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donors at the triple nexus: lessons from the United Kingdom

report

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Executive summary

To address the impact of crisis on poverty, risk and vulnerability and ensure that 'no one is left behind', building synergies between short-term humanitarian assistance and longer-term development and peacebuilding approaches is vital. Momentum behind this agenda has been renewed following the agreement of the OECD Development Assistance Committee (DAC) recommendation on the 'triple' humanitarian–development–peace (HDP) nexus in February 2019, which expands the earlier 'dual' humanitarian–development nexus to incorporate peace. Most donors are in the initial stages of transforming nexus-related policy into practice, and there is a need to generate learning on this agenda. Research presented here focuses on UK experiences on the triple nexus with the aim of drawing lessons for wider application.

The UK is regarded as a leader on this agenda, driving global policy discussions on the triple nexus and implementing innovative context-specific programming at the country level. At the headquarters level, the UK Department for International Development (DFID) is working strategically to identify ways to transform global commitments of relevance to the nexus into practice – through internal policy, practical approaches and staffing structures. While this is an iterative learning process, as it is for all donors, and there are areas for improvement, the scope and ambition for progress on this agenda is clear.

Policy and strategy

Key finding: While the policy framework lays important foundations for approaching the nexus, expanding the focus beyond humanitarian assistance to cover broader crisis and risk will be critical, as will developing operational guidance to transform policy into strategy and to clarify concepts and terms.

The 2015 Aid Strategy signified a shift towards a greater focus on conflict and stability and established an overarching strategy for action in fragile states as the main frame for the UK's engagement on the triple nexus. Complementarity between UK humanitarian and development policy priorities through a common focus on resilience is clear, as are efforts to integrate a peace lens into development programming as a core aspect of the development–peace dual nexus. However, progress on the humanitarian–peace dual nexus poses a greater challenge.

For the UK and other donors alike, this is partly because the addition of peace to the triple nexus is new and in early development but more fundamentally reflects tensions between political agendas around security and stabilisation and needs-based principled humanitarian aid. There is a demand for more thought within DFID and donors collectively about the types of peacebuilding, security and stability activities that are relevant and appropriate to the nexus, and those that are not, and about the limitations of the nexus concerning specific types of humanitarian activities and contexts.

The UK's leadership on the nexus is the result of years of reflection and learning, with global leadership demonstrated on approaches to risk, resilience and preparedness. More recently, recognising the broader focus of the nexus beyond resilience, DFID has developed a strategic approach to protracted crises. However, this is not captured in UK official policy, highlighting the need to stretch the current policy framework beyond humanitarian response covering crisis and risk as a necessary foundation for engaging on the nexus. Explicit commitments on the nexus are primarily made in humanitarian policies, or those developed by the Conflict, Humanitarian and Security department (CHASE) within DFID. This highlights the importance of covering the nexus in broader aid and sector strategies in order to expand ownership on this agenda beyond humanitarian and conflict teams and programmes.

While the UK has comprehensive tools, guidance notes and standards on programming, these do not comprehensively cover crisis, risk, resilience and peace; there is a need for guidance on transforming policy into operational strategy at country and regional levels. Operational guidance on the nexus – potentially as a standalone tool within the Smart Rules – will be vital in setting out common understanding of key concepts and definitions, capturing learning and providing advice on programming and financing approaches, results, indicators and staffing. Striking a balance between providing the central guidance necessary to systematise approaches while at the same time avoiding being too prescriptive will be key. Forcing a blueprint model could undermine the benefits the decentralised model offers in terms of enabling context-specific and flexible approaches.

Programme cycle

Key finding: Systematically embedding the nexus into programme design and quality assurance processes will be crucial.

Assessment Joined-up assessments which capture different aspects of the nexus are undertaken at country/regional levels through the Country Development Diagnostic (CDD) tool as a springboard for joint planning and programming.

Planning While guidance such as the Smart Rules is in place to support personnel in programme design, the nexus of risk, resilience and peace is not systematically embedded within the planning process. It will be crucial that planning and quality assurance demonstrate how the nexus has been considered, capturing this in operational guidance on the nexus, quality assurance checklists and the Business Case template.

Key finding: A strong portfolio of context-responsive programming on the nexus has emerged. Lessons, best practice and programming models now need to be captured and shared in order to systematise approaches.

Programming on the nexus is ahead of policy. DFID has developed a strong portfolio of programming on the nexus covering crisis, risk, resilience and peace. This falls into two distinct (though equally important) categories. First, 'sequential' programming takes a linear approach to development, humanitarian and peacebuilding programming in pre-, active- and post-crisis phases, and is used primarily in disaster contexts. Second,

'simultaneous' programming delivers all aspects of the nexus in the same place at the same time (the 'dual objective' in DFID). Simultaneous programming is at an earlier phase of conception and its effective delivery will require further thought and trial. Through risk- and shock-responsive programming, DFID demonstrates greater expertise in flexing when countries move into a crisis than when transitioning into recovery once a crisis subsides. This reflects the donor-wide challenge of building synergies with the peace component of the nexus in post-crisis contexts, but also the need to strengthen programming tools for exiting crisis into recovery and peacebuilding.

DFID's programming approaches documented in this report have developed organically in response to contextual opportunities and needs, and the individual actions of staff members, rather than following an official model or being driven from top-level policy. Developing a menu of programming options on the nexus would help to systematise the nexus in the programme design phase. This could be done by better capturing and sharing lessons from existing approaches and developing more nuanced mechanisms for understanding needs and the interaction of crisis and vulnerability drivers across the nexus, and including this in operational guidance on the nexus,

Key finding: While strong contingency financing mechanisms are in place, it will be important to expand these beyond humanitarian to development and peacebuilding programmes.

Financing DFID's decentralised model and fungible funding types are key strengths in enabling scale changes of humanitarian, development and peacebuilding assistance in response to crisis. The Internal Risk Facility (IRF) and Crisis Reserve are important tools enabling country offices to flex in response to contextual changes. However, mechanisms tend to support the scale-up of crisis preparedness and programming rather than development and peacebuilding programmes. To strengthen the uptake of risk and flexible financing in longer-term livelihood and peace programmes, there is a pressing need for institutional guidance on use of the IRF as part of a broader tool on flexible finance. While the Crisis Reserve plays a key role in responding to unforeseen crisis, there is scope to strengthen preventive and anticipatory financing, potentially as either a sub-window within the Crisis Reserve or a separate mechanism.

A separate fund or facility focusing on one 'leg' of the nexus can clearly incentivise risk-informed and targeted programming, while also risking the siloing of nexus approaches without systematic building of complementarity. There are many opportunities for the Conflict, Stability and Security Fund (CSSF) and DFID to build upon existing efforts to further systematise a complementary approach. Where both CSSF and DFID are present in a country, there is scope to pursue joined-up planning and programming more actively both in London and in country. The CSSF could utilise and develop its potential for longer-term programming and DFID could reinvigorate its role in the design and delivery of longer-term strategies (including those that transition from the CSSF to DFID) through its participation in the cross-government boards that steer CSSF activities. Regular dialogue and engagement between DFID's programme SROs and CSSF delivery teams, both in London and in country, would help to enable this.

Key finding: A central mechanism for organisational learning and information-sharing is needed.

Learning, monitoring and evaluation Learning from DFID's experience on the nexus is not systematically shared across the organisation, although this is crucial when tackling a new policy agenda such as the triple nexus, which requires experimentation and improvements over time. In the absence of formal learning mechanisms, central policy teams are filling the gap by establishing communities of practice, developing guidance for technical support to country offices on nexus-related issues, and capturing and sharing learning, although this is not systematic. Information on country/regional programme objectives, strategies and indicators is not centrally accessible in a user-friendly format. Establishing a central mechanism for organisational learning and information-sharing would enable the building of complementarity between programmes and would allow teams to identify where connections can be made.

Key finding: Identifying holistic indicators on risk, resilience and peace, and establishing beneficiary feedback mechanisms in programme design, will be vital.

To strengthen accountability on the nexus, it is also vital that qualitative and quantitative holistic indicators on risk, resilience and peace are incorporated in programme design and that beneficiary feedback mechanisms are established to capture the perspectives of affected populations and measure progress against agreed indicators. Supporting teams with a menu of potential outcome-level indicators for measuring progress in these areas, and capturing this in the suggested operational guidance on the nexus, will be important, as will providing guidance on how to connect outcome-level indicators with beneficiary feedback mechanisms. Flexible and adaptive programming is vital to the nexus by enabling iterative learning and flex in response to changing context and needs. The sustained efforts of the Better Delivery Department to test more flexible approaches to results management will be crucial.

Key finding: Working strategically with partners based on their comparative advantage will require co-developing expectations and embedding these into partner performance indicators and reviews.

Partnerships can play a strategic role in the UK's operationalisation of the nexus. DFID could jointly agree nexus-related expectations with NGO and multilateral partners and embed these into partnership agreements. Partners should be selected for having comparative advantage, including local knowledge to inform nexus approaches, rather than for previous connections or being lower risk. While multilateral partners are committed to the nexus through international commitments, this would encourage greater progress. It will also be important to integrate nexus-related capacities of partners into future reviews, such as the Multilateral Aid Review. Moving towards harmonised NGO reporting requirements and clearly communicating results-related expectations with NGO partners in escalating crisis would enable them to better adapt and flex. A joined-up approach between country and central teams to engaging with multilateral and NGO partners will also be vital. Testing approaches and capturing learning for working effectively with national and local authorities is crucial from a nexus perspective, given the importance of linking short-term assistance with national development.

Organisational structures, systems and leadership

Key finding: Strengthening staff expertise on risk, resilience and peace will be vital – through trainings and internal nexus-related networks mandated from leadership. Systematising emerging staffing models, such as the use of country-level multi-disciplinary teams will be important, as will increasing the number of personnel with relevant expertise to provide technical support.

DFID's decentralised structure provides a strong foundation for working practically on the nexus. To realise this potential in full, it will be crucial to: build coherence between the centre and country offices on peace and resilience; develop strategies and structures for stronger regional engagement; and expand and formalise internal networks for providing country offices with technical support on all aspects of the nexus and in protracted crises with a mandate from leadership.

DFID is increasingly using multi-disciplinary teams in crisis contexts, to ensure the right mix of expertise in the right place, although this is not yet standard practice. It is vital that the right blend of expertise is assembled from the outset, not only in active crisis contexts but also in pre- and post-crisis contexts. Guidance on the formation of effective multi-disciplinary teams will be important, as will training for personnel working on different aspects of the nexus on risk, resilience and peace while recognising the continued need for technical expertise and support from the centre. Efforts to cross-pollinate expertise areas in staffing structures are supporting greater collaboration, coherence and complementarity, and could be better standardised. It will also be necessary to increase the number of headquarters- and country-level staff members with expertise in these areas to provide support in integrating a nexus lens across programmes. Expanding the rule that Advisers can use a proportion of their time on other projects could be rolled out more strategically to cover all staff members, as well as joint and cross-cadre working.

Key finding: Strong leadership is crucial for driving staff incentives on the nexus and a cultural shift which expands the ownership of this agenda to development colleagues.

While systems matter, so do the attitudes and behaviours of staff members. Incentivising personnel to work flexibly, collaboratively and coherently, and to identify and pursue opportunities for complementarity in crisis contexts requires the establishment of a reward system embedded in performance management and job descriptions. Most importantly, it also requires an official steer from leadership and senior management.

1. Introduction

Working across the 'triple nexus' (humanitarian, development and peace, see Box 1) to build synergies between short-term humanitarian assistance and longer-term development and peacebuilding approaches is crucial for addressing the immediate and longer-term livelihood needs of vulnerable and crisis-affected people. This is especially relevant in protracted crises where humanitarian, development and peace agendas come together, and is a precondition for aid effectiveness.

This argument has long been understood – emerging from older concepts such as Linking Relief, Rehabilitation and Development and transition financing – and reflected in the Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) commitments to 'leave no one behind'. The nexus has since been the subject of renewed policy focus with the New Way of Working and the establishment of the UN Joint Steering Committee to test approaches for achieving 'collective outcomes'¹ across the humanitarian and development sectors. This 'dual nexus' emerged from the World Humanitarian Summit (2016) as a core aspect of the Agenda for Humanity. Building on this, the OECD Development Assistance Committee (DAC) recommendation on the Humanitarian–Development–Peace (HDP) Nexus agreed in February 2019 provides a set of working principles for DAC donors on the nexus, cementing donor commitments on this agenda and adding the peace component to form a more transformational triple nexus. The report of the UN Secretary-General in May 2019 on peacebuilding and sustaining peace also helped make the case for the inclusion of peace within the triple nexus, and the integration of a peace lens into development work.² The DAC defines the triple nexus as "interlinkages between humanitarian, development and peace actions" with the aim of "strengthening collaboration, coherence and complementarity".³

Achieving collaboration, coherence and complementarity can mean different things to different actors. We understand the three ambitions to sit on a spectrum from complementarity to coherence, with complementarity being the minimum requirement for approaching the nexus. At the opposite end of the spectrum, the nexus can fundamentally challenge existing divisions between humanitarian, development and peace systems, encouraging stronger coherence and working towards shared outcomes. We also understand that there are three dual nexuses within the 'triple nexus': the well-established humanitarian–development nexus; the humanitarian–peace nexus, which is less developed; and the development–peace nexus, which is an emerging priority for the UK in line with the 2015 Aid Strategy.

Financing is a central aspect of the nexus approach, not just in terms of funding responses but also for incentivising joined-up working across all aspects of the programming cycle. Donors clearly play a vital role in testing and developing innovative approaches to operationalise and finance the nexus, yet most donors are in the initial

stages of implementing nexus policy in terms of how they work, both internally and externally.

All donors face similar questions at strategic, principled and practical levels – situated in the political context of their aid agenda. Strategically, what scale of ambition to aim for in the spectrum from complementarity to coherence; to what extent is the focus on system transformation as well as internal change? In terms of principles, how to maintain neutral and impartial humanitarian action while pursuing peace and development priorities? And practically how to balance top-down approaches with contextually-tailored initiatives and how to progress new approaches in crises, but also maintain momentum of development efforts?; And ultimately, they all face the same central questions: what’s possible within their structures and resources, and what works for affected people?

This report is part of a series of studies which aims to document and share current donor practice at the nexus, with a view to informing practical global learning and dialogue. Drawing on the findings of two reports which take a detailed look at the experiences of the UK and Sweden, the series draws out key lessons, practical examples and questions of wider relevance to donors.

This report provides an overview of key learning drawn from the experiences of the UK as a major donor demonstrating leadership on the nexus. At the latest count, the UK was the third-largest government donor of ODA in 2017 and the third-largest DAC donor of humanitarian assistance in 2018.⁴ This report is structured around three key pillars: (1) how policy and strategy have created conditions for delivering on the nexus; (2) how the approach taken at different stages of the programming cycle has enabled or hindered the nexus in practice; and (3) how operational structures and systems lay the foundations for risk, resilience and peace. Key lessons are highlighted throughout the report.

Our research has primarily focused on the efforts of the UK Department for International Development (DFID) on the ‘triple nexus’ but also covers DFID’s involvement in cross-government processes and initiatives relevant to the nexus, especially the peace aspect and the Conflict, Stability and Security Fund (CSSF). Given the increased role of non-DFID government departments in spending ODA (as a result of the 2015 Aid Strategy), we recognise the importance of understanding cross-government efforts on this agenda. The research has explicitly focused on the UK’s approach to the nexus within the remit of ODA spend, while recognising that non-ODA resource flows also play a key role.

Box 1: A note on terminology

This report uses ‘nexus’ as a shorthand term to refer to the connections between humanitarian, development and peacebuilding approaches. It aligns with the definition in the OECD DAC recommendation:

Nexus approach refers to the aim of strengthening collaboration, coherence and complementarity. The approach seeks to capitalise on the comparative advantages of each pillar – to the extent of their relevance in the specific context – in order to

reduce overall vulnerability and the number of unmet needs, strengthen risk management capacities and address root causes of conflict.

In referring to resilience, we align with the OECD DAC definition:

The ability of households, communities, and nations to absorb and recover from shocks, while positively adapting and transforming their structures and means for living in the face of long-term stresses, change and uncertainty. Resilience is about addressing the root causes of crises while strengthening the capacities and resources of a system in order to cope with risks, stresses and shocks.

We are clear that working ‘at the nexus’ to make these connections is not an end in itself but a means of addressing and reducing people’s unmet needs, risks and vulnerabilities, increasing their resilience, addressing the root causes of conflict and building peace. However, as noted in recent research on financing the nexus at the country level, the scope and ambitions of the nexus are not yet clear.⁵ Whether the ambitions of the nexus are to work on technical issues within humanitarian and development programming of limited scale and impact, or to address more fundamental challenges in terms of engaging with the political economy, requires further clarification.

2. UK policy and strategic planning

2.1 Overarching global policy framework

Lessons: The UK 2015 Aid Strategy shifted the agenda towards a focus on conflict and stability and established a strategic framework for action in fragile states. While this promotes complementarity between humanitarian and development policy priorities and the integration of a peace lens into development programming, building coherence with peace aspects of the triple nexus poses a greater challenge, and complementarity should be demonstrated as a minimum. Given the tensions between political agendas on stability and security and needs-based principled humanitarian assistance, it would be helpful for donors to collectively discuss and identify security and stability activities which are, or are not, relevant and appropriate to the nexus. Equally, it would be useful to define the limits of the nexus concerning the scope of humanitarian assistance to go beyond addressing severe needs in the context of finite resources.

The UK Aid Strategy released by the Treasury and DFID in 2015⁶ sets out overarching though largely separate policy priorities for different aspects of the nexus: tackling extreme poverty, humanitarian assistance, and peace and security. The Building Stability Framework (2016)⁷ expands upon the objective to “strengthen peace, security and governance” articulated in the 2015 Aid Strategy and establishes a framework for addressing the drivers of conflict and instability and making progress towards the development–peace dual nexus. The 2017 Humanitarian Reform Policy⁸ expands upon the objective, “strengthening resilience and responding to crisis” and sets out priorities for humanitarian reform.

