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Supporting longer term development in crises at the nexus

Lessons from Cameroon

report

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Executive summary

This Cameroon country report contributes to a multi-country study¹ focusing on the role of development actors in addressing people's longer term needs, risks and vulnerabilities, and supporting operationalisation of the humanitarian–development–peace (HDP) nexus. This is pertinent to the Covid-19 response, involving both immediate lifesaving assistance and longer term support for health systems, socioeconomic impacts and peacebuilding.²

Experience in Cameroon can inform global policy and practice for several reasons. Cameroon moved from a position of stability to three concurrent crises in the last five years, providing a learning opportunity for development actors adapting to deepening crises. It featured in an Inter-Agency Standing Committee's (IASC) study on financing the nexus,³ presenting opportunities to build on these findings. Cameroon is a priority country for the UN Joint Steering Committee to Advance Humanitarian and Development Collaboration and also for the Humanitarian Development Peace Initiative (HDPI), a joint initiative of the UN and World Bank emerging from a commitment made at the World Humanitarian Summit in 2016.

This study is part of Development Initiatives' programme of work on the nexus and aligns with objectives of the IASC Results Group 5 on Financing. It builds on 2019 research on donor approaches to the nexus⁴ and the IASC's research on financing the nexus,⁵ which identified a gap in understanding how development actors address longer term development needs of vulnerable populations and structural causes of crises. Other focus countries are Somalia and Bangladesh, and the study will conclude with a synthesis report setting out key findings and lessons across countries and recommendations for development actors engaging in crisis contexts.

From stability to three distinct crises

Until 2014, Cameroon was stable compared with neighbouring countries. Now three crises affect eight of Cameroon's 10 regions. Two are active conflicts and have required development actors to reconsider their relationship with the government: the sociopolitical (or 'English speaking') crisis in the west; and the international Lake Chad Basin crisis and Boko Haram insurgency in the north. There is a protracted displacement crisis in the eastern regions, affecting host communities and refugees from the Central African Republic. Food security in Cameroon has deteriorated, most acutely in regions affected by the sociopolitical and Lake Chad Basin crises. 1.4 million people were in Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC) Phase 3 or above between October and December 2019.⁶ Each crisis presents unique challenges and opportunities for working collaboratively to address the needs of vulnerable populations.

Development actors in Cameroon are delivering innovative approaches that target crisis-affected populations and are working collaboratively with humanitarian and peace actors. A transition is underway from humanitarian to development approaches in response to

forced displacement in the north and east, and donors are supporting parallel HDP programming, including in response to Covid-19 at the local level. Development actors still have a comparative advantage and key role in financing large-scale infrastructural and social programmes in alignment with government strategies and supporting reforms. Scaled-up efforts to systematically embed a focus on resilience, risk and peacebuilding, and coordination with other actors to address vulnerability, are filling the gap between humanitarian and longer term assistance, and helping to deliver on the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Recommendations specific to Cameroon

Strategy and partnerships

Collectively support and build the capacity of the government to deliver reforms to better target vulnerable populations

The escalation of the crisis in the English-speaking regions and marginalisation of crisis-affected regions in the north has forced donors to reconsider their relationship with the government. However, most donors continue to deliver aid through the central government. Solely aligning with existing priorities of central government will not benefit vulnerable communities. Development actors must play a stronger role in encouraging structural and policy reforms that would help address Cameroon's crises. This requires navigating politically sensitive issues head-on through dialogue with government and agreeing collective positions on critical issues, many of which are essential for achieving the SDGs such as allocating domestic resources to crisis-affected regions and increasing spending on service delivery in the social sectors. This is particularly critical in the context of limited consultation on the new national development strategy and ongoing budget support, which could be used to leverage dialogue. Development partners should collectively agree common positions on key structural and policy reforms as well as red lines on human rights abuses.

In the conflict-affected English-speaking regions, Cameroon's key development partners, as well as their respective political and diplomatic representation, should step up engagement with the government to encourage a political solution to the conflict. In addition, development partners should continue to explore ways to stay engaged in the English-speaking regions, including how to support the government to implement reforms that would de-escalate conflict and to continue to support local livelihoods and services. However, they also must review their partnerships and approach to ensure it is conflict sensitive and fully considers political, conflict and human rights risks. Simply continuing to work alongside the government poses the risk of exacerbating conflict and politicising the actors involved, unless adequately negotiated with all parties to the conflict and grounded in a political framework for peace agreed amongst international partners.

Coordination, prioritisation and planning

Strengthen tools and mechanisms for coordination between HDP actors at the country level, with cross-government buy-in and leadership

The UN-led Nexus Taskforce is an opportunity to strengthen joined-up analysis and programming and encourage regular review of strategic priorities by humanitarian and development partners. The UN's collective outcome approach in Cameroon, which has been championed by the Taskforce, has been a key stimulus for bringing HDP actors together and identifying and working towards shared ambitions. However, the UN is a relatively small player in Cameroon, and therefore it is critical that the Nexus Taskforce, which is led by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), sustain and deepen the engagement and leadership of key development partners, such as the World Bank and African Development Bank, at a senior level to have influence. Cross-government leadership and the engagement of government at the subnational level, for example through regional and local coordination mechanisms, will also be vital for impact. Working primarily with individual ministries will not necessarily generate the necessary buy-in across government to enable multi-sectoral responses in crisis regions. Thus, international actors must encourage involvement of all relevant ministries within the Nexus Taskforce and explore ways to strengthen coordination at the subnational level.

Programming and financing

Strengthen the focus of ODA on crisis-affected regions and use this to leverage government investment

Limited government investment in crisis regions in Cameroon is an ongoing cause of marginalisation, which is reinforced by ODA spending that is biased towards centrally led programmes. The government has highly centralised budget management systems, which may be contributing to grievances underlying conflict and to disparities in poverty and social outcomes between the centre and crisis-affected regions. 79.1% of developmental ODA was reported as targeting the central region in 2019, which may include funding for nationwide programmes implemented outside this region. In comparison, a very low share of ODA was reported as targeting the Northwest (1.2%), Southwest (1.8%) and North (1.1%) regions. A slightly greater proportion was allocated to the Far North Region (5.1%), which may reflect funding increases since 2017 in response to the regional Lake Chad Basin crisis. To deliver on the OECD Development Assistance Committee (DAC) nexus recommendation and address the history of uneven development that is major cause of conflict, development partners should ensure that a greater proportion of ODA targets crisis-affected regions and should use their leverage to move towards government co-financing. This will also require further progress in decentralisation and development of the technical capacity of local government.

International actors have had some success in encouraging government reforms on key issues impacting the lives of vulnerable people, for example the World Bank and Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR)'s support to a paradigm shift towards long-term solutions for refugees and host communities. This impact could

be strengthened on other issues, such as the socioeconomic marginalisation of the northern regions, addressing protracted internal displacement, decentralisation and the adoption of the Recovery and Peace Consolidation Strategy for Northern and East Cameroon 2018–2022 (RPC).

Development partners have often financed responses to Cameroon's crises through crisis-focused regional and multi-lateral funds and programmes. While these fill a gap in development support to resilience and recovery activities, there are risks. Funding through crisis-financing mechanisms may be less sustainable and not grounded in local needs; separate crisis-focused projects may limit opportunities to promote national development strategies that benefit crisis-affected populations and mainstream resilience, peacebuilding, risk and recovery. However, as policy reforms take time to systematise and political barriers are difficult to overcome, development actors should ensure that their funding through crisis-focused mechanisms complements and reinforces their country assistance strategies and efforts to promote national policy reforms. While in some cases this is done effectively, in others it is not clear that centrally managed funds are used in a complementary way – and this could be improved by decentralising decision-making to the country or regional level.

A further challenge is that current financing arrangements, including separate humanitarian and development budgets, do not incentivise collaboration between HDP actors or coordination among development partners. Development partners might explore a pooled funding mechanism as a way to enhance political cooperation and operational coordination and plug current gaps in funding for programmes that fall between traditional humanitarian or development approaches. Such a mechanism could provide flexible support for responses that integrate humanitarian, development and peace approaches (e.g. for recovery, resilience, peacebuilding, and safety nets, among other areas) or involve collaboration between HDP partners. To be effective, such a fund would have to be flexible, inclusive and strategic in its design, allowing for country-level decision-making and prioritising support to government reforms to better address crisis regions.

Recommendations from Cameroon but with relevance globally

Strategy and partnerships

Strengthen funding to a wider set of actors, beyond the central government, to ensure that vulnerable populations are targeted directly

Development actors should continue to engage with the central government to support reforms that will benefit vulnerable populations and promote long-term development in crisis-affected regions, even though these are long-term efforts and the government's political will remains unclear. Local governments in Cameroon, especially in marginalised crisis regions, lack funding to operate effectively and are weak given the history of centralised governance, and national and local NGOs are under-funded. Funding and technical support to local NGOs and local government authorities may help to address the lack of service delivery in crisis regions in the interim and promote decentralisation. However, to achieve this, development partners need to invest in developing the organisational and technical capacity of local NGOs and local authorities and address

blockages relating to risk management, due diligence and reporting requirements. This could be achieved by expanding special grant facilities for local NGOs and ensuring they are included in NGO consortia. Developing local and national government and NGO capacities is especially crucial in the context of Covid-19 where local actors are present and able to respond promptly to local needs.

Coordination, prioritisation and planning

Frequent context analysis and review of development strategies and a shift towards adaptive and complementary programme approaches are vital in crises

Reflecting their commitment to align with government priorities, development actors in Cameroon typically provide support through long-term strategic partnership frameworks, which are usually renewed every four to six years. While development actors often carry out an initial context assessment, this is not regularly updated or used to adapt strategic priorities throughout the planning cycle considering changes to the context. Some development actors, such as the World Bank, have adopted a flexible approach in Cameroon to address practical and operational challenges in insecure areas, especially in the north, and others have begun to use multi-scenario planning (e.g. UN agencies). While joined-up programming is not always appropriate and some level of separation may be necessary (e.g. to protect humanitarian principles), complementarity between HDP programmes should be sought as a minimum, especially when targeting the same communities.

Decentralise decision-making for greater flexibility of country teams

Decision-making structures for most development agencies and donors providing assistance to Cameroon (and broadly) are centralised, with key decisions on programming priorities and funding made at HQ level. This can undermine country-level coordination and the ability of country teams to make timely decisions in response to crisis. Decision-making on budget (re)allocation, partnerships and assessments should be driven by country staff, at least within set thresholds. The response to Covid-19 in Cameroon demonstrates that a rapid response, including the reallocation of funds, is possible when backed at the highest political levels from the centre. In support of a decentralised model, donors must ensure staff at the country level have expertise and guidance. Where it is not feasible to decentralise decision-making, such as with regional and global financing mechanisms, structured coordination between these and the country teams should take place to ensure this financing is used in a coordinated and complementary way.

Programming and financing

Integrate nexus-related ambitions such as on resilience, risk reduction, recovery and peace into national and donor development strategies and programming

Development actors can help to build resilience and support preventative, early action and participatory approaches in crisis, especially where support to resilience activities through humanitarian programmes are short term. A range of resilience-focused development programmes is in place in Cameroon. However, scale-up and sustainability will require systematic integration of resilience, recovery and support to social systems into the government's national development policies and strategies, and donors' country assistance strategies.

