



LIFT Conflict-Sensitivity Principles

2019-2023



L i v e l i h o o d s a n d F o o d S e c u r i t y F u n d



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PRINCIPLE 1:

Analyse the conflict system in your context and understand the power relations and influencing forces operating at every level

PRINCIPLE 2:

Understand the interaction between your programme and the conflict context

PRINCIPLE 3:

Establish meaningful multi-stakeholder multi-level consultation processes

PRINCIPLE 4:

Support cooperation between conflicting parties

PRINCIPLE 5:

Demonstrate values of transparency, openness and cooperation

PRINCIPLE 6:

Demonstrate values of inclusion and non-discrimination

PRINCIPLE 7:

Recognise historical grievances and respond to the needs of conflict-affected communities

PRINCIPLE 8:

Involve local and national civil society organisations in meaningful forms of participation

PRINCIPLE 9:

Adopt a pragmatic, adaptable, flexible and responsive approach

PRINCIPLE 10:

Establish feedback, accountability and grievance mechanisms

PRINCIPLE 11:

Build collective ownership around a project exit strategy

PRINCIPLE 12:

Operationalise these principles throughout the programme cycle

The conflicted and dynamic nature of the political, economic and socio-cultural context of Myanmar has a direct impact on the LIFT Programme. Implementing a food security and livelihoods programme in conflict-affected areas, where the administration and governance of local communities is contested, requires heightened attention to conflict sensitivity.

LIFT works to ensure that integrated programming approaches to livelihoods and food security also establish mechanisms and processes that work deliberately to build greater social cohesion. These mechanisms and processes acknowledge and engage with the conflict dynamics, and the contesting stakeholders in the context, and in so doing contribute to the sustainable peace and development agendas.

A Do No Harm approach seeks to better understand and analyse the conflict dynamics in the context, and to pay attention to the interaction of a development intervention with these dynamics. A Do No Harm Approach then adapts programming in a way that seeks to maximise positive outcomes by strengthening connectors and minimise the potential for unintended negative consequences that arise when dividers are inadvertently fortified.

Conflict sensitivity builds on this approach, but also emphasises a stronger analysis of the conflict systems affecting the context, and requires greater communication and coordination with all stakeholders, including political actors, to harness better synergies between humanitarian, development and peacebuilding processes. In situations of fragility and volatility the first aim should always be to Do No Harm. But the aspiration should be to also improve security and reduce the fragility of the situation at multiple levels.

The following set of principles establish the foundation for an integrated approach to conflict sensitivity that will inform and guide LIFT (LIFT's Fund Board, Fund Management Office and all of LIFT's Implementing Partners) at all stages of the programme cycle.

Principle 1:

Analyse the conflict system in your context and understand the power relations and influencing forces operating at every level

Conflict analysis will be carried out at both a strategic and operational level.

At the strategic level the Fund Board and the LIFT FMO will regularly monitor and update an analysis of the national conflict context, and use this to inform decisions about the selection of partners, target areas and calls for proposals. Analysis will also inform Risk Management; Monitoring, Evaluation, Accountability and Learning (MEAL); communications strategies and consultation and cooperation processes.

At the operational level, conflict analysis carried out by LIFT Implementing Partners will include:

- An inclusive mapping of all stakeholders in the operational context
- Including perspectives on the needs and interests of each stakeholder
- A thorough understanding of the local political and socio-economic drivers

- The dynamics between and within conflicting groups
- The power relations between stakeholders
- The local drivers, dividers and connectors, that will escalate tensions or build social cohesion and peace

The Revised LIFT Conflict Strategy and the Conflict Sensitivity in UNOPS Guidelines¹ outline several practical conflict analysis tools relevant to this Principle. A good enough conflict analysis should include at least a Power, Stakeholder and Relationship Mapping, a Structural and Proximate factor analysis and an analysis of the Peace and Conflict Drivers in a context.

Principle 2:

Understand the interaction between your programme and the conflict context

LIFT and the IPs will identify and consider the potential impact and consequences of LIFT supported interventions on the conflict dynamic. The interaction between LIFT interventions and the conflict dynamics in the context will be appraised regularly to ensure no harm is being done, and to identify opportunities for building social cohesion and contributing positively to local, sub-national and national peace efforts.

In the conflict-affected areas of Myanmar many communities are governed and administered by more than one authority. In several areas parallel systems of governance, with varying degrees of formality, collect revenues and administer services. Without a unitary system of governance for these territories, or clear demarcations to separate them, consultation processes, and engagement with authorities is complicated. Township level relations amongst rival armed actors and between governing authorities will be properly analysed and understood, for each township in the LIFT programme operational areas.