The 2015 Aid Strategy signifies a shift towards a greater focus on conflict and stability, addressing the root causes of conflict as a prerequisite for sustainable development and positioning ODA as a tool to respond to global challenges and the UK’s national interests, extending the responsibility for managing ODA to other government departments. This is reflected by the commitment made in the strategy to spend 50% of ODA in fragile states. Therefore, the UK’s focus on the nexus, as one interviewee described it, is not the primary objective of the UK aid agenda but a by-product of its strategic focus on engagement in fragile contexts. The UK allocated 43% of ODA to fragile states in 2017.⁹ Figure 1 shows an increase in the proportion of UK ODA allocated to conflict, peace and security-related activities in all countries from 2.5% in 2013 to 5.1% in 2017.

Humanitarian and development policy priorities share a focus on resilience, as articulated in both the 2015 Aid Strategy and the 2017 Humanitarian Reform Policy and as a core

focus of the humanitarian–development dual nexus. However, there are greater challenges in building synergies with the ‘peace’ aspect of the nexus, especially concerning the humanitarian–peace dual nexus. This is partly because commitments on the ‘triple nexus’ are very new and less developed but also reflects tensions between political agendas around security and stabilisation and needs-based principled humanitarian aid concerning the humanitarian–peace dual nexus. These challenges are not unique to the UK, however. There is a demand for more thought collectively among donors about the types of peacebuilding or security activities that are relevant and appropriate to the nexus, and those that are not, and about the limitations of the nexus regarding the scope for humanitarian activities given the potential risk of alignment and the limitations faced in expanding focus beyond addressing severe needs in the context of finite resources.

2.2 Policy focus and progress on the nexus

Lessons: The UK has often used its established focus on risk, resilience and preparedness as a springboard for engagement on the triple nexus. More recently, recognising that engagement on the nexus goes beyond resilience, the UK has shifted towards a broader focus on protracted crises. However, this shift is not captured in official policy, highlighting the importance of stretching the current policy framework to go beyond humanitarian reform and cover crisis and risk as a necessary foundation for engaging on the nexus. Where commitments to deliver on the nexus are made primarily in humanitarian policies, explicit recognition of the nexus in broader aid and sector strategies is key to expanding ownership of this agenda.

The UK has historically been advanced in recognising the importance of the nexus and has developed innovative approaches to building synergies between humanitarian and longer-term development programming through an emerging focus on protracted crises and addressing their underlying causes and longer-term impacts. The UK was an early champion of risk, resilience and preparedness approaches, and cash transfers, which it has used as a springboard for engagement on the broader nexus.

Resilience has been an overt objective of UK aid since 2011. The 2011 UK Government Response to the Humanitarian Emergency Response Review presented disaster resilience as “a new and vital component [of our] humanitarian and development work”. Building on this, the UK humanitarian policy, *Saving lives, preventing suffering and building resilience* (2011),¹⁰ put resilience at the centre of its approach to addressing disasters, including a commitment to embed resilience-building in all DFID country programmes by 2015, integrate resilience into work on climate change and conflict prevention and improve the coherence of development and humanitarian work. The 2015 UK Aid Strategy has strengthening resilience as one of four strategic objectives for UK aid, and DFID’s 2017 Humanitarian Reform Policy stresses emergency preparedness and building resilience, to “bring together humanitarian and development funding to support education, jobs, health and social protection given the protracted nature of crisis and harness humanitarian and development responses for a bespoke response to crisis”.¹¹

The 2018 review of the Independent Commission for Aid Impact (ICAI) on DFID's approach to building resilience to natural disasters¹² concludes that "DFID has taken a well-considered approach to mainstreaming resilience to natural disasters and has helped to promote the inclusion of resilience into the global development agenda". However, it is unclear how DFID now tracks resilience and resilience spend across programmes, countries and portfolios. The 2016 report by the National Audit Office (NAO) identified DFID as driving focus among international partners on resilience, and having made steps to embed resilience at country level.¹³ DFID's role in establishing the new Centre for Disaster Protection – anticipated to drive new thinking in early and innovative financing – illustrates its commitment to this agenda.

However, resilience is only one aspect of the nexus, which covers a broader set of activities including preparedness, early action, risks, peacebuilding, recovery and market access. There is some confusion, even among DFID staff members, about the differences between resilience/preparedness and the nexus, highlighting the need for greater clarity on these key terms, and specifically on where resilience sits within the broader nexus (see Section 3.2 and the definition of resilience in Section 1.1, Box 1). There is no common understanding of these terms between donors and agencies and so co-developing this clarity would be beneficial.

The UK's engagement with the nexus has recently shifted to focus on protracted crises. An internal Protracted Crises Discussion Paper was written in 2017¹⁴ to operationalise the Humanitarian Reform Policy to protracted crises. It recognises that, in protracted crises such as refugee situations, it is vital to address the drivers of crisis and longer-term livelihood needs from the outset, shifting the focus to "development where possible and humanitarian only where necessary". As co-chair of the OECD's International Network on Conflict and Fragility, the UK contributed in 2018 to developing the DAC recommendation on the HDP nexus, as well as driving policy changes internally to build collaboration, coherence and complementarity.

Figure 2 shows that the proportion of UK ODA as humanitarian assistance channelled to fragile states doubled in the decade to 2017 (from 16% in 2008 to 31.9% in 2017). This trend is reflected at the country level in Nigeria, Somalia and Yemen, where total volumes of humanitarian assistance increased steadily during the first five years of crisis response (Appendix 6). Trends differ slightly in Iraq and Syria, where volumes and proportions of ODA as humanitarian assistance fell between 2016 and 2017. For Nigeria, Iraq, Syria and Somalia, volumes of humanitarian assistance continued to be greater than developmental ODA (ODA minus humanitarian assistance) in 2017, although this is not the case in Nigeria where developmental ODA is significantly higher than humanitarian assistance. This may reflect the regional nature of the crisis in Nigeria, which has not affected developmental assistance elsewhere in the country.

While the internal Protracted Crises Discussion Paper has a wider focus on risk and crisis beyond humanitarian response, it is not an official policy with buy-in across government. The Humanitarian Reform Policy focuses more narrowly on humanitarian response mechanisms: while it makes some links to longer-term development, it does not cover broader crisis issues such as climate change and global health. Therefore, the current UK

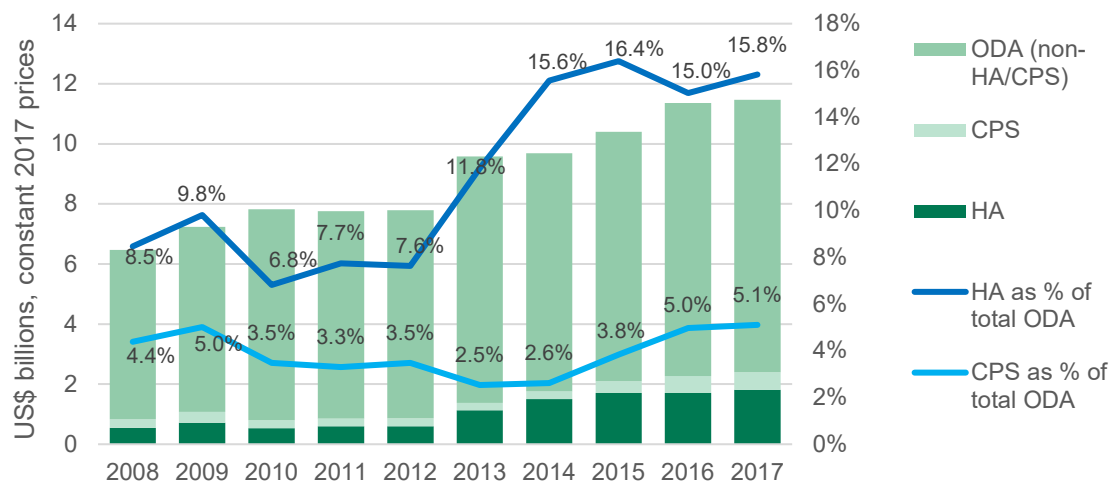
policy framework does not holistically articulate broader priorities on crisis, resilience and future risk to offer the necessary foundations for engaging on the nexus.

Explicit references to building synergies between HDP responses are made primarily in humanitarian policies and those developed by the Conflict, Humanitarian and Security (CHASE) department within DFID. This reflects the view, within DFID and internationally, that humanitarian personnel are primarily responsible for developing the nexus. It is important that objectives on collaboration, coherence and complementarity are built into broader aid strategies, including those focusing on poverty reduction, development and peace. To achieve this, political buy-in and a mandate from top leadership on the nexus will be vital. While there are examples of good practice in integrating a resilience/crisis lens into development guidance (e.g. the Education in Emergencies guidance and Economic Development Strategy), it is important to mainstream this approach across all sector strategies and guidance.

Suggestions for the UK government as a donor

- The UK government could develop a holistic policy, going beyond narrow humanitarian response to encompass crisis, resilience and future risk.
- The UK government could embed commitments to deliver on the nexus (resilience, preparedness, risk, peacebuilding and recovery) into broader aid and sector strategies and guidance. Political buy-in and leadership on this agenda will be critical.
- The UK government could work collectively with other donors to identify the specific types of peacebuilding, stability and security activities which are relevant and appropriate to the nexus, and those that are not, as well as the types of humanitarian assistance in particular crisis contexts which should be ringfenced from work on the nexus to safeguard needs-based principled humanitarian assistance.

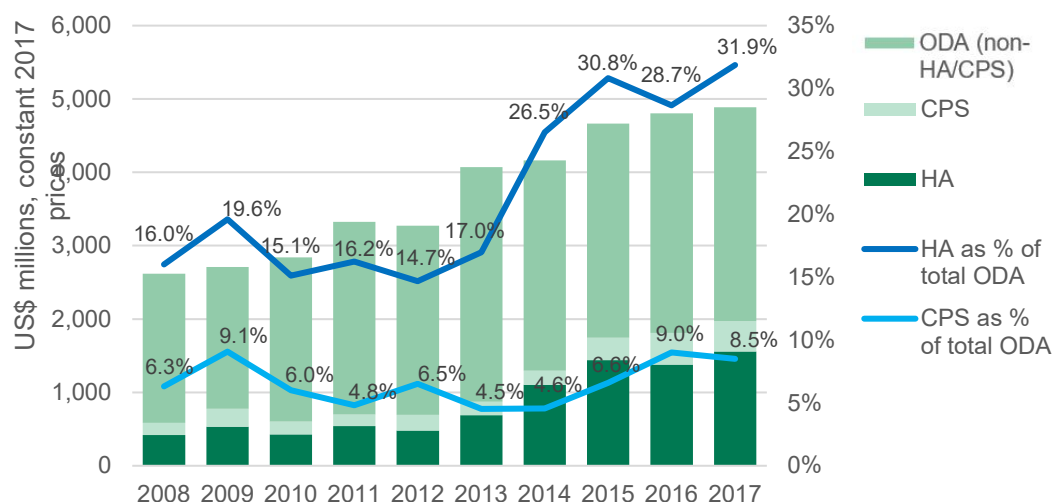
Figure 1: The proportion of UK ODA in the form of humanitarian assistance (HA) and conflict, peace and security (CPS) activities, 2008–2017



Source: Development Initiatives based on Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) Creditor Reporting System (CRS).

Note: Gross disbursements to country recipients, regions and unspecified developing countries.

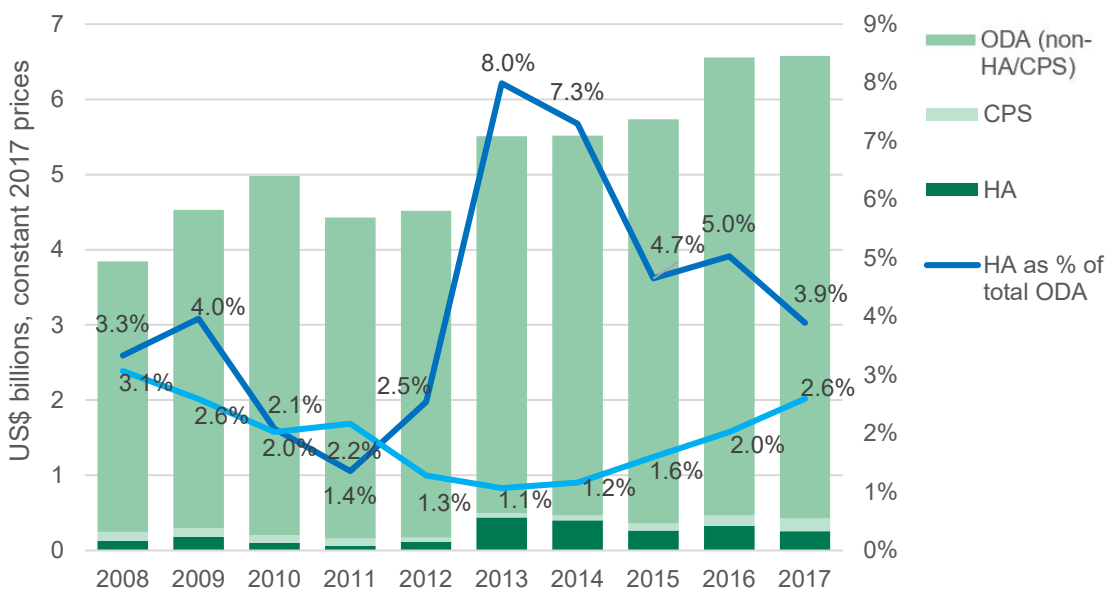
Figure 2: The proportion of UK ODA in the form of humanitarian assistance (HA) and conflict, peace and security (CPS) activities to fragile and conflict-affected states (FCASs), 2008–2017



Sources: Development Initiatives based on Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) Creditor Reporting System (CRS), 2018 State of Fragility Report (OECD) and DFID's ODA 2015 budget spent in fragile states and regions.

Note: The fragile states were classified according to DFID's ODA 2015 budget spent in fragile states and regions.

Figure 3: The proportion of UK ODA given as humanitarian assistance (HA) and to conflict, peace and security (CPS) activities to countries that are not fragile and conflict-affected states (non-FCASs), 2008–2017¹⁵



Sources: Development Initiatives based on Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) Creditor Reporting System (CRS), 2018 State of Fragility Report (OECD) and DFID's ODA 2015 budget spent in fragile states and regions.

Notes: Non-FCAS recipients are all other recipients excluding the fragile states classified according to DFID's ODA 2015 budget spent in fragile states and regions.

2.3 Transforming policy into practice through strategy

Lessons: UK policies are predominantly top-level, with the key challenge being the absence of a mid-level policy framework and guidance for transforming policy into operational strategy at the country and regional levels. While the UK has a comprehensive set of tools and guidance notes on standards and programming, these do not comprehensively cover crisis, risk and resilience. To systematise approaches, it will be vital for donors to develop conceptual and operational guidance on the nexus – which sets out a common understanding of key concepts and definitions.

Policy priorities are implemented through country strategies setting operational plans for the UK's aid allocation in a specific country. These are revised every four years in line with cross-government departmental spending reviews and Country Development Diagnostic assessments undertaken in each country where DFID has a presence (Section 3.1). Regional strategies are not systematically developed.

UK global policies are predominantly high-level, and so their practical application is a critical challenge faced by DFID staff. Interviewees agreed about the strength of the UK government in developing policy. However, they identified as a key challenge the

absence of a systematic approach or framework for prioritising policy commitments or translating policy into strategy and subsequent programming at country and regional levels. Interviewees reported that DFID has tended to produce strategy documents that align to or repeat policy documents but are less detailed on how the policy will be delivered. A recent DFID operational model review process identified the sequencing and layering of strategies and prioritising between different policies as a key challenge resulting in disparate objectives and activities across programmes. This risks limiting staff accountability for delivering strategy and undermining the overall strategic impact of DFID's work.

It is important that high-level policies and ministerial statements are linked with central, sector and country-level strategies through operational guidance and a mid-level policy framework to ensure a strategic drive providing the next level of granularity. DFID has a comprehensive set of standards and (often sector-focused) tools to guide programming decisions in the Smart Rules¹⁶ (Section 3.2), including specific guidance on humanitarian programming and coherence between the centre and country offices. However, it does not, given the nascency of the 'triple nexus', comprehensively cover or draw upon learning as relevant to all policy priorities or provide operational guidance for transforming policy into practice at different levels concerning the nexus.

The development of standalone optional operational guidance on the nexus would help to address this, potentially as a tool within the Smart Rules. It is important though to strike a balance between providing the central guidance necessary to systematise approaches while at the same time avoiding being too prescriptive. Forcing a blueprint model could undermine the benefits the decentralised model offers in terms of enabling context-specific and flexible approaches.

Agreeing a common understanding of key nexus concepts and definitions will be prerequisite to developing this guidance and will be crucial for bringing disparate perspectives on the nexus across DFID together and dispelling and myths or misconceptions as necessary for progressing on this agenda. Without greater clarity on this, and what it means for DFID, staff members are unlikely to prioritise this issue in strategies. While some key concepts are discussed in the Resilience Approach Paper and in the internal Protracted Crisis Discussion Paper which can be built upon, they do not cover all relevant terms or have cross-organisational buy-in. Defining broader terms such as risk, vulnerability, fragility, resilience, and preparedness will be important here, as will organisation-wide dialogue and agreement around fundamental concepts (Section 3.2). An important aspect of this will be identifying the differing and overlapping departure points, end goals, priority groups and levels of engagement for HDP actors, from which ambitions around the nexus can be built.

How DFID allocates its budget internally (once funding is received from the Treasury)¹⁷ illustrates strategic priorities and the extent to which policies are put into practice. However, the process for budget allocation is generally unknown among the staff members interviewed. Once teams have submitted bids for the required budget as part of the spending rounds, a committee of select senior personnel makes the allocation decisions using a formula based on present needs, aid effectiveness, future need and

ability to self-finance.¹⁸ The criteria used in budget allocation should also reflect issues of relevance to the nexus – including resilience, peacebuilding, crisis and risk.