Integrate peace into development programming and build consensus on principles for collaboration between HDP actors in active conflict or other settings where there is a need to safeguard humanitarian space

Collaboration between HDP actors in regions with ongoing armed conflict in the north (related to the Boko Haram conflict) and west (related to the English-speaking separatist movement) has been challenging for a variety of reasons. In both contexts, humanitarian actors have voiced concerns about the need to safeguard humanitarian space, maintain independence from political agendas, and ensure needs-based targeting. Thus, while some information sharing or coordination is possible, for example to negotiate access, there is limited scope for an integrated or joined-up response. Nonetheless, collaboration between development and peace and security actors is possible, and development programming can be oriented to explicitly address peace and security objectives. Development actors vary in their commitments to address peace and fragility, but many have committed to stay engaged during conflict, to think and work politically, and to enhance the coherence of the security and development support. This is evident in stabilisation programmes in the north. In the west, many development actors initially suspended their programmes due to risks associated with the government's active role in the conflict as well as security risks, however some have begun to rethink their engagement and partnerships to reflect new security and conflict dynamics.

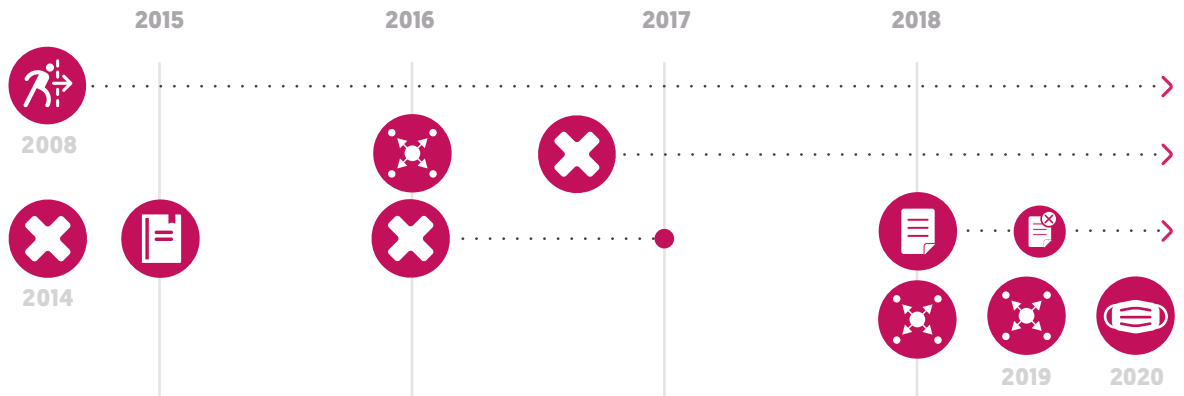
Although direct collaboration may not be desirable in all contexts, all humanitarian and development actors nonetheless have a responsibility to ensure their support is conflict sensitive. This may fall on a spectrum from avoiding harm to promoting peace. In displacement contexts, most actors broadly recognise the importance of promoting social cohesion between host communities and refugees/internally displaced persons (IDPs), but many are less clear on how to integrate peace/conflict sensitivity in active conflict or other humanitarian contexts. Some development actors have been slow to acknowledge Cameroon's fragility or adapt their strategies and partnership with the government to reflect that conflict dynamics are risks. They have had to balance the desire to maintain a constructive relationship with the government, by responding to its priorities, with the need for structural reforms to adequately address crisis-affected regions. As a minimum, development and humanitarian actors should take steps to internalise conflict sensitivity, including by investing in in-house analytical capacity and expertise. In addition, conflict sensitivity implies moving towards more inclusive planning processes, for example encouraging consultations around the National Development Plan.

Establish financing mechanisms that incentivise HDP actors to deliver in a coordinated way

To adapt to changing operating contexts and respond rapidly to needs, development programmes in Cameroon must have the flexibility to adapt approaches and reallocate funding, as well as access contingency funding. Yet, development actors typically have a long programming cycle, rigid, pre-planned programmatic and results frameworks, and little flexibility to adjust programmes and budgets. Furthermore, strict separation between humanitarian and development budgets limits flexibility and inhibits collaboration. In some contexts, this separation is necessary to safeguard humanitarian space and ensure needs-based targeting. However, in others, donor governments could better address both longer term issues and spikes in immediate need through reduced earmarking, flexible business processes to enable quicker decision-making and, ideally, reduced demarcation between humanitarian and development funding streams. Development actors including the World Bank, EU, UK and US have developed innovative financing tools that proactively manage risk (especially in areas with recurring disasters), such as contingency financing mechanisms, emergency reserves and crisis modifiers. Based on learning, these could be more widely used, and other bilateral and multi-lateral donors should develop similar crisis financing instruments, including embedding flexibility in pooled or multi-partner funds.

Timeline

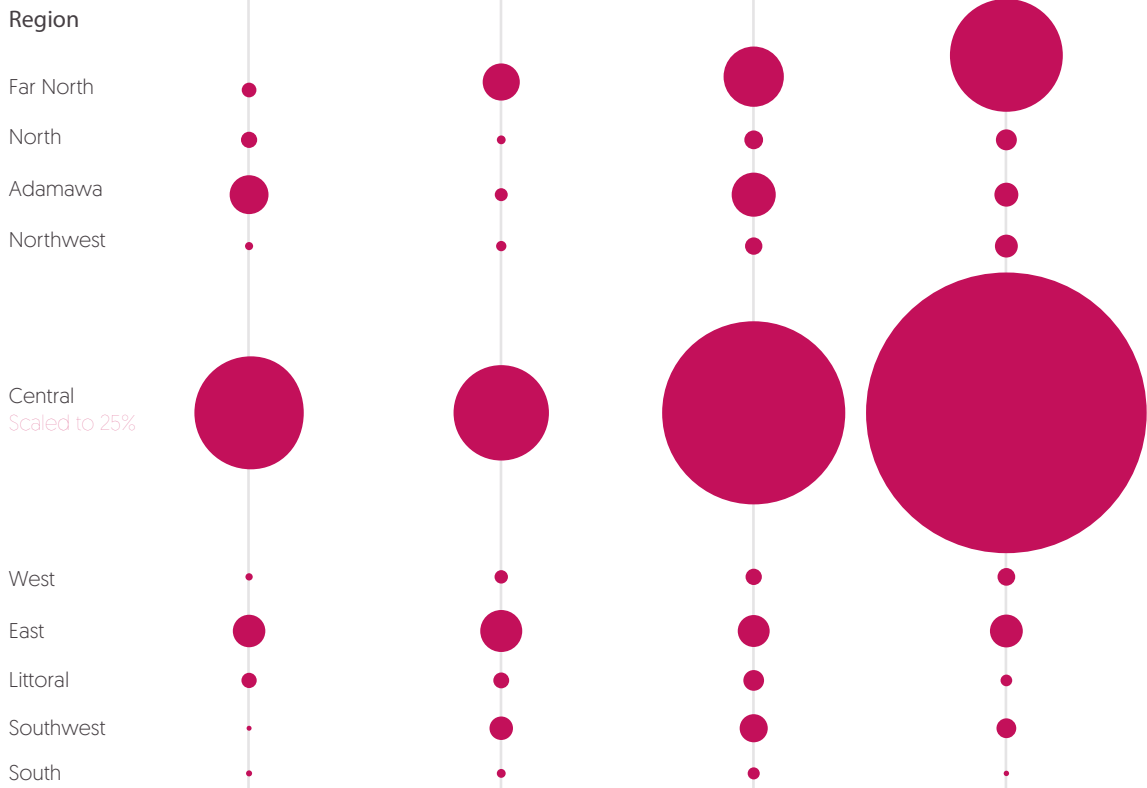
Refer to the timeline key for more detail



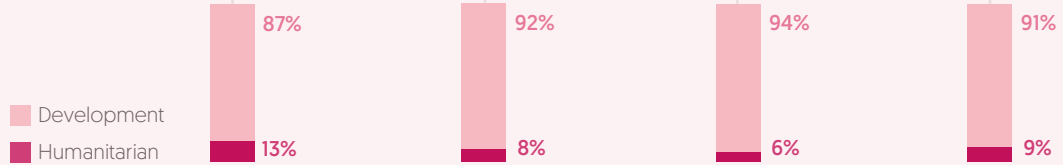
Total ODA, 2015-2018



Regional distribution of region specific ODA



Proportion of ODA as humanitarian and development assistance



Conflict and protests

- 2014**
Boko Haram entered the Far North region, causing large-scale displacement.
- 2016**
Protests arise out of tensions between the English-speaking community and the Francophone-dominated government, escalating into armed conflict.
- Violence erupted in the English-speaking Northwest and Southwest regions, and is still ongoing.

Decentralisation

- 2016**
Local councils given full power to carry out constitutionally-mandated functions.
- 2018**
The Ministry of Decentralisation and Local Development established aiming to modernise local councils.
- 2019**
Bill to institute the General code of regional and local authorities.

Displacement

- 2008**
Ongoing displacement with refugees from CAR in the eastern regions and from Nigeria in the northern regions, and a large and growing IDP population in the Far North and English-speaking regions.

Vision 2035

- 2015**
Vision 2035 agreed with the aim of establishing Cameroon as an emerging market by 2035.

Recovery and Peace Consolidation Strategy

- 2018**
Joint UN-government recovery and peace consolidation strategy developed for Northern and East Cameroon. This has yet to be ratified by government.

Covid-19

- 2020**
Covid-19 and national Covid-19 response plan.

Introduction

Strengthening joined-up humanitarian, development and peace responses requires a shift towards “development where possible and humanitarian only when necessary”, as recognised by the OECD Development Assistance Committee (DAC) (see Box 1 for key terms used in this report). Humanitarian and development actors have a joint responsibility for preventing, managing and recovering from crises. However, they approach crises with different priorities, objectives, policies and programmatic methods. The result is not only a disconnect in their understanding but also gaps in response in crisis contexts. Previous research by Development Initiatives and the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC)⁷ identified the need for further research on the current and potential role of development finance and institutions in complementing humanitarian action to provide more durable solutions for crisis-affected people. This is pertinent in responding to Covid-19, which involves needs for both immediate lifesaving assistance and longer term support for health systems, socioeconomic impacts and peacebuilding.⁸

This country report on Cameroon contributes to a multi-country study⁹ focusing on the role of development actors in addressing people’s longer term needs, risks and vulnerabilities, and supporting the operationalisation of the humanitarian–development–peace (HDP) nexus.

Cameroon has been selected as a focus country and its experience can inform global policy and practice for several reasons. Firstly, Cameroon has moved from a position of stability to three concurrent crises in the last five years, raising questions about how development actors have adapted to this shifting context. Secondly, Cameroon was a case country for the IASC’s study on financing the nexus,¹⁰ presenting opportunities to build on findings from this initial research. Thirdly, Cameroon is as a pilot country for the UN Joint Steering Committee to Advance Humanitarian and Development Collaboration and the Humanitarian Development Peace Initiative (HDPI), a joint initiative of the UN and World Bank that emerged from a commitment made at the World Humanitarian Summit in 2016. Further country studies are underway in Somalia and Bangladesh, which will conclude in a synthesis report setting out key findings and lessons across country studies and recommendations for development actors engaging in crisis contexts.

As part of Development Initiatives’ broader programme of work on the nexus, research undertaken in 2019 on the approach of donors identified a gap in evidence on the ways in which development actors are already and can better address the longer term development needs of vulnerable populations and structural causes of crisis.¹¹ This evidence gap was corroborated in the research of others, including the IASC.¹² This report aims to improve understanding of how development assistance currently targets crisis-affected populations and addresses the structural causes of crisis within Cameroon. It explores how development actors support the delivery of joined-up responses in Cameroon by working alongside and in collaboration with humanitarian and peace actors at the strategic, practical and institutional levels. It identifies examples of good practice,

learning and recommendations for how development assistance can better prevent and respond to crisis situations and support the delivery of the HDP nexus agenda, both within Cameroon and more broadly.