Access to land and development resources affects the social and economic dynamics between people in a context. Development practice changes the access of local actors and wider stakeholders to livelihood opportunities. This impact on livelihoods has a direct effect on power relations, and can disrupt the balance of power in a fragile context. Because land and water are so closely linked to issues of identity emotions can run high when the power balance changes. The political effect of these power shifts is further magnified because of the emotional aspects that identity evokes.

Dialogue, clear transparent communication and a strong focus on the relations between stakeholders, and within communities, will be used effectively to counter the potential for causing harm, and for managing unintended negative consequences.

¹ Conflict Sensitivity in UNOPS Guidelines Version 1.0, Infrastructure and Project Management Group

Principle 3:**Establish meaningful multi-stakeholder multi-level consultation processes**

LIFT will establish meaningful consultation processes with all key stakeholders in LIFT programming areas, including representatives of government, the private sector, civil society organisations, other humanitarian aid, development and peacebuilding service providers, and ethnic armed organisations.

These consultation processes will seek to achieve three key objectives:

- Inform stakeholders about the LIFT strategy and its intentions
- Seek support and engagement with the implementation of the strategy
- Encourage the ongoing involvement of stakeholders in local level consultation processes

Where necessary LIFT will meet separately with organisations to build trust and establish confidence in the LIFT approach.

Meaningful consultation includes fostering participation in decision-making processes as well as promoting a sense of ownership. More inclusive, informal, and empowering channels of communication are required, especially where there are power imbalances between stakeholders.

Initial consultation processes will form the basis for the establishment of a Reference Group (RG) including Union and State level stakeholders.

An IP Coordinating Committee and a minimum set of requirements for IPs regarding regular consultation processes at Township and Village Tract levels will add additional elements to the inclusive consultative approach.

Principle 4:**Support cooperation between conflicting parties**

LIFT will establish mechanisms that enable long-term, inclusive cooperation among different communities and conflicting parties, and that assist in building social cohesion, increasing stability and sustaining peacebuilding efforts.

At township and village levels these mechanisms can assist in local dispute resolution processes. Mechanisms should build on existing local forms of organisation including local peace and development committees. Where an opportunity arises, it is important to encourage different groups to work together towards common activities and goals for local area development. These will include developing common parameters on vulnerability, identifying target groups, coordinating capacity building initiatives and identifying areas for joint work that create synergies between areas of work in the same location and across different areas of operation.

The programme will facilitate co-operation on interventions between government and non-government entities where feasible. LIFT will also work with civil society organisations, faith-based and community-based organisations that have a significant role to play, and support bridge-building processes that facilitate connectivity and relationship building between conflicting parties.

LIFT initiatives will aim to strengthen and improve development structures of the local government administration as well as of non-state armed groups, and will minimise demands on the administrative and human resource capacities of existing systems and institutions.

A long-term goal of inclusion among the different communities and conflict parties needs to be maintained as part of the process of building local social cohesion. Development and humanitarian aid will aim to become regarded as equitable and inclusive.

Principle 5:

Demonstrate values of transparency, openness and cooperation

The programme will operate in a way that builds cooperation among development actors. This will help minimise duplication in each other's work and build synergies and trust.

At all stages of intervention, it is important to ensure the objectives, activities, implementing partners, and availability of LIFT programmes and services are transparent. Transparency and openness can counter destructive rumours about inequitable assistance and mitigate against manipulation that deliberately creates animosity between conflicting parties.

LIFT will integrate conflict sensitivity into its communications strategy, and incorporate learning from the analysis and monitoring of the programme into the content and approach that communicates information in an appropriately conflict sensitive, open, transparent and responsive manner.

As the relationship between vulnerability, nutrition, resilience, protection, food security and indebtedness is not linear, a better understanding of the causes of vulnerability should inform an integrated programme, across implementing partners, that responds to the multiple pathways which lead to vulnerability, and in so doing also reduce the complex vulnerability risk factors. LIFT IPs will be encouraged and supported to operate within LIFT's comprehensive integrated programme framework.

Principle 6:

Demonstrate values of inclusion and non-discrimination

Intervention programmes should adhere to the values of inclusion and non-discrimination, and ensure that services are provided equally to all population groups, regardless of ethnicity, language, religion, gender and age.

These values should inform target communities, beneficiary selection and staff recruitment. In ethnically-divided contexts it is vital to recruit staff from all population groups. Programme decision making need to be sensitive to local ethnic, linguistic, faith and cultural diversity and the dynamics between different groups. The inclusion of historically excluded and marginalised groups will assist in building stability and ensuring sustainability, and create space for effective collaboration between stakeholders.

Principle 7:

Recognise historical grievances and respond to the needs of conflict-affected communities

The LIFT programme must be based on the need for stable livelihoods, sustainable communities and recognition of the fundamental rights of all people. Vulnerable groups who may have previously been denied access to resources, forced to leave their homes, or dispossessed of their land, will intentionally be included in the programme.