Suggestions for the UK government as a donor

- Develop a mid-level policy framework for translating top-level policy on aid, humanitarian assistance, peace and stability into practice, supporting thematic teams and country offices to choose between competing priorities. The function of the Strategy Unit could be expanded for this purpose.
- CHASE could work with the Better Delivery department to establish a dialogue process for agreeing key concepts and terminologies on the nexus, incorporating the outcomes in operational guidance specifically focused on the nexus as a standalone Smart Rules tool. Embedding the nexus into existing thematic and sector guidance will also be crucial.
- This new operational guidance could potentially cover:
 - nexus-related definitions and concepts for use within DFID/UK government
 - learning modules on fragility, resilience, peace, risk and crisis (Section 4.3)
 - learning and advice on potential mechanisms for understanding needs across the nexus and the interaction between drivers of crisis and longer-term vulnerability and conflict
 - learning and guidance on programming and financing approaches
 - advice on quantitative and qualitative performance indicators on resilience and peace and on the use of beneficiary feedback mechanisms in measuring progress against indicators
 - programme staffing considerations for transforming nexus policy into practice.

3. The programme cycle and the nexus

To realise work on the nexus, risk, resilience and peace must be embedded into all aspects of the programming cycle – from joined-up assessments to joined-up results. This process is beginning but progress is variable across the cycle. Most progress has been made at the strategic level in the assessment and planning phases, although this lays the foundations for a cultural shift extending to include downstream programming in time.

3.1 Assessment

Lessons: Joined-up assessments undertaken at country and regional levels through the Country Development Diagnostic tool have acted as a springboard for joint planning and programming across HDP programmes. Embedding conflict analysis into country assessments is not a requirement but is enabling DFID to incorporate peace considerations into its work.

Joined-up action is not possible without a shared assessment of the context. Working at the nexus requires assessments which consider contextual dynamics, risks, needs, vulnerabilities and coping mechanisms, and are driven by participatory approaches. DFID achieves this largely through joined-up assessments. Country strategies are developed through a balance of contextual analyses, using the Country Development Diagnostic (CDD) tool, and efforts to align strategies with UK policy priorities. The CDD tool is based around seven key parts¹⁹ and aims to enable inclusive development through HDP programming. While the seven core elements of the CDD cover core aspects of the nexus (e.g. through a focus on resilience, conflict and service delivery), guidance on five optional analytical modules²⁰ to be undertaken before or after the CDD deepen the coverage of risk, resilience and peace. CDD analyses are undertaken every four years in line with spending reviews. The CDD tool is based on a standardised multi-disciplinary methodology developed by the Chief Economist's Office, which helps to foster a shared hypothesis. Country-level personnel report that this supports greater collaboration, coherence and complementarity across HDP priorities.

Although humanitarian needs feature in the CDD analysis undertaken at the country level, at the headquarters level, CHASE undertakes monthly and quarterly global humanitarian assessments based on the most recent data from key stakeholders²¹ to oversee and direct the UK's humanitarian priorities, driving funding reallocation at the country level and allocation of Crisis Reserve funds as relevant. DFID is also engaging externally and informing international thinking on joined-up needs assessments through the Joint Needs Assessment Grand Bargain workstream. DFID is a member of the

advisory board for the development of 'Quality criteria for joint needs assessments' and of the joint humanitarian–development–peacebuilding analysis group of the World Bank, ECHO, UNDP and OCHA.²²

DFID has long championed conflict analysis at programmatic level to ensure that humanitarian, development and peace-related programmes avoid doing harm, as a minimum, and work towards building peace. The application of this tool is critical for integrating a peace lens into development programming as a key component of the development–peace dual nexus. As appropriate and relevant, integrating conflict sensitivity into humanitarian programmes is a first step towards making progress on the humanitarian–peace dual nexus.

Since DFID's original Strategic Conflict Assessment was developed in 2002,²³ it has been replaced by the Joint Analysis of Conflict and Stability (JACS) which was introduced in the UK's Building Stability Overseas Strategy (2011) as a tool to strengthen cross-government approaches to tackling overseas conflict and instability. It is now used as a strategic assessment to underpin UK National Security Council Strategies. The JACS has reportedly resulted in integration of conflict analysis into programme design and CDD exercises and enabled greater pooling of risk analysis across UK government departments. However its use is not compulsory in country-level planning, and lack of regularity poses a challenge.²⁴

The 2018 Quality Assurance Unit (QAU) annual report, while noting the strength of the CDD tool, highlights the need for Business Cases to better manage the risk of negative unintended effects on politics and conflict. The report states that, while "teams understand the importance of political economy analysis, there is still a significant risk that the approach is insufficiently rigorous to manage risks".²⁵

3.2 Planning and programme design

Lessons: The UK's unique 'Business Case' model drives a comprehensive organisational approach to programme design and planning. However, staff members are not required to consider the full spectrum of nexus-related issues in the design process, resulting in diverse approaches. Strengthening the coverage of such issues in programme planning processes, such as DFID's Business Case development and quality assurance, will be key.

As a result of the CDD and joined-up assessments, planning has become increasingly coherent, with notable collaboration within and beyond DFID across government. The UK has developed an expanding portfolio of innovative practical approaches to the nexus, in response to opportunities in specific contexts, and the imperative of individuals, rather than a drive from the top. Therefore, joined-up planning across humanitarian, development and, to a lesser extent, peace programmes is taking place in pockets across DFID.

Development of Business Cases and the nexus

Once individual departments have been allocated a funding envelope through DFID's budget allocation process, there is a standardised process for designing central and country programmes as set out in the Smart Rules.²⁶ The development of a Business Case in DFID is the main tool used for programme design/planning and provides a comprehensive analysis covering all aspects of programming including the strategic case, management arrangements, risks, partners, outputs/outcomes, results and financing.²⁷

The Smart Rules encourage a 'whole of portfolio approach' in the development of Business Cases and prompt Senior Responsible Officers (SROs) to consider a range of issues relevant to different aspects of the nexus – including the political and economic context, causes of poverty, resilience, peace and security, economic environment, humanitarian response and conflict sensitivity.²⁸ The Business Case templates also require SROs to assess the case in terms of conflict sensitivity and risks, which are critical for inclusion in any assessments underpinning the nexus where the former links to the peace aspect (Section 3.1) and the latter enables programme scale-up in response to deepening crisis (Section 3.4).

While prompts in the Business Case template remind SROs to consider issues relevant to the nexus, it is not an official requirement of the Business Case process to demonstrate how collaboration, coherence and complementarity will be strengthened, how departments have planned for a crisis intensifying, becoming protracted, or transitioning out of crisis, how affected populations have been consulted in the analysis/planning or how beneficiary feedback mechanisms have been built into programme design. Sections in the Business Case template prompt consideration of DFID's role externally in donor/partner coordination, but there is no reference to documenting internal coordination with other teams as an inherent aspect of planning. Feedback suggests that Business Cases are often developed in line with a specific department's objectives and do not systematically consider how a programme can contribute to the objectives of other departments.

There are some strong examples of Business Cases demonstrating collaboration across HDP staff and programmes; Box 2 provides some country examples. On the other hand, there are examples of disconnect in the planning process, where parallel programmes are being delivered by development and humanitarian departments in the same country or where consideration of risk has not been undertaken comprehensively in collaboration with all relevant nexus-related colleagues in the planning phase.

Box 2: Country examples: incorporating the nexus into programme design and Business Case development

Nigeria Business Cases for various programmes in Nigeria demonstrate strategic consideration of the nexus and the need to link humanitarian assistance with longer-term livelihood programming and transition to recovery. For example, the North East Nigeria Transition to Development Programme (NENTAD) explicitly

seeks to implement a proportionate shift from humanitarian to development action in post-conflict recovery supporting longer-term programming for nutrition, education, community security and market development. The NENTAD Business Case also includes an Internal Risk Facility (IRF) to enable rapid response to spikes in need (Section 3.4). The Rural and Agriculture Markets Development Programme for Northern Nigeria (Propcom Mai-karfi) explicitly focuses on building synergies between humanitarian response and longer-term livelihood development with the primary objective to “work with humanitarian aid organisations to develop market orientated support” – supporting market expansion while the crisis is still ongoing to lay the foundations for economic recovery.

Ethiopia Business Cases for various programmes demonstrate strong consideration of links between short-term humanitarian assistance and longer-term development programming. For example, Building Resilience in Ethiopia is a humanitarian programme supporting governments to respond to shocks (focusing on social protection and health), and to address humanitarian needs while supporting a longer-term reform agenda, including food security. Support to various phases of the Productive Safety Net Programme (PSNP) is a strong example of where DFID is delivering the nexus in practice by supporting the Government of Ethiopia to develop shock-responsive nutrition programming focused on building resilience and integrating social protection into national systems.

South Sudan Two separate humanitarian–development-led health programmes were designed in parallel with limited complementarity built into the design phases: the Humanitarian and Resilience Programme in South Sudan (HARISS), which delivers health and nutritional support through partners Medair, ICRC, the South Sudan Humanitarian Fund (SSHF), UNICEF and WFP; and the South Sudan Health Pooled Fund Phase II and III where DFID is supporting health service delivery in 8 out of 10 states together with the US, the EU, Sweden and Canada. Recognising this, DFID South Sudan has requested support from DFID centrally to strengthen coherence and complementarity.

Somalia The Business Case for the Somalia Health and Nutrition Programme (SHINE), a five-year programme approved in 2015, considers the roles of development and humanitarian assistance in the health sector in Somalia and recognises the need to shift from humanitarian assistance into longer-term bilateral support to the health sector, working more closely with government. It also references the collaboration with CHASE in the design of the programme and plans to work closely with humanitarian-focused health programmes (e.g. the Humanitarian and Nutrition Consortium Programme).²⁹

A more standardised approach to embedding the nexus into Business Cases would strengthen the UK’s delivery on this agenda. One option would be to embed nexus-related questions within the Business Case template. This could build upon the optional ‘Programme Design and Business Case Checklist’ developed (though not yet distributed)

by CHASE, prompting teams to: consider approaches for joined-up analysis in protracted crisis; develop links between short-term humanitarian and longer-term risks and vulnerability; and investigate opportunities for using flexible funding. The suggested standalone operational guidance on the nexus, which more broadly covers all aspects of programming as well as clarifying key concepts and terminology, would support this (Section 2.3).

Suggestions for the UK government as a donor

- DFID could strengthen the Business Case template to refer to the nexus and add prompts where SROs can document how it has been considered, building upon the optional checklist developed by CHASE.
- Changes to the Business Case template could include the:
 - ‘appraisal case’, prompting consideration of crisis, risk, resilience and peace in the theory of change and identifying pathways for delivering related outcomes
 - ‘management case’, requesting SROs to document how colleagues across the HDP nexus have been consulted in programme design, plans for consultation and collaboration throughout the programme cycle, and planned support from cross-cutting advisers
 - ‘commercial case’, prompting explicit information about support to be provided to downstream partners, for example in building capacity for resilience and crisis response, and clauses for flexibility and beneficiary feedback.

Quality assurance of Business Cases and the nexus

The quality assurance process for Business Cases within DFID is coordinated by the Quality Assurance Unit (QAU)³⁰ which provides an assessment based on evidence and value for money, drawing guidance from a checklist developed in 2014 which does not explicitly cover risk, resilience and peacebuilding.³¹ Reviews integrate inputs from professional cadres and commercial and financial experts. Feedback is taken seriously and incorporated by SROs, then shared with ministers and signed off by heads of departments. However, the content of feedback as it relates to the nexus depends on the individuals around the table, so can be personality-based and is not systemic. The QAU annual report (2017) recognised the need for greater coherence and complementarity between humanitarian and development programmes, recommending that “Business Cases should consider the incentives they create for government and society that affect long-term development”, justifying the benefits of multi-year funding, as a key element of the nexus.³²

The 2018 QAU annual report also recommended that “Business Cases should better identify their indirect, possibly perverse, effects on political settlement, conflict dynamics and internal migration”, incorporating a greater focus on governance and risk management.³³ The inclusion of these recommendations is positive and a critical first step towards incorporating the nexus into the quality assurance process. This recommendation could be broadened to cover all aspects of the nexus beyond the humanitarian–development elements.

Suggestions for the UK government as a donor

- DFID could embed the nexus into the quality assurance process for Business Cases.
- Building upon the optional 'Programme Design and Business Case Checklist' developed by CHASE, formal guidance or a checklist for delivering on the nexus could be developed for use in quality assurance.
- Political buy-in on the nexus and articulation of this in aid policies will ensure uptake of such a checklist.

3.3 Programming approach

Lessons: DFID has developed a strong portfolio of context-driven programming on the nexus. Sequential programming is more established, while simultaneous programming (delivering peace, humanitarian and development elements together) is an iterative learning process. DFID demonstrates greater expertise in flexing when countries move into a crisis than in transitioning into recovery and stability once a crisis subsides. This highlights the donor-wide challenge of delivering on the peace component of the nexus in post-crisis contexts, but also the importance of strengthening programming tools for transitioning from active crisis into recovery and peacebuilding. These approaches have developed organically in response to contextual opportunities, changing needs and the incentives of individual staff members, and not because there is an official model in place. Documenting best practice in, and developing a menu of programming approaches to, the nexus will be important for systematising approaches and broader uptake.

The nexus is easier to comprehend in its practical application than in concept. Working programmatically on the nexus can be understood as either sequential or simultaneous (Box 3), but participatory and beneficiary feedback mechanisms are vital to the effectiveness of both approaches.

- **Sequential programming** is the delivery of humanitarian, development and peacebuilding responses in sequence, passing on the baton as the context moves into and out of crisis. This includes transition finance where development and peacebuilding investments allow humanitarian assistance to transition out, and is more commonly used in disaster response.
- **Simultaneous programming** is the delivery of humanitarian, development and peace programmes at the same time in the same context. In DFID, this is also understood as programming which serves dual objectives. This can involve both closely joined programmes, and more parallel, complementary approaches. It includes preventive approaches, where development and peacebuilding investments address the risk of crisis, and resilience approaches in situations of chronic crisis.

Box 3: Menu of potential programming approaches

Sequential programming

Establishing mechanisms which enable development and humanitarian programmes to scale up and down as a crisis emerges, intensifies or contracts

Approach 1: Embedding crisis modifiers for early response into development programmes, although the challenge continues to be integrating this approach more systematically.

Approach 2: Flexible or shock-responsive nutrition, social protection and health programming to put contingencies in place, enabling rapid resource reallocation, a scale-up or shift in focus.

Approach 3: Flexing to respond to contextual changes when countries move out of crisis.

Simultaneous programming

Laying the foundations for longer-term development and peacebuilding through or alongside humanitarian programmes

Approach 4: Humanitarian programmes that plant the seeds for longer-term social protection programming through cash transfers.

Approach 5: Development and peacebuilding programmes that support peace dividends in parallel with humanitarian assistance to lay foundations for early recovery.

Approach 6: Providing support to longer-term livelihoods and market expansion during a crisis to lay foundations for recovery.

Investing in resilience, preparedness and peacebuilding to prevent the risk of crisis

Approach 7: Systematically embedding resilience into humanitarian and development programmes.

Approach 8: Integrating a peace lens into development programming

Sequential programming

As one interviewee noted, “there is a misperception of the problem – it is not a crisis if it happens every year”. This highlights the need to foster scalable mechanisms as a feature of good development. Incorporating early action, preparedness and resilience into

humanitarian and development programmes is a critical aspect of this, in which DFID has demonstrated leadership.

Approach 1: Embedding crisis modifiers for early response into development programmes, although the challenge continues to be integrating this approach more systematically

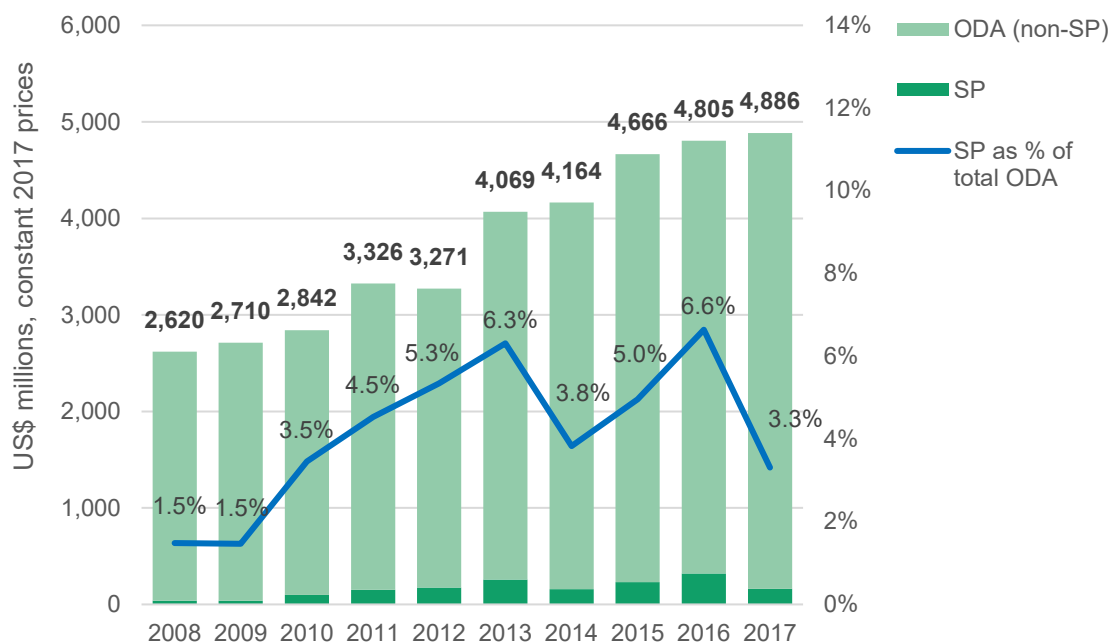
A ‘crisis modifier’ was embedded into DFID’s multi-year Building Resilience to Adaptation to Climate Extremes and Disasters (BRACED) programme, which aimed to build community resilience to climate extremes in South and Southeast Asia and in the African Sahel. The ‘crisis modifier’ was designed to enable access to humanitarian funding to support early action and rapid response to emerging crisis needs in project areas and protect the development gains achieved by BRACED. Reviews on the impact of this crisis modifier have confirmed its value as a working tool in the humanitarian–development nexus, while highlighting the need to shift away from viewing crisis modifiers as a ‘bolt-on’ to development programmes and towards them being an integral part of how development actors design, think and act.³⁴ With the BRACED programme completed, the key challenge now for DFID is to embed this approach within all development planning in country office portfolios.