The research findings are based on a desk review of relevant documentation, key informant interviews (KIIs) with approximately 50 development actors engaging in Cameroon and based at local, national and international (HQ) levels (Appendix 1), and webinars to validate recommendation and deepen analysis.¹³

Box 1: Definitions of key terms

Nexus: This paper uses ‘nexus’ or ‘triple nexus’ as shorthand terms for the connections between humanitarian, development and peacebuilding approaches. We align with the OECD DAC definition:

“‘Nexus approach’ refers to the aim of strengthening collaboration, coherence and complementarity. The approach seeks to capitalize 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.”¹⁴

Achieving collaboration, coherence and complementarity means quite different things to different actors. We understand the three ambitions to sit on a spectrum from complementarity to coherence, with complementarity the minimum requirement for approaching the nexus. At the higher 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. The concept of shared or collective outcomes was conceived by the UN in preparation for and follow-up to the World Humanitarian Summit and recently adopted in the UN-IASC Light Guidance on Collective Outcomes.¹⁵ We also recognise that there are three dual nexuses within the triple nexus – the well-established humanitarian–development, the development–peace and humanitarian–peace nexuses.

This report focuses explicitly on the role of development actors, covering the development–peace and development–humanitarian nexuses. Specifically, this means understanding how development actors are working collaboratively, coherently and complementarily with humanitarian and peace actors at the strategic, practical and institutional levels to address the needs of vulnerable crisis-affected populations. This will translate into actions under a range of existing concepts including resilience, recovery, inclusion and peacebuilding, and embedding risk, among others.

Resilience: We align with the OECD DAC definition:

“The ability of households, communities, and nations to absorb and recover from shocks, whilst 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 whilst strengthening the capacities and resources of a system in order to cope with risks, stresses and shocks.”¹⁶

Resilience is understood as cross-cutting to humanitarian, development and peacebuilding activities.

Early recovery: An approach that addresses recovery needs arising during the humanitarian phase of an emergency, using humanitarian mechanisms that align with development principles. The multidimensional process of recovery begins in the early days of a humanitarian response.

Recovery: This is the restoration, and improvement where appropriate, of facilities, livelihoods and living conditions of disaster-affected communities, including efforts to reduce disaster risk factors, largely through development assistance.¹⁷

Development: This report focuses explicitly on the role of development actors and actions in crisis contexts. Here, we understand ‘development’ as long-term support to developing countries to deliver sustainable solutions for addressing poverty, supporting livelihoods and providing basic services, with a particular focus on those in greatest need and furthest behind. We understand development actors to include donors, NGOs, UN agencies, multilateral development banks, local and national authorities, and private sector and community-based organisations.

Peace: There are many ways to understand conflict and peace, and clear overlaps with development and resilience. In this report, where there is not yet consensus on what is covered in the ‘peace’ aspect of the triple nexus, we understand it to include conflict prevention, conflict sensitivity (to ensure programming avoids harm and where possible builds peace), peacebuilding and mediation efforts at local, national and regional levels. To cover all possible ‘peace-related’ activities in the research, we have included a focus on stabilisation and efforts to tackle violent extremism though recognise the contentions between political priorities on security and stability and safeguarding humanitarian principles.

Humanitarian action: Humanitarian action is intended to:

“...save lives, alleviate suffering and maintain human dignity during and after man-made crises and disasters caused by natural hazards, as well as to prevent and strengthen preparedness for when such situations occur.”¹⁸

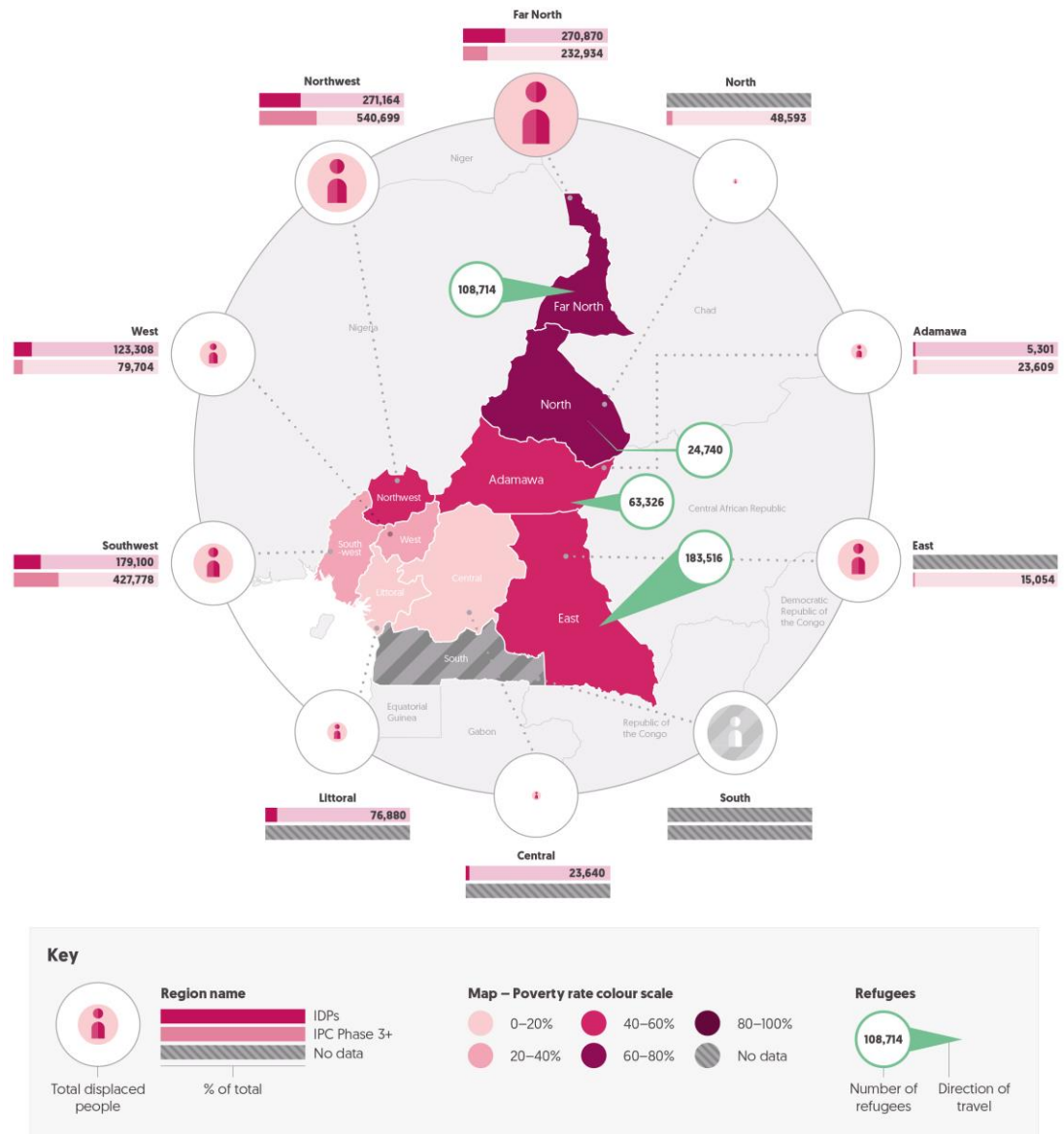
Furthermore, humanitarian action should be governed by the key humanitarian principles of humanity, impartiality, neutrality and independence.

Crisis context

Three separate crises, different opportunities and challenges

Cameroon is the largest economy of the Central African Economic and Monetary Community¹⁹ and a lower middle-income country that was, until 2014, relatively stable in comparison to its neighbours. However, the country now faces three simultaneous humanitarian crises affecting eight of Cameroon's 10 regions (Figure 1). The escalation of the separatist conflict in the Northwest and Southwest and the rapidly deteriorating security situation since 2017 has resulted in growing internal displacement and protection risks. In addition, the Far North has been impacted by the prolonged regional Boko Haram conflict, which is further exacerbated by climatic vulnerability. Finally, the eastern regions face pressures related to the protracted displacement and vulnerability of refugees from the Central African Republic (CAR). As a result of these dynamics, the number of internally displaced people (IDPs) now outpaces the number of refugees, and the population that is food insecure has grown in recent years. The map shows a higher number of IDPs (950,263) than refugees (406,277 from CAR, Nigeria and urban refugees and asylum seekers) in December 2019.²⁰ The number of people experiencing crisis levels of food insecurity (Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC) Phase 3 or above) rose to 1.4 million during October – December 2019.²¹

Figure 1: Levels of food insecurity, poverty and displacement by region



Source: Development Initiatives based on UNHCR, World Bank PovcalNet and Demographic and Health Surveys and Food Security Information Network.

Notes: UNHCR figures for refugees and internally displaced persons (IDPs) are as of December 2019. Total displaced people do not include returnees. Cameroon also has a small population of asylum seekers and urban refugees that are not included in these figures. IPC Phase 3+ as of October 2019 includes people experiencing acute food and livelihood crisis (IPC 3), humanitarian emergencies (IPC 4) or famine and humanitarian catastrophe (IPC 5). No region in Cameroon is in IPC Phase 5. P20 figures from 2018. *P20 data for the Southwest region is representative of urban areas only and is not strictly comparable with P20 levels in the other regions. P20 = the poorest 20% of people.

CAR refugee crisis, East and Adamawa regions: Protracted displacement

While refugees from CAR have moved into Cameroon since 2004, the situation escalated in 2014 with a large and sudden wave of arrivals into east Cameroon following an escalation in violence in CAR. This triggered a humanitarian response in eastern regions, which are today home to over 270,000 refugees from CAR.²² Although there are agreements in place to facilitate the voluntary return of CAR refugees, and approximately 6,000 refugees plan to return to CAR, there is limited prospect of return for the vast majority of refugees due to continued insecurity in CAR.

While there continue to be some new arrivals, the emergency phase has passed and the needs of refugees require structural and longer term responses. More than 98% of CAR refugees are estimated to be living below the national poverty line and struggle to meet their basic needs.²³ According to the Refugee Influx Emergency Vulnerability Assessment, combining food insecurity and poverty, 87% of CAR refugees (over 200,000) are highly vulnerable.²⁴ Tensions between refugees and host populations have, according to some interviewees, risen with increased pressure on natural resources and basic social services, exacerbating pre-existing vulnerabilities, particularly among agro-pastoral communities. Access to basic services is limited for both refugees and host communities.

Lake Chad Basin crisis and Boko Haram insurgency, North and Far North regions: Marginalisation, cross-border conflict and displacement

The northern regions of Cameroon are affected by the decade-long conflict involving Boko Haram in the Lake Chad Basin, which has displaced 2.4 million people and affects some 17 million people in Nigeria, Cameroon, Chad and Niger. Following Nigeria, Cameroon is the second most affected country.²⁵ This crisis has multiple, interlinked causes. These revolve around the drying out of Lake Chad, once one of Africa's largest freshwater bodies and a source of livelihoods for millions of people, due to climate change and overuse. Declining resources coupled with a growing population resulted in migration and increased conflicts over pasture and water, especially between herders and farmers. The crisis escalated with the emergence of the militant Islamist Boko Haram insurgency, which the US officially designated a terrorist organisation in 2013. It has been further reinforced by the structural and longstanding under-development of the region; a broken social contract manifested in lawlessness; the lack of a consistent institutional and security response to the Boko Haram insurgency; and a deepening climate crisis, with recurrent flooding and drought.²⁶

The North and Far North were already Cameroon's poorest regions before the Boko Haram insurgency. 74.3% of the four million inhabitants in the Far North live below the poverty line, compared with a national average of 37.5%.²⁷ Access to essential social services remains extremely limited. Boko Haram's attacks since 2014 have forcibly displaced civilians within Cameroon and across the Nigerian–Cameroon border. The Far North is the region most affected by Boko Haram, with ongoing attacks and suicide bombings, while the North is impacted by both the Boko Haram insurgency and the crisis in CAR.

In 2014, the international community mobilised a humanitarian response to the IDP and refugee crisis in the Far North.²⁸ Conflict and displacement in the Far North is ongoing, with 1 million people in need of urgent assistance and 480,000 people displaced (including returnees) in 2020.²⁹ However, there are also areas of stability,³⁰ with various recovery and development programmes in place.

