihoods approach

##### Human dimension

- Levels of poverty and education, e.g. literacy rates of social groups, number of years spent in school, enrolment rates of girls/boys, people living under the poverty line, unemployment rate, etc.
- Level of capacities: e.g. capacities to adapt farming techniques to climate conditions known by the population
- Access to public services, e.g. access to health services, access to agricultural extension workers, etc.
- Diversity of livelihoods, e.g. dependency on one source of income, availability of secondary sources of income

## Examples of indicators based on the sustainable livelihoods approach (Cont.)

### Social dimension

- Levels of discrimination against women: e.g. access to food/ resources/ education; local gender roles/tasks (e.g. agriculture, trade, household)
- Strength of links with family & friends: e.g. who provides assistance in case of droughts/ conflicts/ unemployment/illness
- Presence of traditions of reciprocal exchange: e.g. frequency of exchange of goods
- Disputes and conflict: e.g. number of disputes and conflicts between groups

### Natural dimension

- State of land tenure: e.g. number of people who own land and landless, equality of access to land (women vs. men, between different groups); amount of land under cultivation with formal vs. customary or non-existent land use rights
- Environmental degradation and pollution, e.g. deforestation rates, water pollution, soil erosion, etc.
- Access to common pool resources such as water: e.g. differences in access to different resources, number of disputes and conflicts over resources.

### Financial capital

- Wages: e.g. Amount of income generated through agriculture, amount of income generated through work outside agriculture? Are harvest yields sufficient to sell products? Can people buy additional food? Are wages high/regular enough to make a living?
- Access to credit: e.g. Amount of money borrowed? Availability of financial products? Is credit available if necessary? Conditions for credit?

### Physical capital

- Quality of and access to water supply: e.g. Is sufficient water available; Walking distance to next water well; incidents of water-borne diseases
- Quality of housing: e.g. Amount of square meters per household member; houses that are storm proof, etc.

Quality of and access to communications: e.g. Means of communication with relatives; Contact to relatives in distant cities/regions; Is it possible to reach/communicate with local/regional capital cities

In addition to indicators that measure the impact of the intervention itself, it is also important to include:

- **Context indicators:** These provide information on whether there are significant changes in the context in which the project is being implemented (e.g. a change of government), and whether and how conflicts and fragility issues are evolving. They can help the project team to keep the conflict analysis updated. Conflict issues are dynamic, and the ability to recognise, and take into account, changes in the context is a key element of conflict sensitivity. In addition, indicators that show how conflicts and fragility develop are also key to measuring the impact your intervention is having on conflict and fragility issues. Thus, these indicators can be context and intervention indicators at the same time.



Example: Frequency of incidents of violence between communities A and B in a designated area in a three-month period.

- **Interaction indicators:** These provide information on the ways in which the intervention may be having an effect on the conflict and how. They provide information on the direct interaction between the project and its context. Gathering such information often requires reflection on qualitative aspects of project implementation and exploring questions linked to staff and communities' perceptions of the project. This data is fundamental to enable a conflict-sensitive approach, but can be very sensitive. An organisation or project team may decide to use such information internally rather than for external reports, to enable greater openness and better quality responses to monitoring questions.

Example: Proportion of people in communities A and B who perceive the resilience project as benefiting both communities equally or one community over the other.

### Baseline

A thorough and comprehensive baseline study at the outset of the project is important in order to measure positive and negative changes. You might be able to get some of your baseline information from your assessment process (step 1). However, it is important to revisit that analysis and make sure that you have all the necessary information, in particular the base values of your indicators. It is important to clearly communicate the aims of the baseline in order to manage expectations of different stakeholders.

#### Example questions from baseline study for North Darfur

##### Conflict

- What are the main conflicts and conflict dynamics in the project area (for example conflicts between different occupational groups/communities or conflict with armed opposition groups)?
- What is the level of violence of these conflicts and how many people are affected?
- Are certain areas more unstable or have a higher conflict potential? Why?
- Who are the main conflict actors?
- What are the main risks for the climate-fragility project?
- Are other organisations monitoring conflicts and/or conflict dynamics in Northern Darfur? If yes, how and can we use this data?

### Example questions from baseline study for North Darfur (Cont.)

#### **Resilience (disaggregated by different groups within communities, in particular IDPs, women, and youth)**

- Human dimension: Basic capacities to cope with and adapt to shocks and pressures:
- How is the access of different groups to basic services, such as health, sanitation, and education?
  - What are the main livelihood strategies?
  - How well can communities sustain their livelihoods?
  - Are they able to cope with and adapt to external shocks and pressures? In particular, what kind of capacities does the community have to cope with and adapt to climate change and what kind of capacities does the community have to manage and resolve conflicts?
- Social dimension: social cohesion, relationships, inclusiveness and trust in the government
  - How is the social cohesion within communities? Are groups or individuals marginalised and excluded? Why?
  - How would you describe the relationships and level of cooperation within and between different groups and communities (include examples of how communities interact and cooperate)?
  - How well are groups and communities connected and working with organisations and agencies outside of their community? Are they receiving external support?
  - Do communities trust the government/local administration/local authorities? How would you describe the relationship between community and the government?
- Natural dimension:
  - Which natural resources does the community rely on for their livelihoods? What is the state of natural resources?
  - How well are natural resources managed? How does access to natural resources differ between groups?
  - Which natural resources are vulnerable to climate change?
- Physical dimension:
  - Does the transport, water, energy, and communication infrastructure support or hinder livelihood strategies?
  - How resilient is the infrastructure to shocks, such as extreme weather events?
- Financial dimension:
  - How are financial resources divided within the community?
  - What is the access to financial resources and services?
  - What are the main differences in terms of vulnerability and resilience between different groups?

### Example questions from baseline study for North Darfur (Cont.)

#### Entry points/peacebuilding potentials

- What have been successful and unsuccessful experiences to manage or resolve conflicts and/or reduce violence in the region?
- What other organisations are doing peacebuilding work?

What are potential entry points for peacebuilding? For example, are there areas in which cooperation between groups is working well, are there examples of improving relationships within and between communities, are there examples and experiences of improving relationships with the government?

## ABOUT THE PROJECT

UN Environment and the European Union (EU) are joining forces to assist crisis-affected countries tackle the destabilizing effects of climate change. The project is designed as a response to the recommendations of the 'A New Climate For Peace: Taking Action on Climate Fragility Risks' report (2015) commissioned by members of the Group of 7. It is one of the first initiatives to take concrete action on climate-security risks at country and community levels.

The four-year project (2017–2021) is financed by the EU's Instrument contributing to Stability and Peace (IcSP). The project is developing a suite of tools for the global, national and local level, as well as piloting practical measures building resilience to climate-fragility risks. The project is partnering with adelphi, one of the leading think tanks on climate security.

This project is made possible by the generous support of the European Union.

**For more information see: [unep.org/climatesecurity](https://unep.org/climatesecurity)**

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