Approach 2: Flexible or shock-responsive nutrition, social protection and health programming to put contingencies in place, enabling rapid resource reallocation, a scale-up or shift in focus

A new centrally managed programme, Maintaining Essential Services after Natural Disasters (MAINTAIN) has been established to provide technical support to country offices on shock-responsive programming for nutrition. This allows development actors the flexibility to scale up in response to shocks – moving innovatively away from a shorter-term humanitarian response to nutrition. DFID has also embedded flexibility into health programmes to enable surge support – as in the South Sudan Health Pooled Fund and the UK Support for Health in Nigeria programme (Section 3.2, Box 2).

DFID has established the Better Assistance in Crises (BASIC) programme to provide technical assistance to country offices on social protection and build an evidence base for best practice in meeting the needs of vulnerable people in crisis through social assistance.³⁵ Adaptive social protection programmes have been established in Kenya (through the Kenya Hunger Safety Net Programme), Ethiopia (through the Productive Safety Nets Programme) and the Sahel (through support to the Adaptive Social Protection Programme), which enable a triggered response, for example to provide cash transfers to affected populations, expanding the number of beneficiaries and complementing transfers with other components such as seed distribution.³⁶ Indicating the UK’s expanding focus on adaptive social protection programmes in crisis contexts, Figure 4 shows that the UK’s funding to social protection as a proportion of ODA to the fragile and conflict-affected states (FCASs) in 2017 increased more than threefold from 2008 to 2016 (from 1.5% to 6.6%).

Figure 4: UK funding to social protection (SP) as a proportion of ODA to FCASs, 2008–2017³⁷



Sources: Development Initiatives based on Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) Creditor Reporting System (CRS) and DFID's ODA 2015 budget spent in fragile states and regions.

Notes: The fragile states were classified according to DFID's ODA 2015 budget spent in fragile states and regions. Data is in constant 2017 prices.

DFID's response to the drought in Somalia in 2017 demonstrated that flexible programming works well. Enabling a timely scale-up of existing humanitarian programmes in response to a crisis helped to avert a potential famine by mobilising support from other donors and increased funding to health, nutrition and WASH.³⁸ However, learning from the response suggested the future approach of scaling back emergency efforts to focus more on early recovery through longer-term development, thus embedding humanitarian response within a broader development framework. Linked to this, the review pointed to the need for DFID and the international community to respond to Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC) category 2, not only categories 3 and 4, in order to build links with longer-term development programming and ensure stronger crisis prevention.³⁹

Approach 3: Flexing to respond to contextual changes when countries move out of crisis

As a general finding, some interviewees report that DFID has more established expertise in innovative and risk programming approaches for flexing when countries move into a crisis (e.g. through shock-responsive programmes and crisis modifiers) than for transitioning into recovery and stability once a crisis subsides. This reflects the challenges associated with the peace aspect of the nexus which predominantly sits in

post-crisis contexts. This observation is reinforced in the 2016 NAO report on DFID's approach to responding to crisis, which states that DFID is strong in responding to rapid-onset crises and less strong in achieving a fluid approach in protracted crises, lacking comprehensive criteria to underpin whether and how to exit crises.⁴⁰

However, as outlined below (Approaches 5 and 6), there is an emerging portfolio of examples of DFID supporting market expansion and peace dividends during a crisis to lay the foundations for recovery. There are also strong examples of where DFID is supporting transition from crisis response to recovery and peacebuilding, for example DFID's portfolios in Somalia and North-East Nigeria are shifting towards a development focus. In Myanmar, the UK is reportedly shifting its approach to tackle more effectively the drivers and consequences of crises through humanitarian, development and peace programming, including by investing in education, health, economic development, governance, peacebuilding and resilience alongside humanitarian approaches, with a view to addressing short-term needs and helping to build resilience and transition into peace over time.

DFID's experience and expertise in transitioning from crisis into recovery, peacebuilding and stability has clearly expanded and strengthened over recent years. These approaches are relatively new and interviewees highlighted the need to strengthen tools and guidance for delivering on the nexus in the post-crisis phase, especially in connection with the peace element, by drawing evidence from programmes that have attempted to achieve this and on experiences of other donors and partners. As one interviewee noted, "when a crisis happens, it takes away from the recovery work we should be doing. We need better blueprints and models of how to do good recovery and stability work alongside and transitioning away from crisis response". The key risk here is that resilience, and peace in the post-crisis phase will be approached narrowly, through national priorities on security and stability. It is important to foster a long-term approach which incorporates a broader and participatory focus on recovery, peacebuilding, security and justice, without compromising principled engagement.

Simultaneous programming

Simultaneous programming involves laying foundations for longer-term development and peacebuilding through or alongside humanitarian programmes. In practice, pursuing a simultaneous approach commonly centres on the ability to work in parallel, pre-empting changes in the context and preparing for stronger coherence, collaboration and complementarity between humanitarian, development and peace actors at each phase of crisis. As outlined in Box 3, Approaches 4 to 6 here demonstrate this, while Approaches 7 and 8 focus on prevention through resilience, preparedness and peacebuilding.

Approach 4: Humanitarian programmes that plant the seeds for longer-term social protection programming through cash transfers

In countries lacking social protection systems, cash platforms were designed with a view to establishing social protection systems in the longer term. This can be a catalyst for more sustainable safety nets, helping to facilitate a transition between humanitarian response and development or wider system reform. DFID is at the conceptual stage with

programmes of this nature. In Yemen, DFID is determining how to support alignment between social assistance and humanitarian cash. In Somalia, DFID is conceiving specific approaches for moving from short-term humanitarian cash transfers to a more harmonised approach in support of developing longer-term national systems.

Approach 5: Development and peacebuilding programmes that support peace dividends in parallel with humanitarian assistance to lay foundations for early recovery

DFID is delivering several humanitarian assistance programmes with embedded components on social cohesion and community resilience, as in the following examples. Such programmes are relatively new and not yet widespread.

- The Humanitarian Reform, Assistance and Resilience (HRAR) programme in Sudan aims to support conflict management mechanisms through the ‘Taadoud’ component.⁴¹
- The Humanitarian Protection for Vulnerable Refugees and Host Communities in Jordan programmes include a component for promoting community cohesion and strong links with humanitarian protection.⁴²
- The Building Resilience through Asset Creation and Enhancement II (BRACE II) programme in South Sudan (2015–2020) aims to increase the capacity of vulnerable households to cope with shocks, improve their food security and build better community relationships. The 2019 annual review reports positive outcomes on social cohesion through training on conflict management and establishment of dispute resolution mechanisms at community level.⁴³

Around half of the 15 largest humanitarian crises supported by DFID in 2017 featured engagement in peacebuilding or stabilisation processes – in Afghanistan, DRC, Iraq, South Sudan, Somalia, Sudan, Syria, and Yemen. The case for supporting immediate peace dividends to prevent damaging possibilities for long-term peace and development is especially strong.

Approach 6: Providing support to longer-term livelihoods and market expansion during a crisis to lay foundations for recovery

As noted above in Section 3.2, DFID is championing progressive programming to expand markets and support recovery in North-East Nigeria while crisis is ongoing. DFID is also playing a key role in supporting the development of the agricultural sector and small and medium-sized enterprises to support livelihood development. Market development and employment opportunities are also key focus areas of the UK’s support to the Comprehensive Refugee Results Framework in Jordan and Lebanon and Job Compact in Ethiopia.

Approach 7: Systematically embedding resilience into humanitarian and development programmes

DFID has recognised the importance of moving beyond crisis financing to cover pre-crisis efforts to prevent or prepare for and reduce the impact of crisis, through funding

resilience, preparedness and early action. As noted in Section 2, DFID continues to advance the resilience agenda internationally, as reflected in the establishment of the new Centre for Disaster Protection which will focus on supporting countries to manage disaster risk. The integration of a resilience component into humanitarian programmes has become increasingly mainstream within DFID, as a crucial aspect of delivering on the nexus and linking humanitarian assistance with longer-term development programming – as in the Humanitarian Assistance and Resilience programme in South Sudan (2015–2020) and the Building Resilience in Ethiopia programme (2017–2022). However, the Multi-Year Thematic Evaluation of DFID’s Multi-Year Humanitarian Approach found that such programmes continue to be oriented towards a humanitarian response and have not yet addressed the underlying drivers of vulnerability.⁴⁴

To approach the nexus effectively, it is crucial that development programmes include efforts to build resilience and preparedness. While development programmes may not explicitly refer to ‘resilience’ in the Business Case, there are many examples of where they are supporting resilience by addressing the needs of crisis-affected people. Such examples include human development programmes in Myanmar, Jordan, Lebanon, Sudan, South Sudan, Uganda, DRC and Nigeria.

Approach 8: Integrating a peace lens into development programming

DFID has long been a champion of conflict-sensitive development programming (Section 3.1). The framework for engaging in fragile states and strengthening engagement on conflict and stability set out in the 2015 Aid Strategy has paved the way for more innovative approaches to embedding a peace lens into livelihood and basic services programming. CHASE has worked closely with the Economic Development Department and the Education team within the Inclusive Societies Department in the Policy Division to support country teams to embed a stability focus into economic development and education programmes. For example, DFID Somalia conducted a ‘building stability’ review of its portfolio of economic development programmes to understand the impact of its programming approach on stability. The review developed actionable recommendations at both the programming and portfolio levels – for example, thinking about managing risks related to regional trade infrastructure and spotting opportunities to increase engagement with sensitive land tenure issues, identifying new stability-related indicators to integrate into results frameworks.⁴⁵

Suggestions for the UK government as a donor

- The UK government could develop stronger tools to support programmes transitioning from humanitarian assistance to recovery and stability. Such tools could be included in standalone Smart guidance on the nexus (Section 2.3), and/or could form the focus of a future consultation process across DFID to identify next steps.
- DFID could expand sequential and simultaneous programming approaches beyond specific programmes and countries, mainstreaming these approaches across the organisation by developing programming models or tools (e.g. on shock-responsive programming).

3.4 Financing channels and instruments

Lessons: DFID's decentralised model and fungible funding types are key strengths in approaching the nexus and enabling scale-up or -down of programming in response to changes in the crisis context. The Internal Risk Facility (IRF) provides country offices with the ability to flex in response to contextual changes, although stronger guidance and tools are required for broader uptake within development programmes. The Crisis Reserve plays a vital role in responding to unforeseen crises, although a gap persists in anticipatory and preventive financing. The overarching challenge here is that available contingency financing mechanisms tend to enable scale-up of crisis-response programming rather than longer-term development and peace programming; this is where a shift is needed, as relevant to all donors.

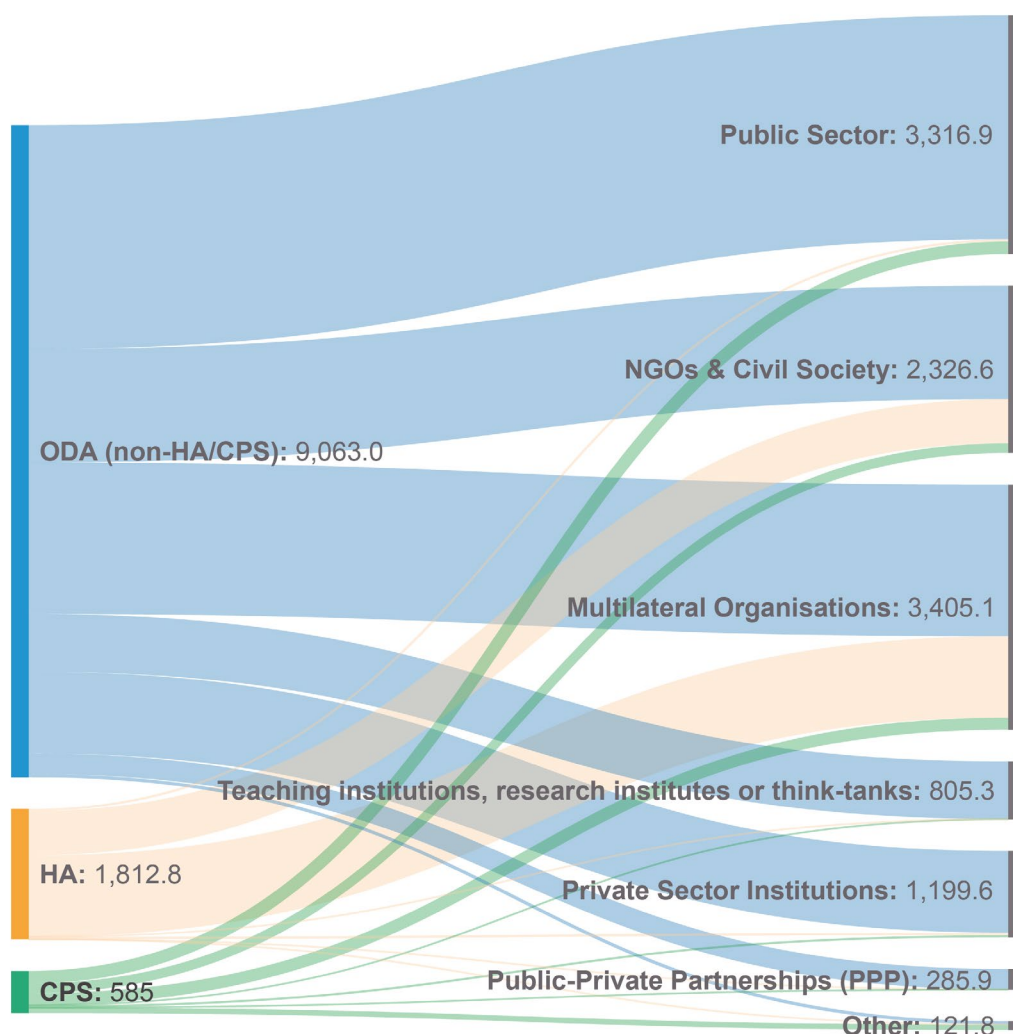
Funding channels

Like most donors, the UK uses a variety of funding channels and instruments in fragile and crisis-affected contexts, channelling funds through a mix of multilateral (core or earmarked funding), bilateral (via public sector and governments) and NGO partners, depending on the context. As shown in Figure 5, multilateral channels are often favoured in crisis and fragile contexts where funding through public partners is not possible given a government's constrained capacity or involvement in conflict. Respecting humanitarian principles, humanitarian assistance is usually 'state-avoiding' for this reason. Two-fifths (39.3%) of UK ODA to fragile states was channelled through multilateral organisations in 2017, in contrast to a much smaller proportion to other developing countries (21.6% in 2017). More UK ODA was channelled through the public sector in other developing countries than in fragile states (37.2% and 19.2%, respectively).

In 2018, 36.5% of total UK ODA was in the form of multilateral funding and 63.5% in the form of bilateral funding.⁴⁶ Of relevance to the nexus is the extent to which decisions on core funding to multilateral agencies are complementary and joined up with decisions to fund the same agencies at the bilateral level. As outlined in Section 4.1, levels of complementarity vary by country programme and agency, and are undermined by the challenges faced in establishing a systematic approach to coherence between the centre and country offices, given DFID's decentralised structure.

Like that of other donors, most of the UK's ODA is channelled to development and humanitarian activities, with funding to conflict, peace and security constituting only 5.1% of ODA in 2017 (Figure 1). This raises questions around the need to match commitments on peace within the triple nexus with a greater proportion of ODA to peace and security activities.

Figure 5: UK funding channels (US\$ millions) of humanitarian assistance (HA), conflict, peace and security (CPS) and non-HA/CPS development assistance, 2017



Source: Development Initiatives based on Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) Creditor Reporting System (CRS).

Notes: Gross disbursements to country recipients, regions and unspecified developing countries. Data in current prices. All figures US\$ millions

Externally managed financing mechanisms

As a key component of DFID's support to multilateral agencies, DFID contributes to financing mechanisms managed by external partners (international financial institutions and UN agencies). These include global funds (e.g. Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance), individual financing mechanisms working at the interface of humanitarian and development response (e.g. the Global Concessional Financing Facility managed by the World Bank and operating in protracted refugee contexts, the Global Risk Financing

Facility), multi-donor trust funds at global and country levels, and pooled funding mechanisms for rapid crisis response (e.g. the UN Central Emergency Response Fund). As set out in the most recent Multilateral Aid Review (2016) and DFID's Humanitarian Reform Policy, support to externally managed funds transfers the risk away from DFID, enables funding to reach countries where DFID does not have a presence, mobilises resources from diverse sources, allows donors to combine efforts, and enables wider use of innovative financing.⁴⁷ The impact of channelling funds through these different types of financing mechanisms and their relevance to the nexus is of critical importance to this research. However, public evidence on the impact of particular global funding mechanisms remains patchy and the performance of multilateral partners on the nexus has not been a systematic focus of previous multilateral partner reviews (Section 3.5).

Flexible financing

DFID has a flexible funding model enabling movement of funds between budget lines, to adjust budgets in line with strategy. Decision-making on allocation within country budgets is fully decentralised: Country Directors have full financial delegation and decisions are made on the ground, with Regional Directors providing oversight. Country Directors plan budgets every four years in line with spending reviews and have the option to move funds in response to contextual changes, apply for access to under-spend in other programmes and, with approval from Regional Directors and ministers, to the Crisis Reserve. DFID's decentralised budget system and fungibility of budget types is a core strength, as confirmed by the recent DFID operational review.⁴⁸

Unlike many other donors, DFID does not separate the budget in terms of development and humanitarian spend. This enables DFID to be innovative, responsive and context specific. However, the budget is split at country level for peacebuilding and stability activities between DFID and other departments funded through the CSFF. While there are cases of joined-up working across departments at country level, this generally poses a challenge for coordination.