Sociopolitical crisis, English-speaking Southwest and Northwest regions: Active domestic conflict and internal displacement

Since the 1990s, the two mainly English-speaking regions of Cameroon – the Northwest and Southwest – have been engaged in ongoing resistance aimed at gaining greater legal and political autonomy and addressing the region’s perceived marginalisation. Protests in 2016 escalated into an armed conflict between the government’s security forces and English-speaking separatists. The situation then rapidly deteriorated, with grave human rights violations on both sides. Almost 680,000 Cameroonians are now internally displaced due to the crisis in the English-speaking regions.³¹

The government officially recognised the crisis in the English-speaking regions at the end of 2018 and organised the Major National Dialogue aimed at resolving the conflict in September/October 2019. However, the English-speaking separatists boycotted the dialogue. The main recommendation emerging from this process was to accelerate decentralisation and grant the English-speaking regions special status.

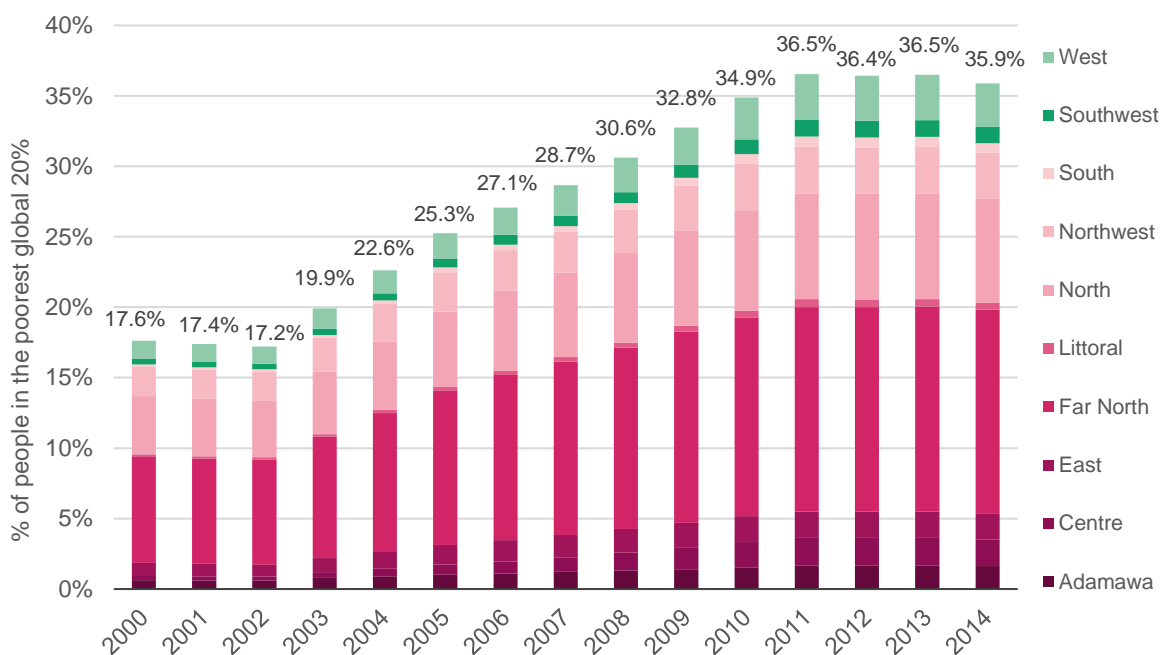
Humanitarian resources were first allocated to the English-speaking regions in 2019, when the government officially recognised the crisis, and have since been scaled up. However, international agencies interviewed claim that humanitarian needs in the English-speaking regions are greater than reported by the government and there has not yet been a comprehensive needs assessment. Key development actors, including the World Bank and United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), are also considering ways to support longer term recovery and development.

Poverty, inequality and government policy

Crises exacerbated by inequality and centralisation

Uneven economic development, which has marginalised rural areas and the northern and eastern regions, is a major structural driver of Cameroon’s three crises. Political and economic power is highly centralised. Although gross domestic product (GDP) has grown, aggregate national poverty levels have remained static over the last decade (with 39.9% of the population living in poverty³² in 2007 and 39.1% in 2019). Economic growth and development have largely benefited the central and southern regions, with the poorest people heavily concentrated in the conflict-affected North and Far North regions (Figure 2).³³ The number of people living in poverty more than doubled between 2001 and 2014 in the North and Far North.³⁴ The government’s own data shows a similar trend, but also shows higher poverty levels in the Northwest and disparities between rural and urban areas.³⁵

Figure 2: Proportion of the poorest 20% of people globally, by region of Cameroon, 2000–2014



Source: Development Initiatives based on UNICEF Multiple Indicator Cluster Surveys (MICS).

The primary focus of the government’s development policy and strategy has been on economic development, with minimal attention to reducing disparities or targeting poorer regions and groups. Vision 2035, Cameroon’s national development strategy and plan for 2010–2020, is largely focused on making the country an emerging economy by 2035 (Appendix 2).³⁶ The northern and eastern regions have long experienced low state presence and public investments, especially in social sectors, as well as poor public administration and implementation capacities, poor governance and community participation.³⁷ Only around 1% of GDP is allocated to municipalities, and their expenditures represent less than 5.56% of national public expenditures.³⁸ Resource and budget allocations are distributed through patronage systems, rather than according to local needs and priorities.

The new national development strategy for 2020–2030 (in support of Vision 2035; currently pending approval by the President³⁹) according to UN representatives reportedly offers more opportunities to address inequalities through a pro-poor approach, support to social sectors and emphasis on the needs of refugees and crisis-affected people (Appendix 2). However, the strategy is not publicly available and interviewees report that the consultation process has been relatively narrow.

Low domestic investment in human development

Relatively low levels of investment in health, education and social protection in Cameroon exacerbate marginalisation.

- **Health:** Cameroon's proportional health spending is among the lowest in the world⁴⁰ and has disproportionately benefited large tertiary hospitals at the expense of more cost-effective primary care.⁴¹ Data on child mortality reveals a similar trend in terms of disparities between regions.⁴²
- **Social protection:** Social protection spending is among the lowest in sub-Saharan Africa at less than 0.1% of GDP, and a large share of the social protection budget goes to civil servants' pension schemes, with limited labour market programmes at the expense of poor and vulnerable households.⁴³
- **Education:** Education spending has also been relatively low compared with other countries in Africa, and poorer regions have systematically received less. For example, students in the North Region receive 2.2 times less spending than students in the Littoral Region. Data on school attendance reveals a significantly worse outcome for Adamawa, the North and the Far North compared with other regions.

Decentralisation and investment in poorer, crisis-affected regions

Public discontent with the government as a result of marginalisation and exclusion, especially in the northern, eastern and English-speaking regions,⁴⁴ has led to calls for decentralisation and greater regional autonomy. In 1996, Cameroon adopted a new constitution that granted greater autonomy to the regions, but few provisions were initially implemented. Basic competencies and resources were transferred to local councils only in 2010, and in December 2016 they were given full power to carry out their constitutionally mandated 63 functions. In recent years, the government has made commitments to accelerate this process and taken steps to strengthen local government capacity, mainly in response to demands from English-speaking regions (Box 2). However, despite the significant expansion of local government responsibilities, the central government has yet to increase fiscal transfers to local government. Cameroon has a highly centralised system for managing its domestic budget, with 87% of public expenditure managed at the central level as of 2015.⁴⁵ The weak capacity of local government and municipalities to manage funds and deliver services is a key reason for this and makes it challenging for donors to channel funding to the regions.

A further challenge is that Cameroon's spending on health, education and other public services is low compared with other sub-Saharan African countries and is biased towards the more developed regions rather than reflecting the needs of local populations. For example, health spending is driven by the presence of health facilities rather than needs, such that the northern and eastern regions receive less funding per capita compared with other regions despite their higher rate of under-five mortality.⁴⁶ A similar pattern exists in the education sector, with the lowest levels of spending per student in the areas with greatest need.

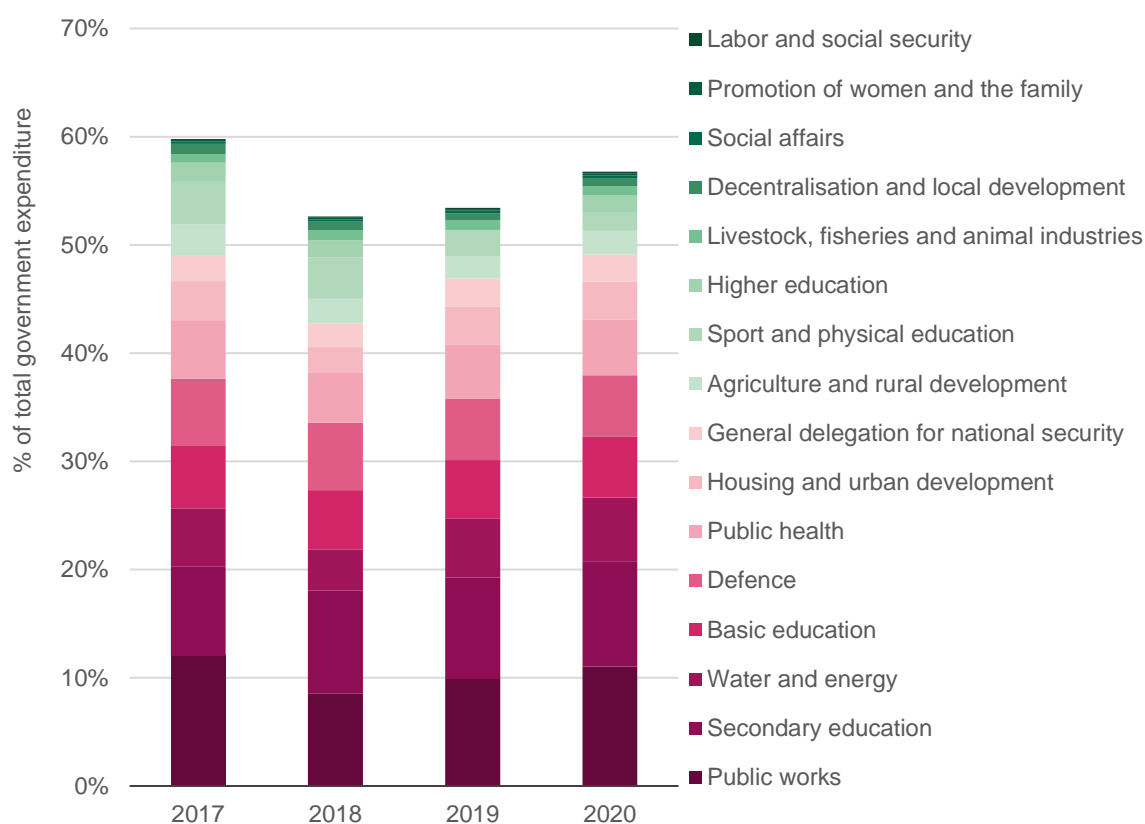
Box 2: Recent decentralisation efforts

In 2018 the Ministry of Decentralisation and Local Development was established to modernise local councils. It is developing a national decentralisation strategy to reduce development disparities between municipalities. A local development index of needs is expected to be part of this strategy to improve national planning. According to the ministerial budget data for 2017 to 2020 (Figure 3), this ministry saw a large increase in funding in 2019 to build the capacity of local governments to manage funds and deliver services. However, the central government has not increased the proportion of the central budget allocated to local government, thereby limiting regional and local autonomy in service delivery.