It is important to recognise that in many conflict-affected areas communal aspirations go beyond economic development and improved livelihoods and food security. Efforts to establish service delivery systems by non-state actors are often linked to political and social aspirations aimed at establishing forms of federalism and advancing self-determination. In other areas, these efforts are part of the implementation of the nationwide Ceasefire Agreement. LIFT programmes will understand this dynamic and ensure IPs adopt an appropriately conflict sensitive approach.

LIFT will increase efforts to work in conflict-affected areas and areas that have historically been difficult to access. LIFT will work inclusively with all stakeholders to strengthen legitimate forms of local authority and include vulnerable groups in identifying, prioritising and achieving programme outcomes and outputs.

Principle 8:

Involve local and national civil society organisations in meaningful forms of participation

Civil society organisations in Myanmar, including farmers' associations, land groupings and youth and women's movements, as well as faith-based and community based organisations (CBOs), play a key role in maintaining the social fabric of society. LIFT's IPs will be encouraged to identify, include and support these local forms of organisation.

Local CSO networks connect local communities to national level policy processes and play an essential role in amplifying the voices of vulnerable groups and influencing and engaging policy makers and decision making bodies. At local level CSOs often have established working relationships with conflict actors and have access to areas outside of government control. CBOs often have a nuanced understanding of the community (including culture and language) that

enriches analysis processes and improves decision making about cooperation and consultation processes.

Principle 9:

Adopt a pragmatic, adaptable, flexible and responsive approach

The situation in conflict-affected areas is often fluid and subject to change. Different regions may need different intervention approaches. A localised understanding of the conflict transformation challenges involved is necessary. Standard and rigid approaches in conflict zones are risky. The programme and its projects therefore need to be flexible and provide for pragmatic approaches that adapt the programme in response to changes in the contextual dynamics.

The volatile and dynamic nature of conflict-affected areas may undergo rapid changes that will require urgent meetings with conflict actors, immediate discussions with community members, the management of unexpected security concerns, and the ability to pause implementation and review the approach, including the design of complementary responsive programming interventions.

Flexibility is also important to achieve results and sustainability. Design and implementation approaches need to be adaptable and based on experience and real time learning. This can be supported by a people-centred and process oriented MEAL system that provides for reflection on lessons learned, best practice approaches, and feedback from partners and beneficiaries, that inform future programme design and planning.

Principle 10:

Establish feedback, accountability and grievance mechanisms

LIFT will establish partner and beneficiary feedback, grievance and accountability mechanisms that reflect the values of openness, transparency, inclusiveness, non-discrimination.

Feedback will be actively sought on the extent to which LIFT has demonstrated transparency, enabled the informed consent of beneficiary communities, created space for concerns and complaints to be raised, and ensured that LIFT staff and IPs have the required skills and competencies to effectively deliver.

The principle of accountability is central to conflict sensitivity and in line with the Paris Declaration and the Accra Agenda for Action, two key processes that guide the LIFT approach.

The Revised LIFT Accountability Framework will contain further details of a clear mechanism for responding to complaints, concerns and suggestions. Partners are expected to set up similar mechanisms at sub-state and township level, adapted to local conditions.

Principle 11:**Build collective ownership around a project exit strategy**

Tension can arise at the end of a programme, particularly if the stakeholders and community do not understand the reasons why the programme is ending or an organisation is leaving. It is important to have a well-considered and agreed exit strategy well in advance of a programme or project ending.

A well-designed exit strategy will make use of the coordination and consultation processes and mechanisms established as part of a conflict sensitive approach. Resource allocation decisions will carefully consider the effect resources have on the existing balance of power in the context.

The ownership arrangements for project assets and infrastructure should be agreed at state, township and village level, in discussions between all stakeholders. These arrangements should seek to strengthen existing forms of cooperation in a manner that builds local ownership, encourages consensus between stakeholders and establishes forms of collective interest around a shared development agenda.

Principle 12:**Operationalise these principles throughout the programme cycle**

LIFT will integrate conflict sensitivity across the programme through the application of these principles and the implementation of the LIFT conflict strategy. LIFT will also continue to support partners in integrating conflict sensitivity principles into their interventions and in conducting conflict analysis at project level and provide tailor-made and ongoing support on conflict sensitivity to enable IPs to implement interventions in a way that is responsive to the context specific conditions in which they take place.

The volatile and unpredictable nature of the context makes significant changes in the short term more likely, and therefore difficult to plan for. The politicised nature of the context also mean that risks have the potential to impact more significantly on LIFT itself, and on the wider context. LIFT will establish an effective Risk Assessment mechanisms and an approach to people-centred Monitoring Evaluation and Learning.

Integrating conflict sensitivity indicators into Risk Assessment and ongoing Monitoring and Learning by LIFT and the IPs will enable a deeper awareness of the impact the programme is having on conflict, and heightened sensitivity to the need to avoid unintended negative consequences.