Predictable and flexible funding: multi-year and unearmarked funding

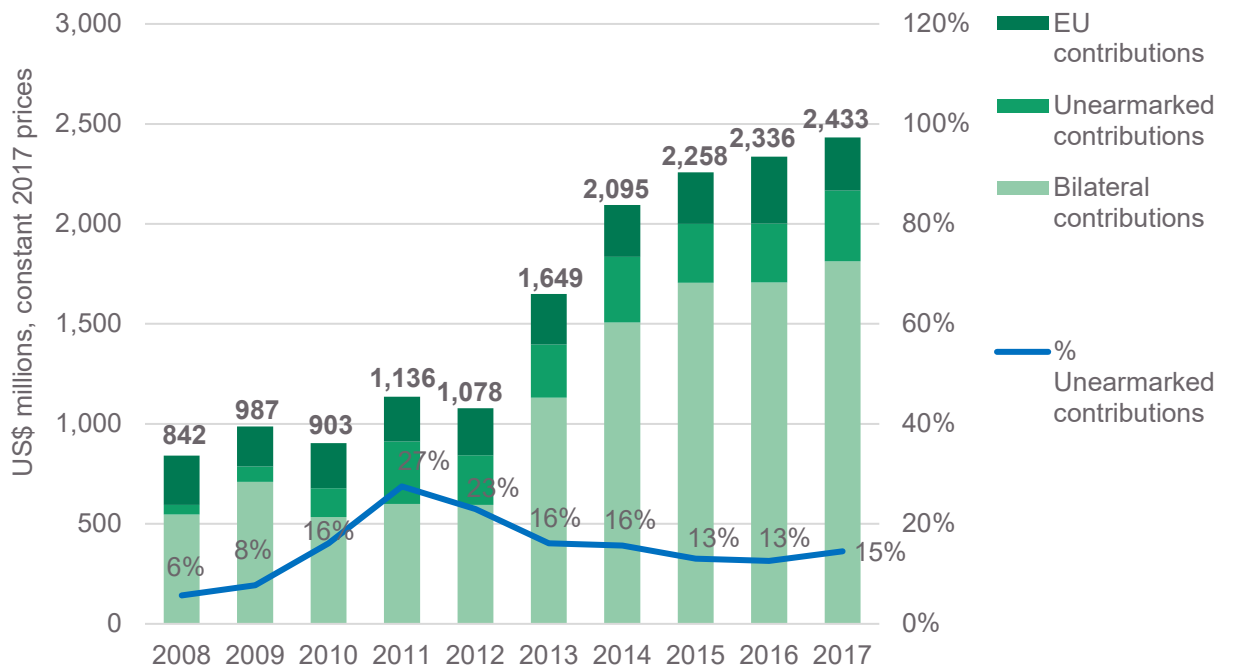
To balance flexibility with predictability, DFID is committed to multi-year humanitarian funding through the Grand Bargain which is also reiterated in the Humanitarian Reform Policy (2017). Multi-year funding is agreed with partners and aligned to Business Case timeframes. Multi-year humanitarian funding allows partners to flex and plan for addressing humanitarian needs not confined to a single year. Given the pressures on humanitarian funding, there is not currently the space within multi-year humanitarian funding for agencies to expand their remit to cover longer-term development programming beyond addressing severe need. In addition, the NAO report on DFID's response to crises highlights challenges including adoption of multi-year funding by second-tier recipients (often UN agencies).⁴⁹ This challenge is faced by all donors.

Multi-year funding should also be flexible but the pressure to demonstrate results reportedly undermines delivery of the UK's multi-year programmes. For example, most of DFID's multi-year funding in Jordan is reportedly earmarked.⁵⁰ One interviewee commented, "corporate inertia means that it is a real struggle to get multi-year

programmes up and running”.⁵¹ Unearmarked funding is a key form of flexible finance that should enable partners to respond to contextual changes and deliver on the nexus, for example by shifting from feeding centres to agricultural interventions as malnutrition reduces.

The proportion of UK humanitarian assistance given to implementing agencies as unearmarked core contributions fell from 27% in 2011 to 13% in 2016. However, this proportion rose again to 15% in 2017 (Figure 6). This is likely to align with rising national pressure to demonstrate results and DFID’s establishment of a ‘payment by results’ system for partners (Section 3.5). Like other donors, DFID may be veering away from commitments made through the Grand Bargain in 2015, to reduce earmarked funding.

Figure 6: The proportion of UK humanitarian assistance broken down by unearmarked core contributions, bilateral contributions and EU contributions, 2008–2017



Sources: Development Initiatives based on Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) Development Assistance Committee (DAC), UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) Financial Tracking Service (FTS) and UN Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF) data.

Note: The unearmarked ODA contributions of DAC members to nine key multilateral agencies engaged in humanitarian response: FAO, IOM, UNDP, UNHCR, UN OCHA, UNICEF, UNRWA, WFP and WHO, as reported to the OECD DAC under Table 2a and the CRS. We do not include all ODA to FAO, IOM, UNICEF and WFP but apply a percentage to take into account that these agencies also have a ‘development’ mandate. These shares are calculated using data on humanitarian expenditure as a proportion of the total received directly from each multilateral agency.

Internal risk financing

Country budget allocation is appropriate to the level of existing risks and needs. SROs have the option of including an internal risk facility (IRF) in Business Cases as a pre-agreement to upscale programmes as needed in response to unpredictable shocks, with sign-off by the Minister for International Development. IRFs are designed to enable: quicker decisions, funding transfers and partner mobilisation during a crisis; greater value for money by enabling early responses to crisis (which are more economical than responding once a crisis has escalated); and reduced staff time focusing on administration and increased focus on achieving outcomes. This applies whether the funds for scale-up come from the Crisis Reserve, in-country budgets or as additional funds signed off by Treasury.⁵² Feedback on the effectiveness of IRFs is mixed.

IRFs are felt to work better in contexts where shocks are predictable, highlighting a general gap in current risk analysis undertaken as part of the Business Case development process in terms of identifying risks that are less predictable and foreseeable. Strengthening mechanisms for participatory consultation and feedback in the risk analysis process would help to better understand risks at the community level (Section 3.2). The use of an IRF in Somalia was identified as an important factor preventing a potential famine in 2017, allowing speedy disbursement and contracting.⁵³

However, some interviewees operating at the country level felt that resistance to signing off reserve financing within the Treasury can put (perceived) limits on the scale of the IRFs embedded into programme design. To date, IRFs have been used primarily to scale up humanitarian funding in response to rising humanitarian needs, with limited use in development programmes. Yet to achieve the proposed policy shift towards ‘development where possible and humanitarian only when necessary’ (Section 2), the uptake of risk financing in development programmes will be vital. Learning from DFID’s drought response in Somalia in 2017 is that the IRF, which focused on humanitarian response, is only one part of the solution, highlighting the need to embed shock-responsive financing options into resilience and development programming.⁵⁴

Raising awareness and providing guidance on IRFs may broaden their uptake among development colleagues. While draft IRF guidance has been developed by the Humanitarian Head of Profession, which usefully provides direction in designing shock- and disaster-responsive programmes and highlights the limitations, this is not currently formalised or embedded within a broader tool on flexible finance. To strengthen the uptake of IRFs and other flexible funding approaches within programme design, institutional guidance is needed on all options for flexible financing and their appropriateness in different contexts. Having formal tools in place for flexible financing will help to make the case to Treasury on the importance of reserve funding and overcoming related risks.

Financing for rapid onset

DFID has a suite of financing mechanisms in place for responding to rapid-onset crises, or supporting others to do so, and demonstrates advanced thinking in this area. This is particularly important in enabling the UK government to flex in response to crises in

countries where it does not have a presence. As outlined in the Smart guidance, the ODA Crisis Reserve is an in-year contingency fund established under the 2015 Aid Strategy – with £200 million as a central contingency reserve and £300 million as ‘re-deployable’ funds. It pays out to UK government departments and DFID country offices and UK embassies. The Crisis Reserve is managed by CHASE but open to bids from other government departments.

The Crisis Reserve is important for responding to unforeseen and rapid-onset crises and, as such, its role in terms of the nexus and linking short- to longer-term assistance is relatively small. According to one interviewee, “the crisis reserve works in a slightly old-world way – i.e. responding to a big crisis and not looking at preventive measures or dealing with recurrent or protracted crises”, highlighting a gap in DFID’s existing financing framework in terms of preventive and anticipatory financing. This could be addressed by establishing a financing sub-window within the Crisis Reserve, or integrating anticipatory approaches into the criteria for accessing it, or by establishing a separate funding mechanism for this purpose. Drawing on learning from other contingency financing mechanisms that have taken steps to build in anticipatory action will be helpful here – examples include the Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF) and the Start Network.

Suggestions for the UK government as a donor

- The Better Delivery Department could develop a tool to provide teams with guidance on flexible programming and financing to encourage uptake of IRFs beyond humanitarian programmes.
- DFID could set requirements to support this, for example by requesting that country offices with high vulnerability scores (e.g. on INFORM) establish mechanisms enabling flex in response to crisis.
- DFID could consider establishing a funding window, either within the ODA Crisis Reserve or as a separate mechanism, which specifically focuses on prevention and anticipatory approaches. An alternative would be to include anticipatory response and risk mitigation in the access criteria for the Crisis Reserve.

The Conflict, Stability and Security Fund (CSSF)

Lessons: The UK’s activities on peacebuilding and stability are primarily managed through the Conflict, Stability and Security Fund (CSSF) and the National Security Council (NSC), where DFID oversees humanitarian and development activities and maintains a focus on peacebuilding. A separate fund or facility focusing on one part of the nexus can clearly incentivise risk-informed and targeted programming. However, this also risks siloing nexus approaches in the absence of a systematic approach to building complementarity. There are many opportunities for the CSSF and DFID to build upon existing efforts to increase complementarity. Where both CSSF and DFID are present in a particular country, there is scope to pursue joined-up planning and programming more actively, both in London and in country. The CSSF could utilise and develop its potential for longer-term programming and DFID could reinvigorate its role in the design and delivery of these longer-term strategies (including those that transition from the CSSF to DFID) through its

participation in the Cross-Government Boards that steer CSSF activities. Regular dialogue between DFID’s programme SROs and CSSF delivery teams, in London and in country, through existing systems would help to enable this.

The CSSF was established in 2015 as a cross-departmental fund to bring coherence in the UK response to conflict and instability, and as such plays a key role in delivering the ‘peace’ aspect of the nexus. It delivers the objectives set out in the Aid Strategy on: (i) global peace, security and governance; (ii) strengthening resilience and response to crises; and (iii) tackling extreme poverty and helping the world’s most vulnerable people. The CSSF also delivers the 2015 Strategic Defence and Security Review and National Security Council strategies. Feedback from interviewees highlights the positive role that the CSSF has played in increasing coherence and collaboration, or ‘fusion’, across government on peace and stability issues, especially at country level.

The 2018 ICAI review of the CSSF supports this, concluding that the “CSSF implements its work with wider UK programming in mind, and this helps to avoid gaps and overlaps”. The report points to programmes in Pakistan and Jordan on refugee-camp stability that were designed as pilots to be transitioned to DFID, in Jordan’s case in anticipation of the department’s increased presence in the country. This is a clear link from CSSF’s work to longer-term peace and security priorities on municipal infrastructure and service delivery to benefit refugees and host communities.⁵⁵

Other interviewees identified challenges that have faced the CSSF in terms of delivering outcomes, given its annual project focus, and perceived limited transparency. The lack of information on some activities funded through the CSSF, reportedly because of beneficiary security concerns relating to the types of activities and contexts, can make it more difficult to identify opportunities to build coherence with development and humanitarian responses. The CSSF has reported to the International Aid Transparency Initiative (IATI) since August 2019, and highlights the challenge of reporting to the OECD DAC given the multiple reporting codes of relevance to CSSF. The CSSF has taken a number of steps to strengthen transparency over recent years. For example, in 2018/19, the CSSF published 83 out of 90 programme summaries, with a further six to be published later in the year⁵⁶, and in 2017/18, 63 programme summaries were published.⁵⁷ The Joint Fund Unit (JFU) management response to the CSSF Annual Review⁵⁸ and three Annual Reports⁵⁹ are also publicly available. In addition, the CSSF and departments it funds publish information to IATI at programme level, although they do not systematically provide project-level detail, given perceived security concerns. As part of the Publish What You Fund HMG transparency assessment, DFID and CSSF have been actively supporting CSSF spending departments to improve their reporting to IATI. Ongoing efforts to strengthen transparency of the Fund will be important.

Regarding outcomes, the 2018 ICAI report found that the CSSF has weak results frameworks in place, given its output-orientated focus, and lacks evidence on impact, making it difficult to gauge its comparative advantage over broader peacebuilding and security and justice programming and financing.⁶⁰ However, the 2019 ICAI follow-up on progress on the 2018 recommendations highlighted that “the CSSF has achieved significant progress in its response to most of them”, “there has been a step-change in

the quality of programme level documentation” and that “annual reviews now include the reporting of outcomes, not just outputs”.⁶¹

As an example of where outcomes have been demonstrated at the country level, a CSSF-funded Conflict Early Warning and Early Response System (CEWERS) in South Sudan was found to have contributed to a number of outcomes including reductions in the volumes of violent incidents, organised cattle raids and inter-communal conflict. In August 2017, CEWERS “issued a conflict alert after several sources confirmed mass mobilisation of Murle youth to launch an attack on areas of Jonglei State”.⁶² Stakeholders worked together to respond to the threat and talks were held with armed youths. “By the end of September, there were no reports of any organised cattle raids in Jonglei State, saving lives and livelihoods.”⁶³

As a general point, specific cross-departmental donor funds or facilities focusing on one ‘leg’ of the nexus clearly incentivise cross-government collaboration and targeted risk-informed interventions. They can also risk siloing nexus approaches, unless a systematic approach to building complementarity is taken. For the UK, some interviewees felt that the planning and programming cycles of development and humanitarian responses (overseen by DFID) being separate from those on peace and stability (managed by the National Security Council and delivered through the CSSF by delivery departments) could pose a challenge for complementarity across the nexus. Separated management for different aspects of the nexus may be necessary for strengthening cross-government approaches to delivering on certain priorities or in terms of safeguarding humanitarian principles. However, achieving complementarity as a minimum between humanitarian, development and peacebuilding activities is crucial to the nexus.

There are several opportunities for DFID and CSSF to build upon existing efforts to further systematise a complementary approach. Where CSSF and DFID are both present in country, there is scope to pursue joined-up planning and programming more actively – in London and in country. Lebanon is an example of where complementarity is being achieved at the country level. Government departments “work together using CSSF funds, to deliver and support activity to address the impacts felt from the conflict in neighbouring Syria”.⁶⁴ DFID has reportedly used CSSF funds to address pressures on the education system and on basic municipal service delivery caused by the influx of Syrian refugees. The Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) and Ministry of Defence (MOD) have supported programmes training the Lebanese Armed Forces (LAF) in parallel.⁶⁵ As another example: in Syria, the CSSF supports access to education in Western Aleppo and Idlib. CSSF funding has “enabled Syria’s education programme to work closely with community leaders and local organisations to support teachers and coordinate work across the education sector”.⁶⁶ This complements DFID bilateral funding which focuses on enhancing “the quality of needs-based education in a protracted crisis, including the provision of remedial literacy and numeracy, child protection and psycho-social support”.⁶⁷

While a key element of CSSF’s mandate focuses on agile, high-risk interventions driven by the government’s response to fast-moving developments, the CSSF could utilise and develop its potential for longer-term programming. Equally, DFID could reinvigorate its role in the design and delivery of these longer-term strategies (including those that

transition from the CSSF to DFID) through its participation in the Cross-Government Boards that steer CSSF activities. Regular dialogue and engagement between DFID's programme SROs and CSSF delivery teams, both in London and in-country, through existing systems would help to enable this.

Suggestions for the UK government as a donor

- CSSF and DFID could utilise existing cross-government systems for ensuring that joined-up planning and programming is actively undertaken at headquarters and in country, agreeing on a division of responsibilities and identifying a process for the CSSF to transition to DFID to manage longer-term aspects of the strategy. Systematising approaches for regular dialogue and engagement between DFID's programme SROs and CSSF delivery teams both in London and in country would help to enable this.
- The CSSF could utilise and develop its potential for longer-term programming and DFID could reinvigorate its role in the design and delivery of these longer-term strategies through its participation in the Cross-Government Boards that steer CSSF activities.
- More broadly and at the UK policy level, bringing priorities and results frameworks on resilience and peacebuilding together would help to forge greater synergies and align the peace element of the nexus with development and humanitarian programming. The new spending review is an opportunity to build these synergies.

3.5 Partnerships

Lessons: Partners can play a strategic role in supporting the UK to deliver on nexus commitments. Jointly discussing expectations for flexing in response to contextual change and delivering on resilience, peace and inclusion outcomes with partners and embedding these into partnership agreements will be key. It will be important to integrate nexus-related capacities of partners into future reviews, to move towards harmonised reporting requirements for NGOs and to strengthen the coherence of internal engagement with multilateral and NGO partners for more strategic outcomes. Testing approaches and developing experience in working with national governments is increasingly crucial from a nexus perspective, given the need to link short-term assistance with national development and social protection.

Partnerships with multilaterals

Multilateral agencies are a major channel of both development and humanitarian assistance in crisis contexts (accounting for over a third of UK ODA in 2017, Figure 5). This offers an opportunity to develop joined-up approaches within DFID to engaging with these agencies and identifying strategic partnership outcomes for risk, resilience and peacebuilding. However, DFID personnel tend to partner with agencies they know, or that are lower risk, rather than seeking greater comparative advantage. Largely as a result of the way in which the UN is structured, there is limited cross-over between departments

working on different aspects of the nexus, limiting opportunities for joined-up working. For example, humanitarian teams tend to work with UNOCHA and UNHCR, development teams with UNDP and peacebuilding teams with the UNDP Bureau for Crisis Prevention and the UN Peacebuilding Fund. Where there is cross-over, and development and humanitarian teams are partnering with the same agency, e.g. UNICEF, they often have separate management in the same country. Interviewees felt that this undermines DFID's strategic approach to partnerships. However, there are some examples of joined-up working, for example in the Water and Sanitation programme in Zimbabwe designed to respond to the cholera outbreak in 2018.⁶⁸

To move towards longer-term development programming in crisis contexts, it will be important to develop and systematise a joined-up approach internally to engaging with individual multilateral agencies in fragile and crisis contexts. External factors also play a role – including the capacity of multilateral agencies to deliver on the nexus, and the division of responsibilities within the UN structure itself. Some country personnel reported challenges they face in identifying multilateral agencies with appropriate skills and the mandate and scope to engage in the broad range of programming necessary, highlighting the importance of fostering partnerships with a broad range of partners on the nexus, such as technical NGOs; others were more positive regarding their experiences.