Nonetheless, local governments can engage in revenue generation, partly facilitated by the Special Fund for Inter-municipal Equipment and Intervention. The fund collects certain council revenues and disburses them either as a block grant to regional authorities (74% of total in 2018) or through a local development fund (26% of total in 2018).⁴⁷

Following the Major National Dialogue aimed at resolving the crisis in the English-speaking regions, parliament enacted a new law (the General Code of Regional and Local Authorities) in December 2019, granting the Northwest and Southwest regions “a special status based on their language, specificity and historical heritage”. The law commits to channel an increased proportion of the central budget to municipalities.⁴⁸

Figure 3: Government expenditure by ministry, 2017–2020



Source: Development Initiatives based on Loi de finance 2018, 2019 and 2020, Gouvernement du Cameroun.
 Notes: 2020 data is the planned budget for this year, while the data for previous years are the executed budget.
 Ministry budget allocation figures are proportional to total government expenditure minus debt repayment (excluding interest payments) to conform with international reporting standards (e.g. IMF GFS manual).

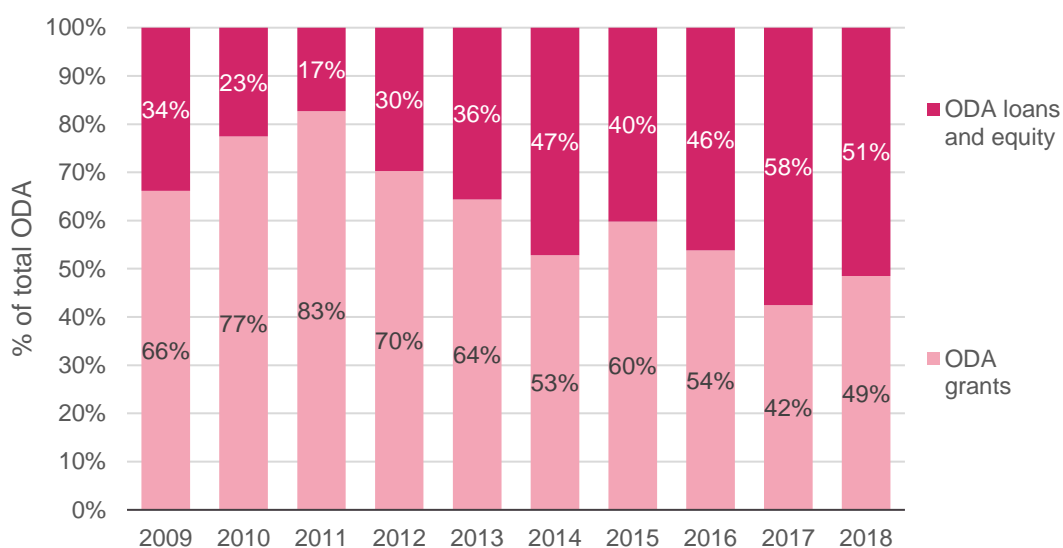
International financing landscape

Loans as a large proportion of rising ODA

Official development assistance (ODA) is an increasing resource in Cameroon. Volumes of ODA have grown by 68% over the last 10 years, from US\$719 million in 2009 to US\$1.2 billion in 2018. Totals peaked in 2017 at US\$1.3 billion. Cameroon was the 35th largest ODA recipient in terms of volumes in 2018 (out of 143 recipients of ODA).

A growing proportion of ODA to Cameroon has taken the form of loans – from 17% in 2011 to 51% in 2018 (Figure 4). This is largely due to an increase in non-concessional loans taken by the government to fund infrastructural programmes, which led to a balance of payment issue. As a result, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) increased concessional lending to help stabilise the government’s payment issues. However, most externally financed infrastructure projects have not directly benefited crisis-affected regions (Figure 5). There is also a risk that unsustainable government debt constrains government spending on services that benefit the poor.

Figure 4: Proportion of ODA as grants and loans, 2009–2018



Source: Development Initiatives based on OECD DAC Creditor Reporting System (CRS).

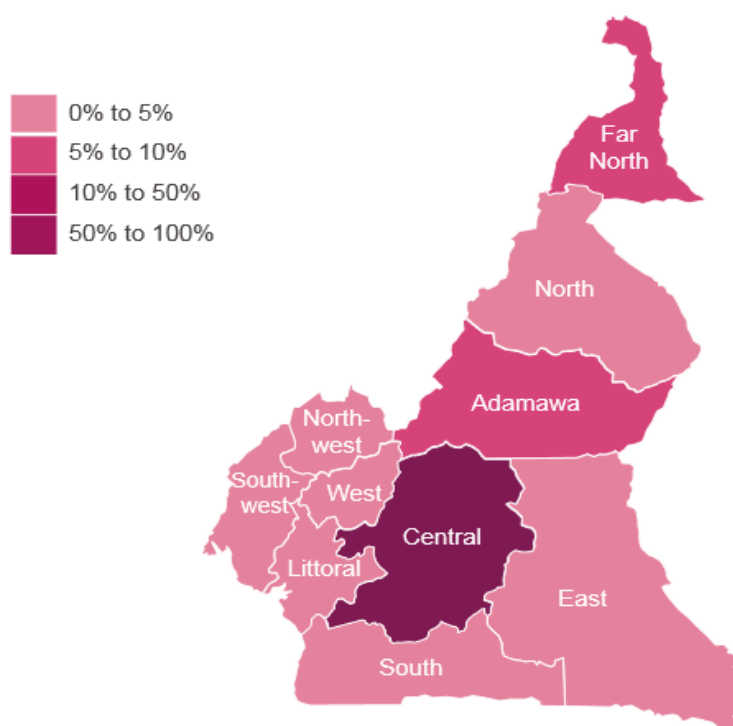
Humanitarian and developmental ODA targeting crisis regions

Low development and humanitarian funding to crisis-affected regions continues to be a challenge in Cameroon. This undermines the practical delivery of the OECD DAC HDP nexus recommendation and is a cause of marginalisation. Despite significant increases, humanitarian aid has been insufficient – below US\$30 million in each year between 2009 and 2013 before rising because of the Boko Haram insurgency in the Far North and large inflows of refugees from CAR arriving into eastern Cameroon. It remains small relative to total ODA – just 9% of Cameroon’s total ODA in 2018 according to OECD DAC statistics. Funding for the Humanitarian Response Plan (HRP) peaked at US\$144.3 million in 2018,⁴⁹ representing 45.1% coverage of needs, and declined in 2019 to \$130.1 million.⁵⁰ Cameroon’s 2018 HRP was the least-funded in sub-Saharan Africa⁵¹ and the 2019 HRP was the least funded in all of Africa.⁵²

The data shows that a very low proportion of aggregate developmental ODA is reported as targeting crisis-affected regions compared with non-crisis regions. The central region, which is not crisis-affected and where the capital city Yaoundé is located, received 79.1% of developmental ODA in 2019 (Figure 5).⁵³ However, this may include nationwide projects, meaning funds are not all necessarily spent in this region (see below for more on data challenges). A very small proportion was directed to the sociopolitical crisis in the Northwest (1.2%) and Southwest (1.8%), which is unsurprising given the constraints international actors face in accessing these areas.⁵⁴ A slightly greater proportion was allocated to the marginalised Far North (5.1%), although this is still relatively low and likely to reflect the increase in global financing frameworks targeting this region since 2017, given its importance to the Lake Chad Basin crisis. It is important to note that the proportion of funds allocated to crisis regions differs by donor. The EU, using its own

data, reports that 32.5% of EU grants (EU Services plus EU Member States) target crisis regions, and this does not include benefits from nationwide projects.⁵⁵ The World Bank reported that its commitments to the northern regions accounted for 40% of its total portfolio in 2016, and its Country Partnership Framework (CPF) for 2017–2021 commits to expand this support further.

Figure 5: Development ODA to regions of Cameroon, 2019



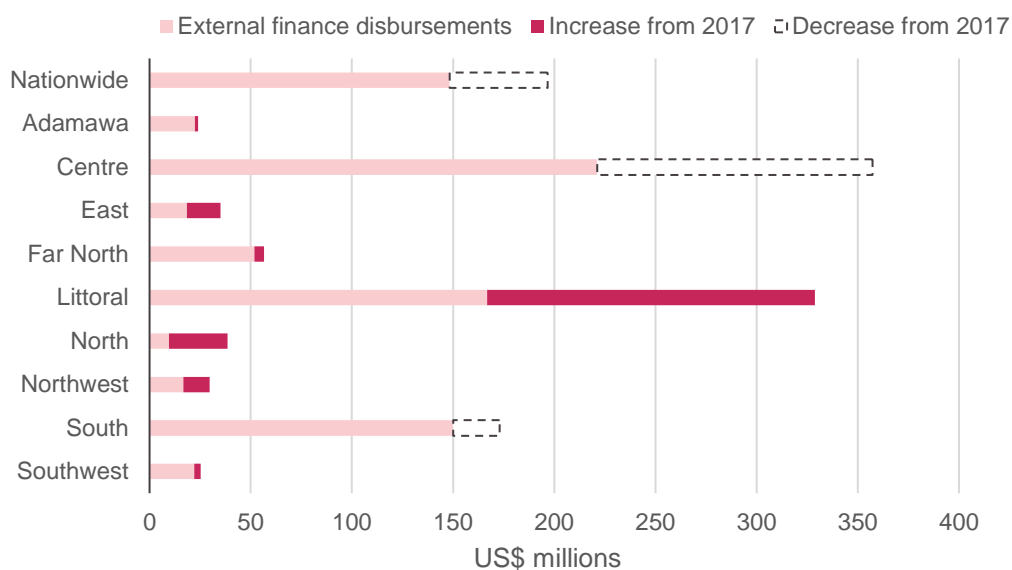
Source: Development Initiatives based on International Aid Transparency Initiative (IATI) Registry data.
 Note: Total disbursements reported to IATI Registry data by region in 2019 as a proportion of total disbursements reported to IATI Registry data to Cameroon in 2019.

It is difficult to track ODA targeting crisis-affected regions for a variety of reasons. The OECD DAC Creditor Reporting System (CRS) – the most comprehensive data source for financial tracking of ODA – does not currently have a coding system that enables systematic tracking of crisis-focused funding. While donors can specify if ODA is humanitarian or if it targets a particular region, their reporting is likely to be incomplete. In addition, aid channelled to the government and to national programmes may benefit crisis affected regions directly or indirectly, even if a specific crisis-affected region is not the primary focus.

Government data on the allocation of external aid also demonstrates the concentration of funding in non-crisis regions. Figures 6 and 7 show that most external finance to social development and infrastructure was channelled to regions with the major cities and centres of economic development: Littoral, South and Central regions. The crisis-affected regions (East, Adamawa, Northwest, Southwest, North and Far North) received a much smaller proportion.

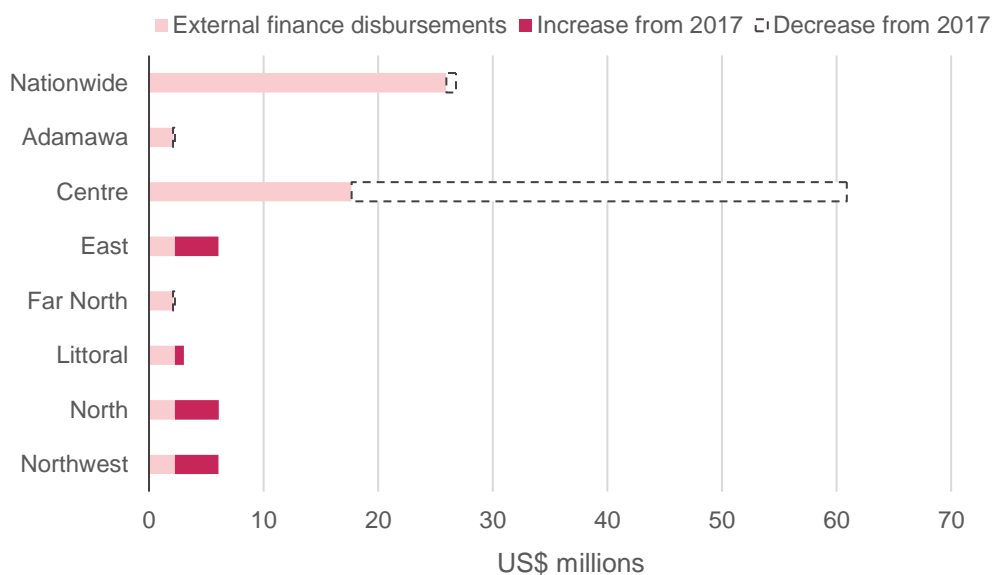
Figure 6: External disbursements to infrastructure by region, 2017 and 2018

Source: Cameroon aid management platform.



Notes: Data in current prices. Data on disbursements to West is not available.

Figure 7: External disbursements to social development by region, 2017 and 2018



Source: Cameroon aid management platform.

Notes: Data on disbursements to Southwest and South is not available. Data in current prices.

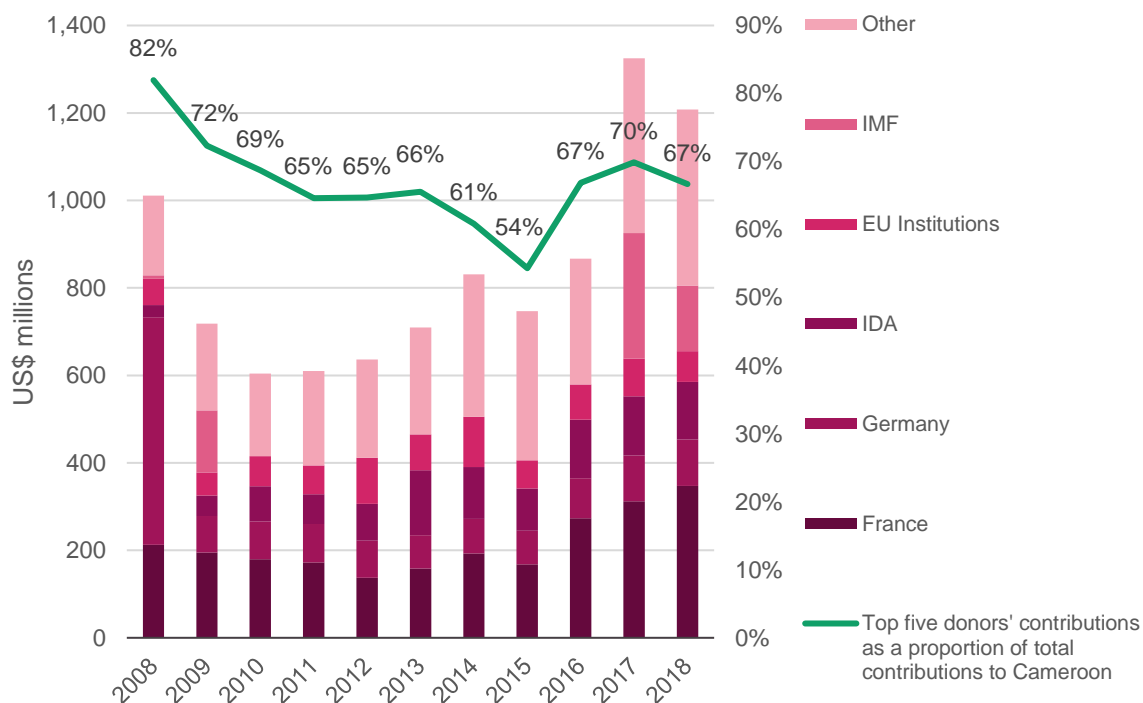
A unique funding landscape

Cameroon's donor landscape is unique because it is dominated by only a handful of donors, and regional, global and thematic funding instruments play a key role. Cameroon's largest donors in 2018 were France (29%), IMF (12%), World Bank (11%), Germany (9%) and EU (6%). The UN provided only 2% of Cameroon's total ODA in 2018 (Figure 8).

Besides France (with historical ties to Cameroon) and Germany (an increasingly important donor over recent years), Cameroon is not a strategic priority for bilateral donors. As a result, bilateral donors have worked through global and multilateral partners and do not have in-country presence. This poses serious challenges for coordination and collective prioritisation. It is also reportedly a result of donors shifting to prioritise humanitarian assistance through UN agencies, as has been the case with the UK,⁵⁶ the US⁵⁷ and Canada⁵⁸ (see 'Organisational issues' section).

In 2020, the World Bank added Cameroon to its list of fragile and conflict-affected countries,⁵⁹ which may help it access new development funding dedicated to fragile contexts. Classified as a low-income country by the IMF, Cameroon is eligible to receive no-interest credit from the IMF Extended Credit Facility. It granted concessional loans to Cameroon in May 2020 to support the national response to Covid-19.⁶⁰

Figure 8: Top five donors to Cameroon, 2009–2018



Source: Development Initiatives based on OECD DAC Creditor Reporting System (CRS).

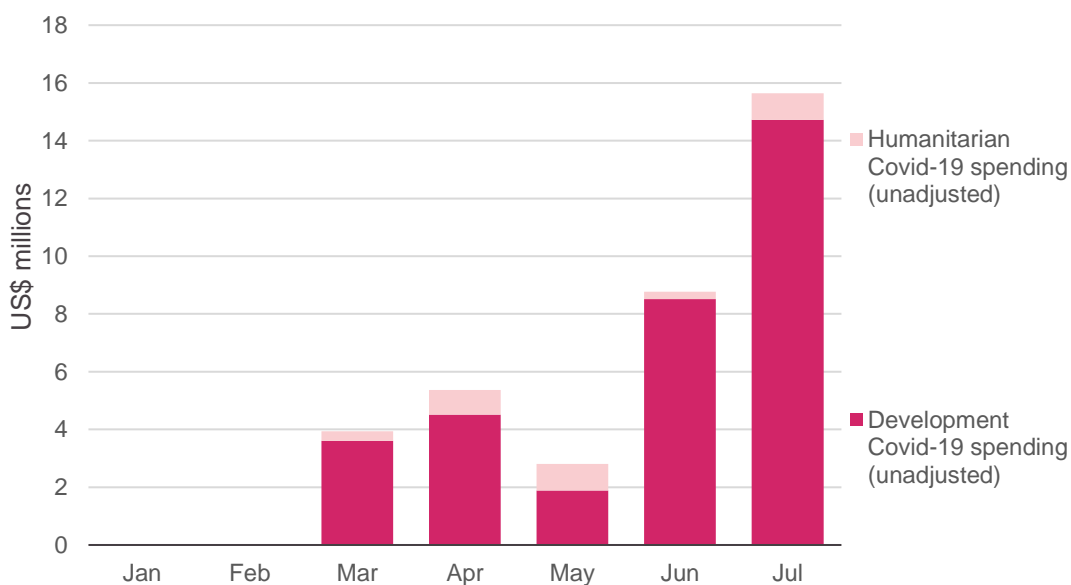
Notes: Data in 2017 constant prices. IDA = International Development Association; IMF = International Monetary Fund (Concessional Trust Funds).

Regional and global programmes and financing mechanisms

Development partners often finance responses to Cameroon's crises through unique, crisis-focused regional and multilateral funds and programmes. This is due, firstly, to the regional nature of the Lake Chad Basin and CAR crises, for which there has been an effort to develop regional responses. Secondly, donors such as the EU and France have established separate crisis-financing facilities to allow faster decision-making and greater flexibility than would be allowed through normal bilateral channels (see 'Flexible financing tools' section for further discussion).

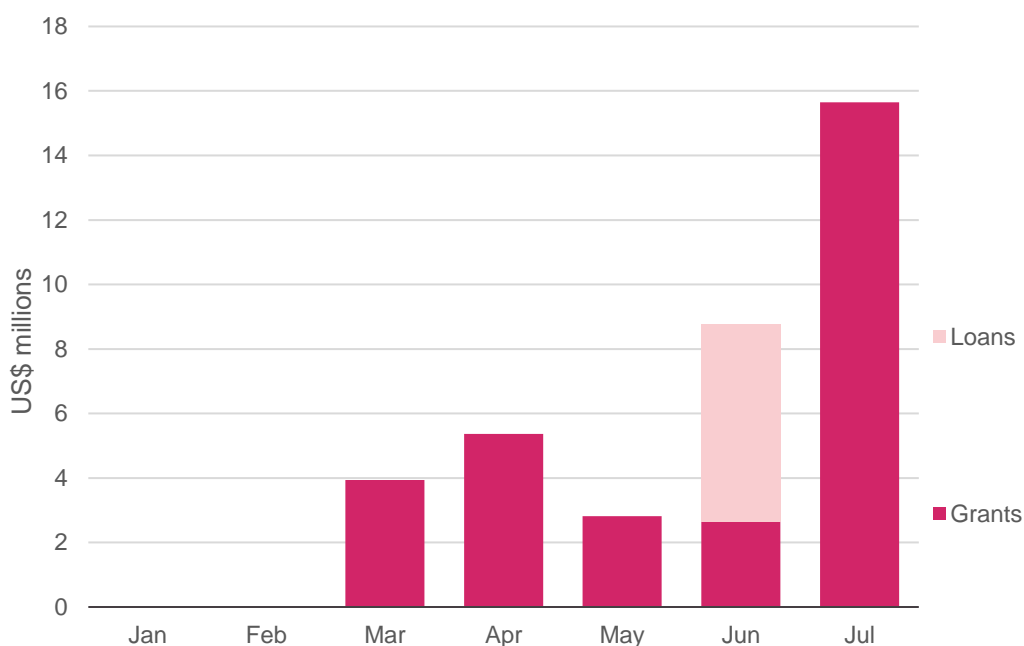
Financing the Covid-19 response

Figure 9: Total ODA disbursements to Covid-19 as humanitarian assistance and developmental ODA, January–July 2020



Source: Development Initiatives based on International Aid Transparency Initiative (IATI) data.
Note: Data in current prices.

Figure 10: Total ODA disbursements to Covid-19 as grants and loans, January–July 2020



Source: Development Initiatives based on IATI.
Note: Data in current prices.

Financing for Covid-19 increased month on month (except in May) between March and July 2020 (Figure 9). This was mostly developmental ODA, demonstrating the speed at which development actors responded (in particular the World Bank and IMF).

While this data represents new money, some funding has also been reallocated from existing programmes. It is difficult to have a complete and accurate picture, as financial tracking systems are not set up to capture this and reporting is optional. Nevertheless, country-level data from late September indicated that 15% (US\$10 million of US\$65 million) of approved or received funding for the Covid-19 response had been redirected from existing programmes. As the data-collection process is ongoing, this is likely not to be a comprehensive figure in terms of scale. Still, it provides an indication of the proportion of funding for the response made available through reprogramming, which is evidence of the flexibility of some development funds.

The proportion of Covid-19- marked ODA as humanitarian assistance has consistently comprised a small proportion of total ODA, reaching 5.9% in July 2020. This demonstrates the slow pace at which funding for the global HRP for Covid-19 has taken place. The response to Covid-19 thus contests earlier perceptions that humanitarian actors can flex and act more quickly than development actors. Conversely, where there is political will to override clunky bureaucratic processes, development actors can access much greater volumes of finance at speed, whereas for humanitarian actors the challenge is not process as much as it is access to finite resources. The largely developmental response to Covid-19 is positive in that it lays the foundation for a more

sustainable approach to tackling longer term socioeconomic impacts of the pandemic than is the case for a predominantly humanitarian response.

Whether this development finance takes the most appropriate form is a separate question. Figure 10 shows that most ODA to Covid-19 has taken the form of grants, although in June 2020 70% of total ODA was in the form of loans.