While multilateral agencies have promised to deliver on the nexus through international commitments, there is no further explicit requirement in DFID's partnership agreements. While the Smart Rules partnership principles touch on the importance of conflict sensitivity, partner approaches to risk, resilience and peacebuilding are not covered. This disincentivises DFID teams to select partners based on their comparative advantage.

To make progress on the nexus, it is vital that multilateral agencies, in receipt of such a large proportion of UK ODA (Figure 5), are incentivised to strengthen their capacities to deliver on resilience, risk and peace by incorporating expectations on these outcomes into existing or new partnership guidance (e.g. Smart Rules partnership principles) and performance management systems. Directly supporting partner staff capacity on the nexus through training and shared learning would also help to cement progress on this agenda. Future reviews of multilateral partnerships should explicitly cover the nexus, in contrast to previous reviews on the impact of channelling aid through multilateral agencies, such as the Multilateral Aid Review (MAR). While the MAR states a desire to support 'working together to maximise results', it does not explicitly focus on how DFID can enable this through its own internal practices. This is also relevant to broader donor reviews such as those of the Multilateral Organisation Performance Assessment Network (MOPAN).

Partnerships with governments

Partnering with governments and channelling assistance through national systems is a key component of the aid effectiveness agenda and the Grand Bargain commitment on localisation. As shown in Figure 5, very little UK humanitarian funding is channelled through the state, with a greater preference for multilateral channels. Working with governments to address crisis and risk raises difficult questions but is increasingly crucial from a nexus perspective, given the push towards longer-term development programming

in crisis contexts, and the essential role of governments in linking short-term assistance with national agendas on resilience, preparedness and social protection. DFID has demonstrated leadership internationally by championing the risk and resilience agenda and promoting the role of governments within this. The 2018 ICAI report praises DFID for its work to strengthen governments' resilience programming.⁶⁹

However, like many donors, DFID faces practical institutional challenges to meaningful partnerships with governments in humanitarian response, defaulting towards an internationally led response. As a result of the UK political landscape and pressure to demonstrate results, and as noted in the mid-term OECD DAC review, "DFID has become more sensitive to reputational and fiduciary risks and as a result puts less emphasis on using country systems. Although country offices use national systems where these are considered robust, DFID has made conditions for doing so more restrictive".⁷⁰ While governments are limited to being programming partners or access enablers, this calls into question their role in driving nexus priorities.⁷¹ DFID's experience in Ethiopia was that it was critical to engage with a broader set of ministries, beyond those coordinating emergency response – especially the finance ministry, given its role in administering government resources. Interviewees highlighted a potential nexus 'trade-off' whereby partnerships with national governments to deliver on the humanitarian–development nexus through resilience/disaster prevention can undermine the possibilities of engaging in the same country on peace and stability issues.

Partnerships with NGOs

DFID funds many multi-mandate NGOs working across humanitarian and development portfolios. This is a key opportunity for strategically linking partnerships with the nexus by encouraging NGOs to make connections across HDP programmes. However, as with multilateral agencies, there is no requirement for NGO partnerships to demonstrate progress on the nexus. Systems to enable NGO partners to employ flexible programming are key in approaching the nexus and in the UK's ability to flex in response to contextual changes (Section 3.4). Interviewees from country offices identified cases where DFID was supporting partners to build flexibility into their programmes, allowing them to adapt as required. However, the stringent reporting requirement for partners – resulting from efforts to de-risk in crisis contexts, the introduction of counter-terrorism legislation concerning NGOs, and the imperative to demonstrate results – was unanimously identified as the key challenge DFID faces in utilising partnerships for flexible programming, especially in fragile contexts where the need for flexibility is greatest.

ICAI's review of UK humanitarian funding highlights concern regarding DFID's use of payment by results and performance-based systems, which undermine partners' flexibility and the inherent benefits of core funding.⁷² The OECD DAC review noted that "reporting requirements for non-core funding are becoming heavy and time consuming... not always consistent across countries and are not harmonised with other donors putting the quality of partnerships at risk". Cumbersome reporting requirements affect multilateral agencies too.

ICAI's review of DFID's partnerships with civil society organisations (CSOs) found that DFID's current approach to funding does not empower CSOs to achieve the best possible

project results.⁷³ This was exacerbated in 2016 by the ending of unrestricted and core funding to CSOs, resulting in central and in-country funding being exclusively project-based and tightly restricted by results frameworks, reducing opportunities for strategy, learning and adaptation. The impact of this, as identified in the review of DFID's response to the drought in Somalia in 2017, is that the pool of partners is often too limited to deliver on anticipated outcomes. In Somalia, DFID reportedly worked through existing international partners, excluding local actors and limiting coverage, localisation and, potentially, innovation.⁷⁴ This has undermined DFID's progress on the Grand Bargain commitments on localisation and harmonised reporting.⁷⁵

However, the OECD DAC review of the UK notes that DFID has taken several steps to address the rigidity and weight of its internal procedures and to manage risk through innovative thinking, such as the formation of its Smart Rules which outline less rigid quality expectations and provide a basis for flexible and adaptive programming.⁷⁶ There remains a pressing need for more manageable, harmonised partner reporting requirements and clearer guidance on value for money regarding partnerships, and, to manage risk, a shift towards more regular monitoring and oversight mechanisms and away from heavy reporting. As explored in Section 3.6, flexible results management frameworks and clear communication with partners at the country level will be vital in managing programmes to enable flex in response to shocks and mobilisation of an IRF.

Suggestions for the UK government as a donor

- DFID could ensure that future cross-organisational and country-level reviews (including MAR) consider the structure and staffing skills of multilateral agencies in terms of the nexus.
- Performance indicators on risk, resilience and peace could be incorporated into partnership agreements and performance reviews of multilateral agencies and NGOs, and internal partnership guidance, such as Smart partnership principles, could better cover requirements regarding partner approaches to risk, resilience and peacebuilding. DFID could also consider providing direct capacity-building support to multilateral and NGO partner staff on the nexus.
- DFID could foster a more joined-up and strategic approach to engaging with individual multilateral agencies between the centre and country offices across humanitarian, development and peacebuilding programmes. While tools to support this are incorporated within Smart guidance ('Best Practice in Programming Coherently across DFID'), going beyond guidance to make it a requirement of programme planning that the centre systematically consults country offices when engaging with individual multilateral agencies (and vice versa) would strengthen this (Section 4.1).
- DFID could undertake in-depth research, generating learning on how the UK and other donors have worked with national governments in crisis response, and whether this has contributed to longer-term development programming. This could feed into wider external discussions to strengthen the strategic engagement of governments in driving the nexus, beyond acting as technical partners. DFID could streamline cumbersome NGO partner reporting requirements, enabling NGOs to flex better in

response to contextual changes. Lighter and more regular monitoring and oversight mechanisms would help to overcome risks associated with NGO partnerships.

3.6 Monitoring, evaluation and learning

Lessons: Learning from DFID’s experience on the nexus is not systematically shared across the organisation, and information on programme objectives, strategies and indicators is not centrally accessible in a user-friendly format. Establishing a central mechanism for organisational learning and information-sharing would help to fill this gap. This is especially crucial when tackling a new policy agenda such as the ‘triple nexus’ which requires experimentation and improvements over time. To strengthen accountability around the triple nexus, holistic qualitative and quantitative indicators on risk, resilience and peace should be identified, and beneficiary feedback mechanisms established to capture the perspectives of affected populations in programme design. Supporting teams with a menu of outcome-level indicators, potentially in the suggested operational guidance on the nexus, will be important, as will flexible and adaptive programming. Sustained efforts to test more flexible approaches to results management will be crucial.

Learning and information management

Capturing and sharing context-specific learning within DFID and across government departments is crucial to the nexus, especially given that this is a complex issue requiring new thinking. While there are challenges in capturing cross-sector learning and embedding it into responses, DFID is doing well in comparison to other government departments, especially at the individual programme and thematic level. At the country level, for example, in Nigeria an internal ‘education and emergency learning lab’ has been established to facilitate learning on designing education programmes in conflict-affected areas.

At the central level, in the absence of a cross-organisational system for capturing learning, central teams such as CHASE, the Inclusive Societies Department and other departments within the Policy Division, as well as cadres and Heads of Practice, are playing a vital role in filling this gap by capturing and sharing learning. They are also establishing communities of practice for providing country teams with technical advice (Section 4.1) and establishing internal central guidance documents such as *Mainstreaming Stability*⁷⁷ and the *Protracted Crises Discussion Paper* (Section 2.2). These efforts would enable broader uptake of learning, however, if they were systematised, incorporated into and supported by a centrally managed approach to learning. DFID has also established the Centre for Disaster Protection to drive learning on risk financing.

Responsibility for learning sits within each individual department and, despite several information-sharing platforms, there is no central authority for knowledge-sharing and learning. Although the Evidence into Action department has taken initial steps to capture learning, formats and dissemination are regarded as inadequate. The uptake of cross-

government learning is reportedly more of a challenge. ICAI is currently undertaking an in-depth review, which will help to identify opportunities for strengthening cross-institutional learning.

Information-sharing is also a prerequisite for building coherence, collaboration and complementarity. However, country and thematic strategies and results frameworks are often developed on a programme-by-programme basis and not connected strategically or designed to complement other relevant programmes across the nexus. As a result, headquarters-based thematic and policy teams have no systematic way of gathering information about thematic programmes operating at country level; and country programmes have no way to connect with other country programmes. Interviewees recounted examples of teams contributing to each other's annual reviews for learning purposes but this is not systematic. It would be helpful for departments and country teams to access each other's strategy documents and results frameworks, for which a central information system is required. While Business Cases published on the UK's DevTracker do summarise individual programmes, it is inefficient to sift through each document separately. A database with a search mechanism would improve the speed and ease of the process. The Aid Management Platform collects key information about programmes and enables staff to search for information about a specific programme, although it does not enable comparison of programmes using common results indicators.

Monitoring and evaluation

There is a clear and standardised approach in place for measuring programme results for all DFID programmes, as set out in the Smart guidance.⁷⁸ Measuring results relating to the nexus – involving programming across resilience, risk, early warning and preparedness, social protection, peacebuilding and crisis response – is complicated and requires tools different from the standard approaches to monitoring outputs and outcomes. However, it is crucial to identify practical qualitative and quantitative outcome-level indicators and test new approaches through an iterative process.

Ambitions to deliver on the nexus and associated beneficiary feedback mechanisms are not systematically incorporated into programme results frameworks set out in Business Cases, or in subsequent reviews and evaluations, thus limiting accountability around the nexus and undermining opportunities for learning. This is exacerbated by confusion among staff members about the concept of the 'nexus' and what it means in practice (Section 2.3). The suggested operational guidance could help to clarify expectations by including a menu of optional qualitative and quantitative outcome-level indicators on resilience and peacebuilding for use in programme planning, as well as guidance on capturing beneficiary feedback and feeding this into results management.

Adaptive programming

Adaptive programming enables more deliberate experimentation, learning and adaptation. It is an important factor in the nexus as it can enable programmes – simultaneous and sequential – to experiment when the solution to a problem is not obvious, or when the pathway to the solution is uncertain and dependant on a changing political economy. It involves using results to inform decisions on whether to scale up,

close or adapt interventions. Adaptive programming has been successfully implemented in some cases, for example through the Legal Assistance for Economic Reform (LASER) programme in eight DFID partner countries (2014–2017), which sought to improve the business environment and enabled an adaptive approach through regularly reviewing and updating the theory of change and logframe indicators.⁷⁹

The Better Delivery department has developed guidance on designing adaptive programming and on how it can be integrated into Business Cases, programme design and contracting processes. A recent review found that the guidance outlined in the Smart Rules allows for adaptive programming, promoting a delegated risk appetite which is encouraging innovation. It concludes that maintaining this risk appetite and encouraging uptake of adaptive programming will be essential given the UK's commitment to engage in fragile contexts.⁸⁰

While tools and guidance for adaptive programming are in place,⁸¹ the real challenge is delivery. Interviewees report that adaptive programming is hard to do well because of the pressure to track and report against predictable results. Overall, DFID systems do not incentivise adaptive programming. To change this requires a re-think on the design of programmes, results frameworks, monitoring and evaluation, procurement, partnerships and staff capacity-building. However, DFID's Smart Rules do allow for the use of alternative results frameworks where a linear logframe may be unsuitable.⁸² As a positive first step, the Better Delivery department is investigating more flexible alternatives to logframes (such as a 'change frame') used in results management, to support adaptive programming, although this is experimental and not yet standard practice. A critical aspect of this will be identifying ways to embed flexibility into NGO partnership agreements at the country level and to communicate clearly to NGO partners ways in which results will be managed in the case of programmes flexing in response to shocks or the mobilisation of an IRF (Section 3.5).

Suggestions for the UK government as a donor

- DFID could consider developing a central system for sharing learning and information on different programmes, including outcome-level indicators to encourage connections across programmes. This could build upon existing mechanisms, such as the Governance and Social Development Resource Centre (GSDRC) for capturing learning.
- DFID could include a menu of harmonised indicators on resilience and peace to use in programme design and results frameworks in the suggested standalone guidance on the nexus (Section 2.3), including prompts on the use of these indicators in the Business Case template.
- The Better Delivery Department could continue to test flexible results frameworks and other programme-cycle tools necessary to support adaptive programming.

4. Organisational structures and systems

Lessons: DFID's decentralised structure provides a strong foundation for working practically on the nexus. To realise the potential this offers, it will be important to build coherence between the centre and country offices on peace and resilience, developing strategies and structures for stronger regional engagement and expanding, formalising and mandating directly from leadership internal networks for providing country offices with technical support on all aspects of the nexus. Efforts to cross-pollinate expertise areas in policy/advisory staffing structures is supporting greater collaboration, coherence and complementarity, and could be expanded and systematised. Expanding the rule that Advisers can use a proportion of their time on other projects could be rolled out to cover joint and cross-cadre working for the whole staff.

4.1 Organisational structure

It could be argued that working at the nexus requires an overhaul of organisational structures, dismantling thematic and multi-disciplinary teams. However, this is not practical for DFID, and there are opportunities to strengthen work on the nexus within the current structure. DFID has the primary responsibility for UK aid, within the overall budget and framework agreed by Parliament. The 2015 Aid Strategy extended responsibility for the delivery of ODA to other government departments, and this primarily takes shape as ODA spend on stability, security and peacebuilding. DFID is the primary agency responsible for humanitarian spend. In 2018, DFID was responsible for 75% of total UK ODA spend, with the Department of Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy (BEIS) responsible for the second-largest share (5.8%), followed by the Foreign & Commonwealth Office (4.4 %) and the CSSF (4.2 %).

Within DFID, various teams cover areas of work of relevance to the nexus. Country offices play a vital role in delivering the nexus given the decentralised structure. At the central level, the Conflict, Humanitarian and Security Department (CHASE) is responsible for policy on humanitarian response, security and peacebuilding, policy on nexus through establishment of the Humanitarian and Protracted Crises Policy (HPCP) team, coordination of humanitarian response across DFID and management of the Crisis Reserve. The Policy Division oversees the direction of organisational policy on issues of central importance to the nexus (e.g. social protection, education, nutrition, and health), and the Economic Department (Private Sector and Growth and Resilience Departments) covers the role of the private sector in linking humanitarian assistance with longer-term recovery. The Global Partnerships, UN and Commonwealth teams as well as the International Financial Institutions Department (IFID) also play a role, given their potential

to shape joined-up approaches to partnerships. The cross-government Stabilisation Unit and NSC are also central stakeholders, given their coordination of issues relevant to the peace aspect of the nexus.

Collaboration between country offices and the centre on the nexus

Despite many benefits of the decentralised model, a key challenge is finding consistency in the approach of country offices and the centre (e.g. policy teams) in delivering on policy objectives, which in turn affects institutional impact across all policy areas. As one interviewee noted, “DFID has a very decentralised model but overlaid with corporate priorities and objectives which waxes and wanes a little”. The 2014 OECD DAC peer review of the UK found that DFID’s country offices are not systematically consulted about central programmes (and vice versa), which makes it difficult for them to have a comprehensive view of the department’s overall actions in country.⁸³

Guidance produced through the Smart Rules in 2016⁸⁴ helps to build consistency between country offices and central programmes and formalise expectations. However, it is not a requirement to follow the guidance and so coherence varies. Interviewees provided anecdotal examples of where resilience programmes had been developed at country level without consulting the central Climate and Resilience department, and of where central programmes had been designed without consulting country offices. In contrast to this, and sometimes in the very same country, there are examples of strong coherence in engaging with multilateral partners (e.g. in Ethiopia).

Internal networks for providing technical support from the centre to country offices on nexus-related issues in protracted crises play an important role. An informal community of practice (CoP) has been established to enable advisers in CHASE and the Policy Division to provide technical advice to country offices across a range of expertise areas (e.g. humanitarian, nutrition, social protection, health, education, conflict and security, climate and resilience). As noted, technical advice has been provided through this structure to country offices, e.g. South Sudan on strengthening coherence on health and nutrition (Section 3.2). Formalising this CoP and ensuring that it is mandated by DFID leadership will be crucial in determining its reach and influence. Existing CoPs on resilience and shock-responsive approaches also play key roles, as does the Resilience Board set up after ICAI’s review of DFID’s approach to resilience.⁸⁵

While regional departments are in place, the limitations they face and the absence of alternative regional mechanisms (e.g. sub-regional bodies) for addressing the scale of regional vulnerabilities emerged as a challenge of DFID’s decentralised structure, undermining communication between country offices addressing similar regional issues and between country offices and the centre. Given that many of the issues prioritised by the UK government have a regional dimension (e.g. conflict, climate change and climate-induced migration, disasters and fragility), a regional approach to addressing such issues is important.