Policy and strategy

Limited government commitment to a long-term strategy

A central challenge has been the lack of a clear vision and common strategy for engaging in the different crisis-affected regions in Cameroon. In an effort to address this gap, the Ministry of Economy, Planning and Land Planning (MINEPAT), in partnership with the EU, UN and World Bank, developed the RPC Strategy for Northern and East Cameroon 2018–2022 through a participatory process. The RPC strategy aims to reduce the long-standing socioeconomic marginalisation of the North, Far North, Adamawa and East regions, although it does not include the English-speaking regions or fully integrate a ‘peace’ perspective (Appendix 2). Nonetheless, this strategy presents a clear opportunity to bridge humanitarian and development approaches in northern and eastern Cameroon.⁶¹ Notably, the RPC strategy identifies priorities for government reform, including the adoption of a strategy for forcibly displaced people and the revision of communal development plans and the Public Investment Budget to better include the needs of crisis-affected populations. However, while a strong collective strategy is in place, the process for implementation has stalled as the Presidency is yet to endorse it.

Most international actors still see the RPC strategy as the starting point for a sustainable solution for displaced and vulnerable populations in northern and eastern Cameroon and are working towards its adoption. There are proposals from donors through dialogue with the government about including the RPC strategy’s priorities in the new National Development Strategy 2020–2030. Furthermore, the UN system has aligned its programming with the RPC strategy in terms of geographical scope, timeframe and thematic focus. As an example, the United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) 2018–2020 explicitly aims “to serve as a framework for transitioning from humanitarian action into development by mainstreaming well targeted post-crisis resilience and early recovery strategies... especially by restoring basic social services and re-launching economic activities”.⁶² The 16 UN agencies present in Cameroon have adapted their engagement in line with the UNDAF and the HRP. The RPC strategy has also informed the strategy of the new UN-led Nexus Taskforce (see ‘Coordination, prioritisation and planning’ section).

Three distinct crises with separate strategic responses

Without a government-endorsed strategy to address Cameroon’s crises and bring together HDP approaches, development and humanitarian actors have largely pursued separate strategic responses to each crisis. Although the systemic marginalisation of peripheral regions is a driver to all three crises, they each have distinct political, security and environmental causes and dynamics – and the Lake Chad Basin and CAR crises have important regional and cross-border dimensions. Thus, while the responses to the

three crises should be harmonised and interlinked, each crisis also requires a distinct response, making the engagement of development actors complex.

The Lake Chad Basin regional crisis

Donors, including the World Bank, France, EU, African Development Bank, Germany, the UK and the US, have begun to scale up development programmes aimed at strengthening resilience and stabilising the Lake Chad Basin since 2016.⁶³ In 2018, the African Union Lake Chad Basin Commission adopted at a ministerial level the Regional Strategy for Stabilisation, Recovery and Resilience of the Boko Haram-affected Areas of the Lake Chad Basin Region (RSS). It provides a framework for the engagement of humanitarian, development and security partners, with nine pillars spanning peace and security, social and economic recovery, and humanitarian dimensions.

In 2019, UNDP launched the Regional Stabilisation Facility for Lake Chad to facilitate the implementation of the RSS with a planned budget of US\$ 100 million, funded by Germany, the EU, Sweden and the UK. In this context, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and UNDP have played a leading role in longer term development, recovery and resilience activities in the North and Far North regions. The World Bank has also scaled up its engagement in 2020, approving the US\$170 million Lake Chad Region Recovery and Development Project, which includes US\$60 million in financing for Cameroon. This supports the recovery of agricultural livelihoods in the Far North of Cameroon (and selected areas of Chad and Niger), the restoration of rural mobility and connectivity around the lake through the rehabilitation of rural roads and transport infrastructure, and regional and national capacity-building.⁶⁴

Development programming in the North and Far North has often been delivered under the banner of preventing violent extremism and stabilisation, for example those funded or delivered by USAID, the EU, UNDP and the French Development Agency (AFD) (see 'Programming approaches' section). Interviewees report that some agencies present livelihoods-focused activities as 'stabilisation' projects to attract funding. At the same time, although activities may look similar, stabilisation-focused livelihoods and economic recovery programmes often have peace and security objectives, rather than strictly socioeconomic objectives. This can result in fundamental differences in how they are implemented, including in their beneficiaries, geographic focus and approach.

There are opportunities for a nexus approach in these regions, particularly in terms of development and peacebuilding actors laying the foundations for recovery, peace and development, in parallel with humanitarian assistance. Direct collaboration between humanitarian and stabilisation-focused development actors is challenging given the need for humanitarian actors to maintain needs-based targeting and independence from political/security objectives, and that some development actors are deliberately serving security objectives. Nevertheless, there may be an opportunity here for development actors to make a greater contribution to addressing vulnerability through support to livelihoods and economic opportunities.

Long-term solutions for CAR refugees and host communities

In the East and Adamawa, and to a certain extent in the North and Far North, international assistance has shifted towards longer term resilience and development activities, with a decline in humanitarian assistance. UN agencies have strengthened their focus on recovery and resilience in these regions in line with the UNDAF 2018–2020 and the UN Country Team’s leadership on the nexus. This includes working with the government and strengthening collaboration with development partners, such as the World Bank, to expand support to both refugees and host communities and to shift towards vulnerability-based rather than status-based targeting.

This crisis is conducive to a nexus approach – specifically the engagement of development and peace actors in addressing longer term livelihood needs and conflict dynamics between refugees and host populations. While there are still humanitarian needs due to the ongoing arrival of CAR refugees, the ‘active crisis’ phase has passed, and most of the needs today are structural and development related.

International engagement with the crisis in English-speaking regions

The English-speaking regions have witnessed a withdrawal of development actors since the conflict escalated due to the direct involvement of the government in the conflict and associated risks of politicisation from continuing this partnership, as well as security risks to staff. A number of major development actors including the World Bank and Germany pulled out of the Southwest and Northwest, or suspended agricultural and other development programmes that benefit vulnerable populations, and some EU infrastructure projects were not renewed or put on hold.⁶⁵ Some actors continue to implement development programmes where possible; for example, EU projects funded under the European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights and banana-production support measures are ongoing, and three new projects funded under EU Instrument contributing to Stability and Peace are due to start up shortly. However, overall, there has been a contraction of development assistance in these regions, with implications for longer term livelihoods.

To fill this gap, development actors need to identify ways to navigate their relationship with the government and opposition groups and to adapt their programmes, including by working with non-governmental partners. There have been several notable efforts to develop a new basis for development actors to engage in the region. The government has recently launched the Presidential Plan for Reconstruction and Development.⁶⁶ The plan has been rejected by separatist and non-state armed groups. While development partners remain sceptical, some donors have expressed interest in supporting the first phase of this plan focusing on recovery to be implemented by UNDP. UNDP is currently engaging with non-state armed groups to overcome blockages and generate acceptance for recovery efforts. Also, the World Bank is exploring how to (re)engage in the Northwest and Southwest regions, taking an integrated approach to IDPs, refugees and host communities, and adapting current education and health programmes.⁶⁷ It is currently undertaking a vulnerability assessment in the regions.

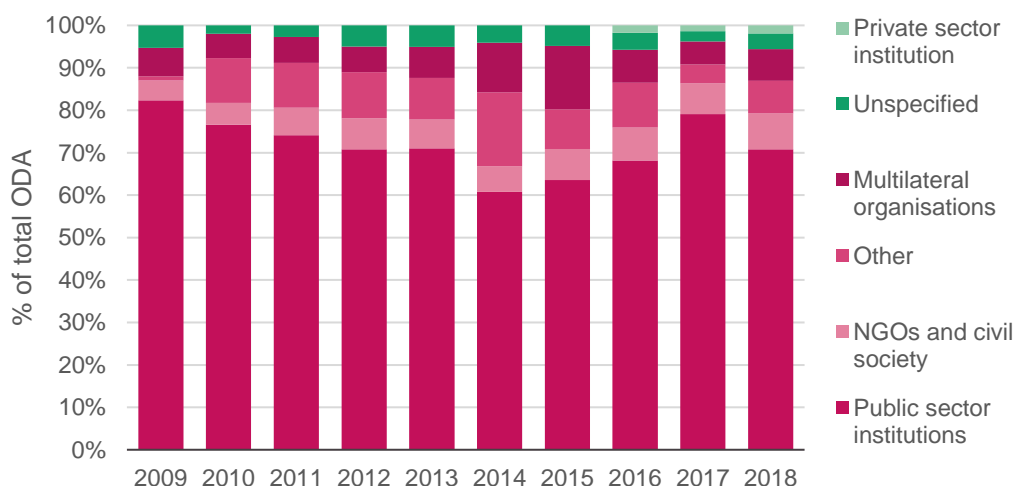
This crisis is considered the least conducive for a nexus approach because the conflict is still active, with very limited access, and the government's involvement makes it highly politically sensitive for international actors. There is a clear need to need to safeguard humanitarian space. But all actors can integrate conflict sensitivity and peace as an approach. Development actors need to review their partnerships with the government given current conflict dynamics and decide how to engage, which will also depend on their appetite for political and security risk and their added value. There may be opportunities for nexus collaboration through focusing on IDPs and host communities in neighbouring regions and supporting populations in the English-speaking regions to recover, sustain livelihoods and lay foundations for longer term development as soon as the situation allows.

Partnerships

ODA primarily channelled to public institutions

In line with aid effectiveness principles, most development assistance is aligned with government priorities and a large proportion of aid is channelled through government institutions (Box 3). Public sector institutions are the largest recipient of ODA, accounting for over half of the aid to Cameroon each year in the last decade (Figure 11) (this includes aid executed directly by bilateral donor government institutions). Furthermore, most ODA channelled to public institutions in Cameroon is directed through central government, or does not have a specified government institution, while only 0.1% is reported to go through local government (Figure 11). This is notably higher than other lower middle-income countries in the region also affected by the Boko Haram insurgency. For example, whereas on average 65% of ODA was channelled through public institutions in Cameroon between 2016 and 2018, in Nigeria this was much less (48.8%) during the same timeframe. In comparison, more ODA is channelled through NGOs in Nigeria than is the case in Cameroon (see ‘Supporting non-government partners to directly target vulnerable people’ below).

Figure 11: ODA to Cameroon by channel of delivery, 2009–2018



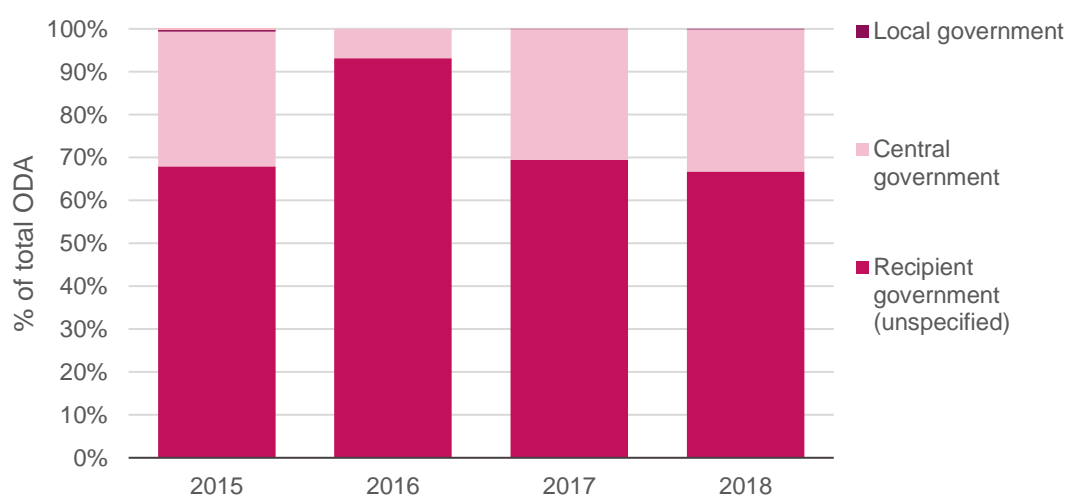
Source: Development Initiatives based on OECD DAC Creditor Reporting System (CRS).