Collaboration within DFID's central humanitarian, development and peacebuilding departments

Emerging changes to staffing structures in policy/advisory teams are helping to support greater collaboration across humanitarian and development departments. For example, the placing of a Conflict Adviser within IFID is helping to build synergies and strengthen DFID's work on the private sector in fragile and crisis contexts outside mainstream development. As another example, a Humanitarian Adviser has been placed within the Social Protection Team, Inclusive Societies Department, in the Policy Division, which is helping to forge stronger links between humanitarian response and longer-term development programming.

There are examples of opportunities being missed to build expertise and learning across different aspects of the nexus. For example, Advisers have the option of using 10% of their time to work on other projects for their own learning. There is no specific guidance attached to this, nor incentives to use this time to support coherence, collaboration and complementarity with regard to delivering on the nexus. The Heads of Profession structure is regarded positively and perceived to play a key role in promoting coherence and collaboration across relevant departments – by providing oversight of all engagement in the profession, supporting joint learning and bringing people together.

Suggestions for the UK government as a donor

- DFID could roll out the approach of cross-pollinating expertise areas in staffing structures more systematically to other departments, including embedding development staff into humanitarian departments, and vice versa.
- DFID could expand the rule enabling Advisers to use 10% of their time on other projects to all staff members, between cadres, and in engaging with joint activities such as annual reviews.
- DFID could consider establishing regional hubs to assist SROs at central and country levels to coordinate and achieve a joined-up approach to addressing regional issues. The delivery of the draft Africa Strategy provides an opportunity to test this approach.
- DFID could formalise and ensure CoPs relevant to the nexus and the provision of technical support in protracted crisis countries are mandated by DFID's senior management to strengthen uptake and buy-in.

4.2 Leadership, ownership and staff incentives

Lessons: Clear leadership is vital to progress on the nexus. The attitudes and behaviours of staff members are as important as systems and structures. Incentivising personnel to work flexibly in crisis contexts as a central approach to the nexus requires the establishment of a reward system in performance management, flexibility for engaging risks and, most fundamentally, a steer from leadership.

Fundamentally, effective working on the nexus requires strong leadership at headquarters and country levels, as well as through technical support and internal

networks. Staff members are unlikely to work to deliver on an agenda that has not been communicated as such by directors. To date, there has been no formal steer from senior leadership on this issue. Incentivising staff to think collaboratively and work in innovative ways to deliver on the nexus requires the ability to work more flexibly and take risks, although this is not well matched to DFID's culture of compliance and risk-avoidance. One interviewee commented, "people are encouraged to take risks but there are massive restrictions – pressure to show results, and protect DFID from any safeguarding, operational or reputational risks". As a result, the risk is passed to downstream partners. An ongoing conundrum for DFID management is working within these external constraints while encouraging innovation and flexibility.

The drive for delivering on the nexus sits within CHASE and specifically among humanitarian colleagues, reflecting where the push sits internationally. However, there is also engagement from conflict colleagues in the Building Stability team within CHASE, who are working on the development–peace nexus and collaboratively on the CSSF on peace and stability. To deliver fully on the nexus, improving on previous attempts,⁸⁶ the responsibility and accountability for this agenda must include development colleagues and partners. It calls for real change and a cultural shift in the perceptions of personnel across DFID and the whole UK government but also internationally. To enable such a cultural shift, staff incentives are critical. As one interviewee stated, "it is not the structures but the people that drive this [the nexus] – and incentives matter" (Section 3.2).

There is no official reward system in place for members of staff to recognise their efforts to enhance collaboration, coherence and complementarity. Where this is being promoted and achieved by individuals or teams, it is a result of volunteer time. This is corroborated in the Operational Model Review which found that informal incentives are strong. Examples include the efforts being taken with CHASE and the Policy Team to develop a CoP to provide country teams with technical advice on a range of issues in protracted crises (Section 4.1), as well strong working relationships between CHASE and policy teams on health, education, nutrition, climate and resilience and social protection. The inclusion of deliverables relating to the nexus in job descriptions and performance indicators is a key aspect of incentivising staff to deliver on this agenda.

Suggestions for the UK government as a donor

- A steer from leadership at both headquarters and country levels through formal communication will be critical.
- DFID could consider embedding the nexus into job descriptions, line management and performance indicators, and establishing a reward system such as an annual 'peace and resilience' staff award.

4.3 Staff skills and capacity

Lessons: DFID is increasingly using a multi-disciplinary team model in crisis contexts to ensure the right mix of expertise the right place, although this is not yet standard practice. For humanitarian responses to transition into longer-term programming, it is vital that the right mix of expertise is assembled from the

outset, not only in active crisis contexts but also pre- and post-crisis. Guidance on the formation of effective multi-disciplinary teams in different types of crises will be important, as will training for personnel working across HDP programmes to strengthen knowledge on risk, resilience, anticipatory and preventive approaches, and peacebuilding. More expertise at headquarters and country-level on fragility, resilience, peace and protracted crises would support broader uptake of nexus approaches at all levels.

For responding to rapid onset emergencies, DFID has developed strong systems and invested in appropriate skills development. As set out in the Smart Humanitarian Emergency Funding Guide, options for rapid response include surge Humanitarian Advisers, standby surge DFID Advisers to UN field capacity and OCHA rapid response mechanisms, provision of medical expertise (jointly with the NHS), search and rescue capabilities (jointly with the UK Fire and Rescue services) and technical expertise drawing on the cross-government Humanitarian Emergency Experts Group of Scientific Advisers.⁸⁷ The UK's use of staff flexibility in its successful response to the Ebola outbreak is an example of this.⁸⁸ Establishing the right skills for working across the nexus in protracted crises, and enabling staff to flex in response to changes in the context, is even more complex.

The Operating Model review found that DFID has limited flexibility in responding to emerging priorities and making the most of skills. Key challenges include 'grade creep', with more people in senior positions, and that staff members have limited time for thought leadership and learning.⁸⁹ To strengthen staff skills for greater adaptability to support the delivery of the nexus, and balance the need for expertise with flexibility, it is crucial that development and peacebuilding personnel understand and are trained in humanitarian response, risk financing, conflict sensitivity and engaging in crisis contexts. Equally, humanitarian staff could be trained in working with and through governments, in types of development and peacebuilding programming relevant in protracted crisis contexts (e.g. social protection and nutrition) and transitioning to recovery and peacebuilding. DFID currently largely relies on the existing expertise of advisory staff and does not systematically provide training, which is a limiting factor on the nexus where there is a limited pool of existing expertise. Appointing people with dedicated skills on fragility, resilience and the nexus at headquarters and country level is critical for operationalising the nexus in all aspects of planning and programming.⁹⁰

The OECD DAC peer review of the UK (2014)⁹¹ found that DFID has a forward-looking human resources strategy and makes every effort to ensure that it has the right people in the right places by, for example, increasing front-line staffing levels, developing new capabilities in critical areas and posting personnel in fragile contexts. However, more recent analysis demonstrated that staffing is low in proportion to aid spend, and the administration budget has not kept pace with increases in ODA. A report produced by the International Development Committee in 2017 stated that the headcount at DFID appears to have "fallen below what is required" to manage the UK aid budget.⁹²

DFID has moved towards a model of using multi-disciplinary teams at the outset of crisis contexts to ensure that the right expertise is in place, which is critical to delivering on the nexus and ensuring a joined-up approach. Some country offices have set up programme

boards where SROs can talk through and identify additional resources needed for coherence and complementarity.

There are several examples of this:

- In response to the Nepal earthquake, the humanitarian experts deployed were fully integrated into the country office, working closely with governance and development advisers.
- In Syria, a cross-cadre/technical advisory group was established, covering eight multi-disciplinary specialities.
- In Nigeria, multi-disciplinary teams have been established and the Education in Emergencies programme is led by development experts, enabling emergency response to connect with longer-term development priorities.
- In Yemen, Economic Advisers have been embedded into multi-disciplinary teams, ensuring that planning around the response considers the impact of the crisis on macroeconomic and trade dimensions. For example, Economic Advisers have supported joint analysis and donor engagement to support salary payments for municipal workers in the north as a preventive measure against cholera outbreaks.

While the use of multi-disciplinary teams is clearly beneficial, it is not systematised as standard practice, leading to diverse approaches by country offices. There has been a tendency for a more systematic approach when a rapid-onset crisis occurs, but not in pre-crisis risk and resilience contexts or in acute conflict contexts where the humanitarian response has been led primarily by humanitarian advisers (e.g. in South Sudan) and governance, private sector and development advisers have played a more peripheral role. To shift towards a staffing model that enables shorter-term humanitarian responses to transition into longer-term programming, it is vital that foundations for continuity are established by assembling the right mix of expertise from the outset, including humanitarian, development, peace/conflict, governance, climate/environment, financing and private sector expertise, in all contexts.

Suggestions for the UK government as a donor

- DFID could consider rolling out training for personnel working on humanitarian, development and peace programmes at central and country levels to strengthen their ability to flex in response to changes in contexts and foster joined-up working. Ensuring that applications for internal positions are not limited to specific cadres will also be important.
- DFID could consider expanding Smart Rules to include specific guidance on the formation of multi-disciplinary teams with skill sets spanning the nexus to ensure that country office staffing plans include capability on multi-sector crisis teams.
- DFID could consider appointing a team of advisers at headquarters level with expertise on fragility, resilience, peace and protracted crises to focus explicitly on providing support to country offices in operationalising the nexus. Embedding personnel with similar skills at country levels where contextually relevant will be equally important.

Appendix 1: Acknowledgements

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Appendix 2: Acronyms

CDD	Country Development Diagnostic
CHASE	Conflict, Humanitarian and Security department (DFID)
CoP	community of practice
CPS	conflict, peace and security
CSSF	Conflict, Stability and Security Fund
DAC	Development Assistance Committee (OECD)
DFID	Department for International Development (UK)
FCAS	fragile and conflict-affected state
HA	humanitarian assistance
HDP	humanitarian–development–peace
ICAI	Independent Commission for Aid Impact
IFID	International Financial Institutions Department (DFID)
IRF	Internal Risk Facility
MAR	Multilateral Aid Review
NAO	National Audit Office
NSC	National Security Council
SP	social protection
SRO	Senior Responsible Officer
QAU	Quality Assurance Unit

Appendix 3: Interviewees

Bellers, Roger, Senior Technical Adviser, DFID

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Wier, Gareth, Operating Model Review Lead, DFID

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Yocheva, Cvetina, Head of ODA Evidence and Evaluation, Independent Commission for Aid Impact

Zappa, Davide, Humanitarian Adviser, CHASE, DFID

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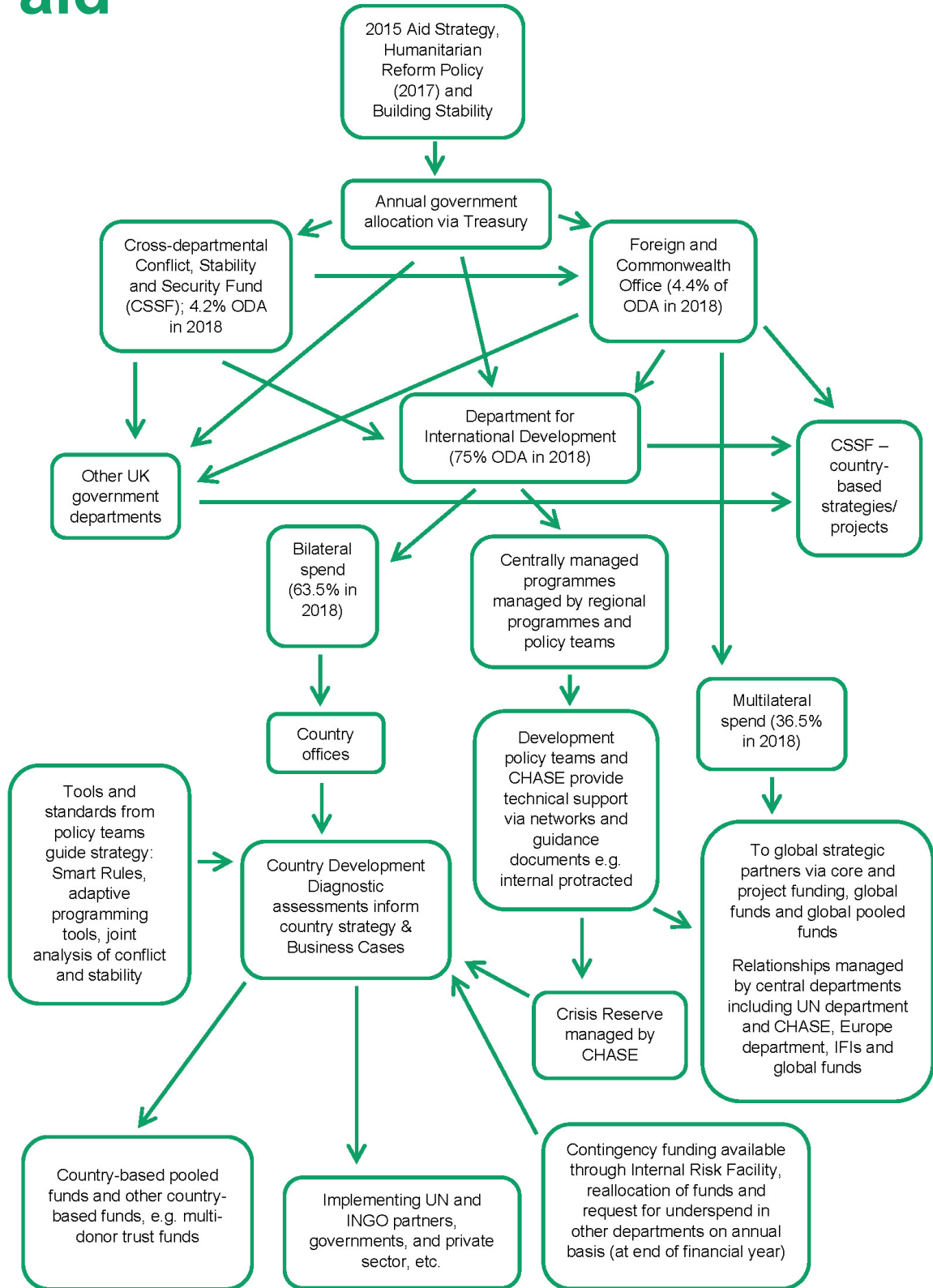
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Appendix 5: The flow of UK aid



Development Initiatives' illustration of the flow of UK aid

Appendix 6: UK aid for countries in protracted crisis

This appendix includes information on volumes of UK humanitarian assistance and developmental (non-humanitarian) ODA for countries experiencing protracted crisis or entering into protracted crisis response in 2018 and 2019: Iraq, Nigeria, Syria, Somalia and Yemen.

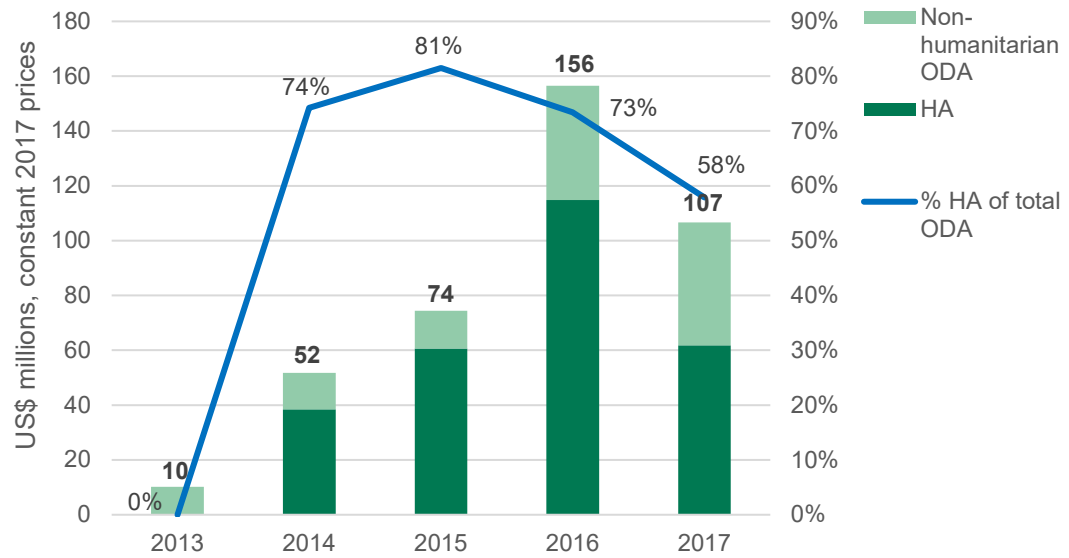
The criteria we have used to define countries in protracted crisis response is as follows.

- **Protracted crisis response countries:** countries which had UN-coordinated country response plans in place for at least five consecutive years in any point during the period 2000–2017.
- **Countries entering into protracted crisis response:** countries which had UN-coordinated country response plans in place for least five consecutive years as of 2018 or 2019.

For Iraq and Nigeria, it is not possible to demonstrate five consecutive years of data as they entered into protracted crisis response (i.e., with a first year of a UN-coordinated appeal) in 2014 and 2015 respectively, and 2017 is the most recent year for which OECD/DAC data is available for recipient countries.

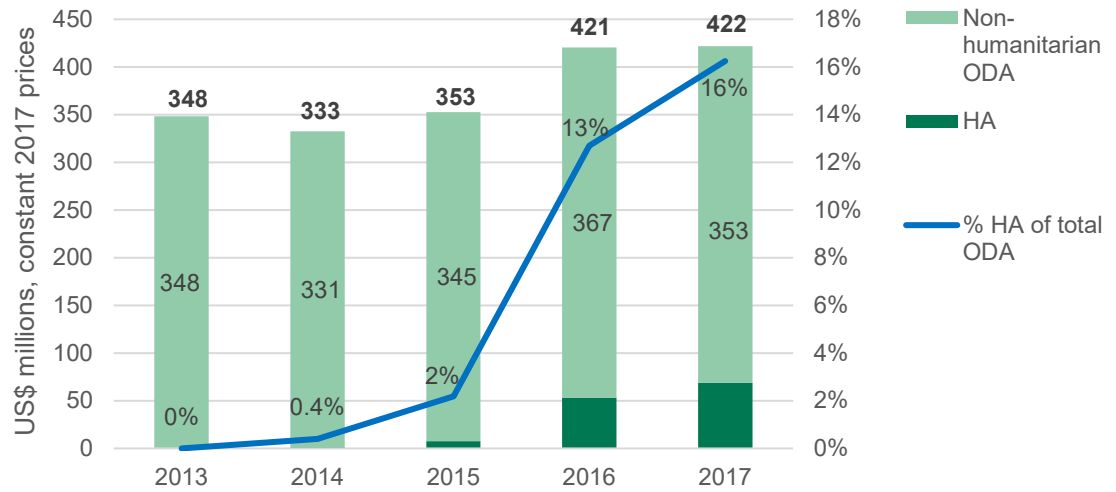
For consistency, Figures 7 to 11 show the total volume of humanitarian assistance received over the five-year period 2013–2017. However, this may not reflect the first five years of protracted crisis for some countries which have received funds through UN-coordinated appeals for many more years, such as Somalia which has been receiving funds through a UN-coordinated appeal since 2000.

Figure 7: UK ODA to Iraq, showing the proportion of humanitarian assistance (HA), 2013–2017



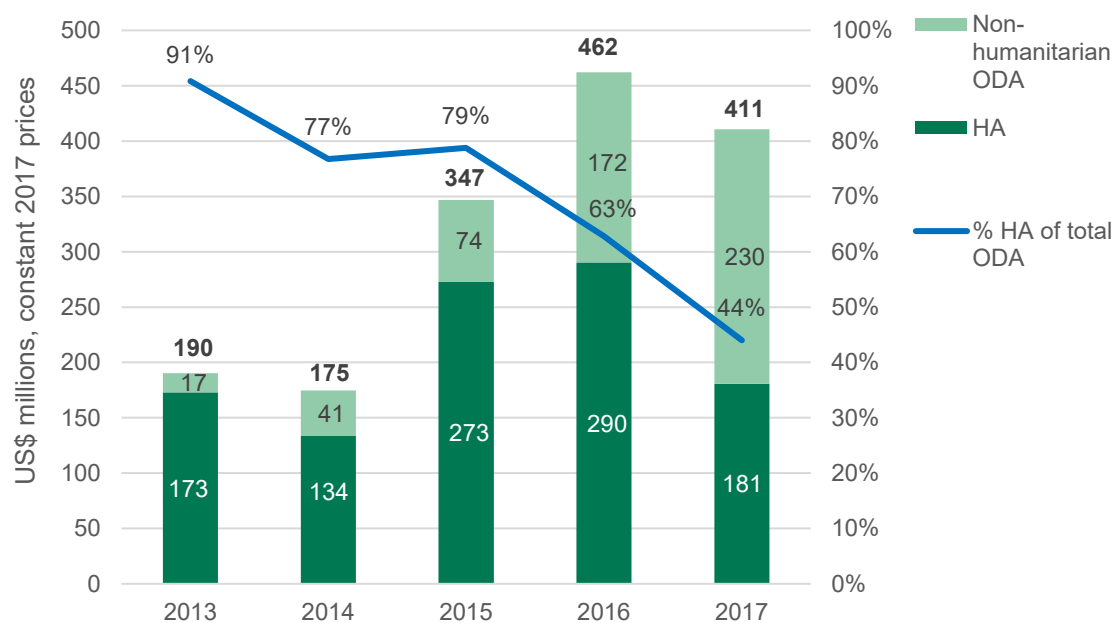
Source: Development Initiatives based on Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) Creditor Reporting System (CRS).

Figure 8: UK ODA to Nigeria, showing the proportion of humanitarian assistance (HA), 2013–2017



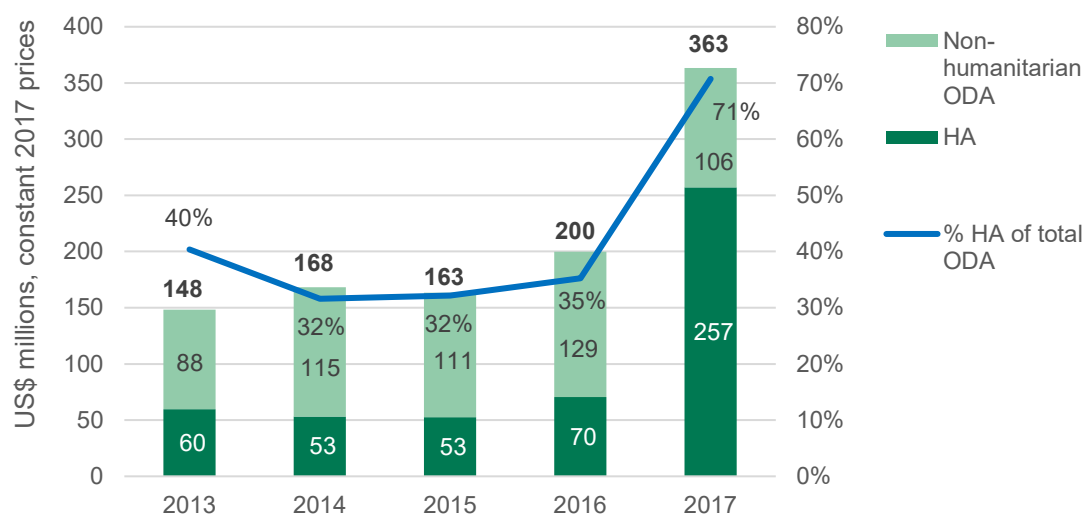
Source: Development Initiatives based on Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) Creditor Reporting System (CRS).

Figure 9: UK ODA to Syria, showing the proportion of humanitarian assistance (HA), 2013–2017



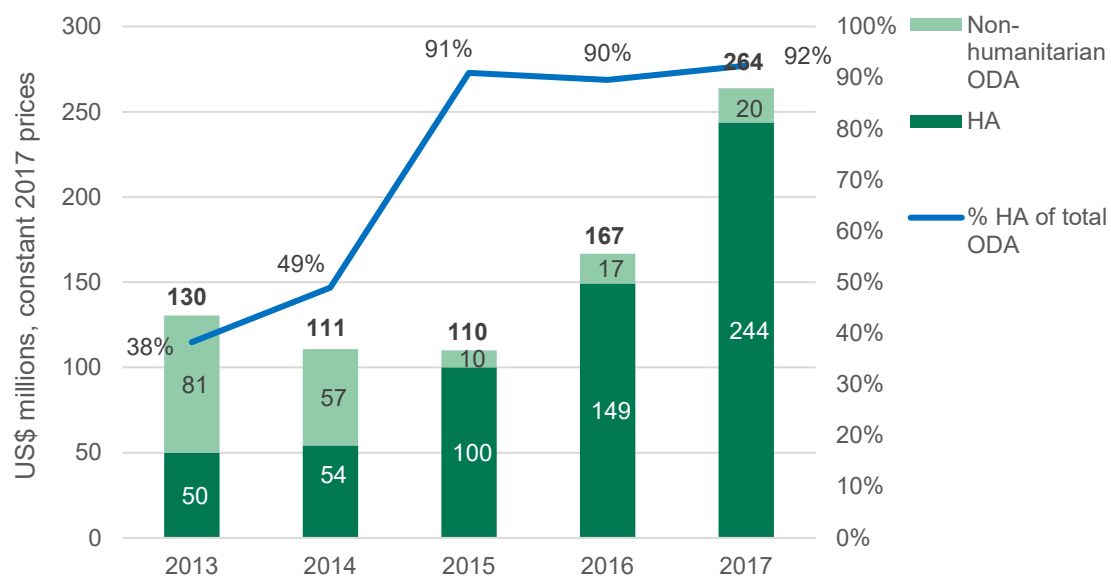
Source: Development Initiatives based on Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) Creditor Reporting System (CRS).

Figure 10: UK ODA to Somalia, showing the proportion of humanitarian assistance (HA), 2013–2017



Source: Development Initiatives based on Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) Creditor Reporting System (CRS).

Figure 11: UK ODA to Yemen, showing the proportion of humanitarian assistance (HA), 2013–2017



Source: Development Initiatives based on Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) Creditor Reporting System (CRS).

Notes

¹ As yet, there is no international consensus on the definition of 'collective outcomes'. For the purpose of this research and drawing upon the 'key elements' articulated by the IASC Task Team on the Humanitarian–Development Nexus, a 'collective outcome' is understood to refer to a jointly envisioned outcome which has the aim of addressing vulnerabilities and risks and requires the combined efforts of humanitarian, development and peace actors, among others.

² UN General Assembly Security Council, 2019. Peacebuilding and sustaining peace: report of the Secretary-General. Available at: https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/S_2019_448_E.pdf

³ OECD DAC, 2019. Recommendation on the humanitarian-development-peace nexus. Available at: <https://legalinstruments.oecd.org/public/doc/643/643.en.pdf>

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⁵ Poole, L. and Culbert, V., 2019. Financing the nexus: gaps and opportunities from a field perspective Geneva: FAO; UNDP; NRC

⁶ DFID, 2015. UK aid: tackling global challenges in the national interest. Available at:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/478834/ODA_strategy_final_web_0905.pdf

⁷ DFID, 2011. Building stability overseas strategy. Available at:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/67475/Building-g-stability-overseas-strategy.pdf

⁸ DFID, 2017. Saving lives, building resilience, reforming the system: the UK government's humanitarian reform policy. Available at:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/659965/UK-Humanitarian-Reform-Policy1.pdf

⁹ The UK uses its own list of fragile states, which differs from the OECD DAC list. The creation of the cross-departmental CSSF also reflects this shift in focus to fragile states.

¹⁰ DFID, 2011. Saving lives, preventing suffering and building resilience: the UK government's humanitarian policy. Available at:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/67467/The_20UK_20Government_s_20Humanitarian_20Policy_20-20September_202011_20-20Final.pdf

¹¹ DFID/UK Aid, 2017. Saving lives, building resilience, reforming the system: the UK government's humanitarian reform policy. Available at:

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¹² ICAI, 2018. Building resilience to natural disasters. Available at: <https://icai.independent.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/Building-resilience-to-natural-disasters-ICAI-review.pdf>

¹³ NAO, 2016. Department for International Development: responding to crises. Available at:

<https://www.nao.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2016/01/Responding-to-crises.pdf>

¹⁴ DFID, 2017. Protracted crises discussion paper: 10. Internal document

¹⁵ The significant increase in humanitarian assistance to non-fragile and conflict-affected states in 2013, compared to 2012, was driven by the increase of gross disbursements to Middle Eastern region (up US\$184 million to US\$203 million, a ninefold increase), South of Sahara region (up US\$41 million to US\$93 million, an increase of 78%) and the Philippines (US\$44.9 million in 2013 compared to US\$0.002 million in 2012).

¹⁶ Smart Rules were initially developed in 2014 (and updated twice a year) by the Better Delivery Department as guidance for staff members across a range of areas relevant to delivering effective programming using a combination of 37 rules.

¹⁷ DFID, 2017. Financial planning and budgeting policy. Internal document

¹⁸ DFID, 2016. Bilateral development review: technical note. Available at:

https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/Bilateral-Development_Review-technical-note-2016.pdf

- ¹⁹ The CDD tool provides a common analytical framework based on seven core parts that cut across different aspects of the triple nexus (e.g. political settlement and institutions, conflict, state capability, growth, growth transition, social policy and service delivery and resilience, with separate guidance for integrating climate and environment). DFID, 2016. Bilateral Development Review: technical note. Available at: https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/Bilateral-Development_Review-technical-note-2016.pdf
- ²⁰ Human development (which includes risk and shock responsive analysis), inclusion, inclusive growth, conflict, humanitarian and fragility, and governance.
- ²¹ Including but not limited to UN OCHA, UNHCR, WHO, ACAPs, Humanitarian Needs Overviews and Humanitarian Response Plans.
- ²² DFID, 2019. Grand Bargain in 2018: annual self-report narrative, UK. Available at: https://interagencystandingcommittee.org/system/files/uk_dfid_-_narrative_summary.pdf
- ²³ DFID, 2002. Conducting conflict assessments: guidance notes. Available at: www.conflict-recovery.org/bin/dfid-conflictassessmentguidance.pdf
- ²⁴ ODI/RUSI, 2018. Aid, security and Britain's role in the world: proposals for coherent government action. Available at: www.odi.org/sites/odi.org.uk/files/resource-documents/12152.pdf
- ²⁵ DFID, 2019. Quality Assurance Unit Annual report 2018. Internal document
- ²⁶ As described in Smart Guidance, heads of departments are required to set out business plans for strategic and portfolio priorities which translate spending reviews and RARs into a framework that is context specific and risk appropriate. Heads of department then allocate a Senior Responsible Officer (SRO) to each programme, responsible for the programme design, delivery, reporting, annual review, completion review and closure. SROs are responsible for developing programmatic concept notes in the design phase, a signed-off Business Case which sets out objectives for delivering on the business plan, and subsequently a delivery plan, monitoring and evaluation framework, logframe and risk register, as agreed with heads of departments.
- ²⁷ Specific activities may not be included in the Business Case, particularly where one multi-year Business Case is used to authorise multiple projects from different partners.
- ²⁸ DFID, 2019. Smart Rules: better programme delivery. Available at: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/791174/Smart-Rules-External-Apr19.pdf
- ²⁹ DFID, 2017. Business case summary: North East Nigeria Transition to Development Programme (NENTAD). Available at: <https://devtracker.dfid.gov.uk/projects/GB-GOV-1-300432/documents>
- ³⁰ The progress of the QAU is reviewed by the Investment Committee.
- ³¹ DFID, 2014. QAU Reviewers' Checklist. Internal document
- ³² DFID, 2018. Quality Assurance Unit Annual report 2017. Internal document
- ³³ DFID, 2019. Quality Assurance Unit Annual report 2018. Internal document
- ³⁴ BRACED, 2017. Crisis modifiers: a solution for a more flexible development-humanitarian system? Available at: www.odi.org/sites/odi.org.uk/files/resource-documents/11861.pdf
- ³⁵ UK Aid, 2019. BASIC – Better Assistance In Crisis: information sheet
- ³⁶ DFID, 2017. Protracted crises discussion paper 10. Internal document
- ³⁷ Social protection refers to the OECD DAC Creditor Reporting Service code 16010 (16010: Social Protection).
- ³⁸ UK Aid, 2018. Rapid real-time review DFID Somalia drought response. Available at: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/5a8566e4e5274a2e87dc3e43/DFID_Somalia_2017_IRF_Real_Time_Review_FINAL.pdf
- ³⁹ The IPC standardised scale categorises the severity of acute food insecurity (www.ipcinfo.org/ipcinfo-website/resources/resources-details/en/c/1129202/#targetText=The%20IPC%20standardized%20scale%20categorizes%20the%20severity%20of%20acute%20food%20insecurity.&targetText=The%20description%20of%20Phase%205,death%2C%20and%20destitution%20are%20evident).
- ⁴⁰ NAO, 2016. Department for International Development: responding to crises. Available at: www.nao.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2016/01/Responding-to-crises.pdf
- ⁴¹ From a key informant interview.
- ⁴² DFID, 2018. Business Case study: humanitarian protection for vulnerable refugees and host communities in Jordan. Available at: <https://devtracker.dfid.gov.uk/projects/GB-GOV-1-300537/documents>
- ⁴³ DFID, 2019. Annual review summary sheet: Building Resilience through Asset Creation and Enhancement II (BRACE II) programme in South Sudan (2015–2020). Available at: <https://devtracker.dfid.gov.uk/projects/GB-1-204888/documents>
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- ⁵¹ Ibid.
- ⁵² DFID, 2019. 'Shock responsive programming: designing Internal Risk Facilities (IRF) in DFID multiyear humanitarian and development programmes' (draft).
- ⁵³ UK Aid, 2018. Rapid real-time review: DFID Somalia drought response. Available at: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/5a8566e4e5274a2e87dc3e43/DFID_Somalia_2017_IRF_Real_Time_Review_FINAL.pdf
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- ⁵⁵ ICAI, 2018. The Conflict, Stability and Security Fund's aid spending: a performance review. Available at: <https://icai.independent.gov.uk/report/cssf/>
- ⁵⁶ Gov.UK webpage: Conflict, Stability and Security Fund: programme summaries <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/conflict-stability-and-security-fund-programme-summaries>. (accessed 27 November 2019)
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- ⁶⁶ Ibid., page 21.
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- ⁷⁷ DFID, 2019. Mainstreaming stability. Internal guidance document
- ⁷⁸ Indicators for measuring results are captured through the Business Case development process. All programmes must have an annual review within 12 months of a Business Case being approved. Post-approval reviews are also undertaken, as well as 'spot checks' and 'thorough reviews'. An SRO can close or restructure a programme with approval from the head of department. A scoring system is in place to rate programmes during an annual review – if a programme receives a review score of B or C, it must integrate improvement measures into the delivery plan. The QAU has recently amended the annual review report template, to better capture theory of change and proposed outcomes.
- ⁷⁹ DFID, 2016. Annual review: Legal Assistance for Economic Reform programme (LASER). Available at: <https://devtracker.dfid.gov.uk/projects/GB-1-202647/documents>
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- ⁸³ OECD DAC, 2014. Peer review of the UK. Available at: www.oecd.org/dac/peer-reviews/peer-review-unitedkingdom.htm
- ⁸⁴ DFID, 2016. Best practice in programming coherently across DFID. The guidance provides direction for SROs managing central programmes on engaging with country offices in design of regional, global, multi-annual programmes and for SROs at country level (country heads) to engage with central teams (e.g. policy division) when designing programmes or in response to central requests for country consultations. It covers issues from suppliers and programme design to monitoring and evaluation.
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- ⁸⁶ Focus on this issue has risen and fallen over last few decades, e.g. transitional financing in 2010.
- ⁸⁷ DFID, 2016. Smart Rules guide: humanitarian emergency funding guide. Internal document.
- ⁸⁸ NAO, 2016. Department for International Development: responding to crises. Available at: www.nao.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2016/01/Responding-to-crises.pdf
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