Note: ODA channelled directly to the government includes both ‘public sector institutions’ and ‘unspecified’ (which covers budget support).

Box 3: Examples of development partnerships with government

- France continues to channel most of its assistance to Cameroon through the central government and focuses on dialogue to promote necessary reforms.
 - The EU's National Indicative Programme for 2014–2020 under the European Development Fund was developed in coordination with the government and focuses predominantly on rural development and governance, with no geographical focus. The EU channels most of its aid through budget support and has looked to use it as a tool to push for reforms.
 - The World Bank almost exclusively works through the government.
 - UN strategies are formulated and validated with the government and align with national strategies. UNICEF, the largest UN agency in Cameroon, allocates two-thirds of its budget to the government. Most International Fund for Agricultural Development investment projects are loans to government at favourable interest rates.
 - Germany's programme of cooperation in Cameroon, delivered through government, focuses on the protection and sustainable use of natural resources, good governance and rural development.
-

Figure 12: ODA to Cameroon channelled through the public sector, 2015–2018



Source: Development Initiatives based on OECD DAC Creditor Reporting System (CRS).

Note: Data in 2017 constant prices.

Despite the dominance of budget and direct support to the central government, many interviewees questioned the government's capacity to deliver services and its willingness to prioritise crisis-affected regions. Cameroon spends a large share of its public spending on general public administration and debt service (together accounting for nearly half of total spending in 2015), while its spending on social services (health, education and social protection) and infrastructure is low compared with other sub-Saharan African countries. In addition, within its budgets for the social sectors, a high share of resources covers salaries and other overhead costs (over 70% for health and education in 2015), leaving fewer resources for service delivery.⁶⁸ A further challenge to reaching vulnerable populations in crisis-affected regions through aid channelled to the government is the weakness of local government structures. As with the decentralisation agenda, there is a considerable gap between the government narrative on prioritising the most vulnerable and what has been done in practice. Although the government now targets the northern regions for development projects, funding is very limited – and absent in the most remote areas. Corruption, high operating costs and lack of government support have made even relatively stable areas in the North and Far North less attractive to donors.⁶⁹

Development actors supporting government to target vulnerable crisis-affected populations

Some international partners have positively influenced the government to better target vulnerable populations in crisis-affected areas, particularly with respect to the refugee situation in the East and Adamawa. UNHCR and the World Bank have been instrumental in shifting the government's focus away from repatriation and towards durable and inclusive solutions for refugees and host communities. UNHCR's advocacy has resulted in progress on national policy reforms including:

- Signing a convention with MINEPAT in October 2016 to integrate refugee needs and opportunities in development plans, prioritising support for refugee-hosting communities⁷⁰
- Advocating for the government to integrate the needs of refugees into national development plans, to include refugees in national basic service provision and to strengthen their livelihood opportunities, while supporting host communities
- In August 2016, signing a convention with the Ministry of Public Health, committing the government to cover 30% of the cost of health services for CAR and Nigerian refugees⁷¹
- Discussing a joint five-year strategy with the Ministry of Public Health on the integration of refugees into the national health system⁷² (paused as a result of the Covid-19 crisis but likely to resume when possible).

The World Bank's US\$130 million in grant funding through the International Development Association 18 (IDA18) regional sub-window for refugees and host communities (RSW) also played a central role in progressing policy reforms, as the government must meet criteria related to refugee recognition, support and protection to access funding. This was a key motivation behind the government's involvement in developing the RPC strategy and in its IDA18 RSW application letter, the government committed to the "systematic issuance of birth certificates for refugee children born in Cameroon with new registry

offices (or reinforcement of existing registry offices) in areas with large populations of refugees and displaced persons” as well as “issuance and recognition of biometric identity documents for refugees”. The government also committed to adopt an integrated approach to forced displacement and develop a national strategy on forced displacement, addressing protection as well as the social and economic aspects of the crisis.⁷³ These commitments have not yet been delivered but UNHCR, with other UN agencies and NGOs, is supporting the government to do so.

This demonstrates how international actors can encourage government reforms on key issues impacting the lives of vulnerable people, such as the socioeconomic marginalisation of the northern regions, finding long-term solutions to protracted internal displacement, decentralisation and the adoption of the RPC strategy. Development partners could have greater influence by incorporating these issues (or priorities set out in the RPC strategy) in their country assistance strategies and coordinating and identifying common positions in policy dialogue. For example, the World Bank has identified addressing rural poverty in the northern regions as a focus area of its 2017–2021 CPF and has refocused its country portfolio in line with this. In addition, its regional strategy and the recent approval of regional funding to address the Lake Chad Basin crisis allocates additional resources to the Far North. The CPF also prioritises governance as a focus area, including reforms that if implemented would support the technical capacity and role of local government in development planning and public financial management. However, other development partners, such as the African Development Bank, have country strategies that are out of date and do not adequately address regional disparities or structural reforms that are necessary to address needs in crisis regions.

Reviewing government partnership in light of the conflict in the English-speaking regions

Donors have a role to play in collectively supporting the government’s engagement in a peace process to address the English-speaking regions impacted by crisis. While many development actors have withdrawn from the English-speaking regions (see ‘Policy and strategy’ section), this has not affected central funding to the government through budget support, despite requirements on human rights, democracy and rule of law. Germany is the exception, having stopped budget support for the central government because of its involvement in the crisis in English-speaking regions, and is now working as much as possible at a decentralised level. Although some international players such as the US, UK, EU and Chad have publicly denounced violence and encouraged dialogue, there is very little regional and international engagement to find a solution to the conflict.⁷⁴

Cameroon’s key development partners, such as AFD, Germany and the EU, together with their respective political or diplomatic representation should consider their collective role in supporting a ceasefire and an internationally supported peace process. In addition, development partners such as the World Bank and UNDP should continue exploring ways to stay engaged in the English-speaking regions, including how to support the government to implement reforms that would de-escalate conflict. However, they also must review their partnerships and approach to ensure it is conflict sensitive and fully considers political, conflict and human rights risks. Simply continuing to work alongside

the government poses the risk of exacerbating conflict and politicising the actors involved, unless adequately negotiated with all parties to the conflict and grounded in a political framework for peace agreed amongst international partners.

Supporting non-government partners to target vulnerable people

Where partnership with government is politically sensitive or challenging due to the absence of functioning local government, development partners have taken steps to strengthen partnerships with the UN and NGOs to reach vulnerable populations. Nonetheless, direct funding to NGOs remains limited: only 8% of ODA to Cameroon was channelled through NGOs in 2018. This is low compared with neighbouring countries also impacted by the Boko Haram crisis, such as Nigeria, where 19% of ODA was channelled through NGOs in the same year.

Funding to UN agencies and NGOs (including local NGOs) in crisis regions has been enabled and strengthened over recent years specifically through regional and global financing mechanisms targeting crisis regions (see 'International financing landscape' section). In the Far North region, where the local government is particularly weak, AFD's Minka Peace and Resilience Fund and the EU's Emergency Trust Fund for Africa provide direct funding to NGOs. For example, AFD supports a consortium of NGOs to deliver its Inclusive Economic and Social Recovery Project for Lake Chad covering Niger, Cameroon, Chad and Nigeria (2018–2021)⁷⁵ and an Norwegian Refugee Council social inclusion and local governance project in the Far North of Cameroon and North East Nigeria.⁷⁶ The EU's resilience programmes in the Far North⁷⁷ work with two consortia of NGOs, and the EU delegation regularly puts out calls for proposals under the Civil Society Organisations and Local Authorities programme and European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights. In addition, the Active Citizenship Civil Status Strengthening Program project, funded by the European Development Fund, aims to strengthen civil society through smaller grants in all regions.

Cameroonian NGOs and civil society organisations (CSOs), community organisations, faith groups and women's groups can play a central role in a sustainable and locally-led response in crisis contexts due to their relationships with and access to local communities. However, these actors are weakly organised due to historic underinvestment in the NGO sector. Overcoming this would require substantial, long-term investment in developing the technical and organisational capacity of local actors. Although some mechanisms exist for direct funding of NGOs and CSOs (described above), the risk management, due diligence and reporting requirements of development partners favour partnerships with international NGOs, especially given the weak financial management capacity of Cameroonian NGOs. As a result, funding to local NGOs tends to be largely channelled through UN agencies. For example, UNICEF has allocated a third of its funding to CSOs in remote and insecure areas with little or no government service provision. However, in other contexts, Cameroonian NGOs have been excluded from crisis response even where they are well-positioned to play a role; for example, local NGOs report that they have not received any additional funds for responding to Covid-19. According to interviewees, local NGOs and CSOs tend to receive funding through local

authorities or community donations in Cameroon. The lack of direct international funding and support limits the potential of local NGOs and CSOs to develop and grow, and can be seen as reinforcing a power dynamic in which local actors are sub-implementers rather than equal partners.

Coordination, prioritisation and planning

Strong coordination mechanisms bringing HDP actors together

Coordination takes place in silos with stronger coordination mechanisms on the humanitarian than the development side. While humanitarian action is coordinated by UN OCHA through the cluster system, the main mechanism for bilateral and multilateral donor coordination on the development side is the largely non-functioning Multi-Partner Committee (*Comité Multipartenaires*) chaired by MINEPAT and the UN Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator (RC/HC). Donors reportedly coordinate informally given the lack of a formal mechanism, but the key challenge is the engagement and leadership of the government as a prerequisite for effective coordination of development, and HDP actors, more broadly.

Several recent initiatives, however, offer opportunities to strengthen coordination among HDP actors in Cameroon. In 2019, the UN RC/HC established the Nexus Taskforce (Box 4) co-chaired by OCHA and UNDP to facilitate joined-up planning between HDP actors as part of the joint UN–World Bank initiative to pilot the triple nexus in three countries. The Nexus Taskforce focuses strategically on addressing the needs of refugees, IDPs and host communities in the Far North, North, Adamawa, East, Northwest and Southwest. At the time of research, interviewees were unclear on the specific support available at country level through the UN-World Bank initiative. Nevertheless, the UN Country Team did receive funding for an HDP Nexus Coordinator through the Humanitarian-Development-Peacebuilding and Partnerships Facility managed by the Peacebuilding Support Office to support nexus efforts between the UN and the World Bank. The national response to Covid-19 has also created lessons and coordination structures that could be built upon in the long term (Box 5). Finally, if the government adopts the RPC strategy, this presents an opportunity to establish an institutional mechanism for coordinating its delivery.⁷⁸

Box 4: Nexus Taskforce: An opportunity for coordination

Membership and buy-in: The Taskforce is composed of UN agencies, government representatives, international and national NGOs, and donors. It was conceived, and is led by, the UN, specifically UNDP and OCHA. The challenge with establishing nexus-focused mechanisms in other contexts has often been the perception that the nexus is the responsibility of humanitarian actors. To date, key development partners, especially the World Bank, have been actively participating in meetings, and government representatives from various ministries have

attended. However, interviewees report that the government's political buy-in to the nexus remains to be confirmed, with a lack of strong leadership or ownership from any one ministry. Cross-government buy-in and participation of all relevant ministries will be crucial to the success of the Taskforce, and it is vital that international actors expand their relationships with the government to cover a range of ministries in support of this. Interviewees report that the government's main interest in the nexus and the Taskforce appears financial rather than strategic – to attract development funding as a solution to the crisis in English-speaking regions, and in support of host communities and IDPs.

Vision and objectives: The Taskforce's primary objective is that humanitarian, development and peace actors converge, coordinate and synchronise interventions in selected areas ('areas of convergence') at the municipality level, based on specific criteria and crisis dynamics. The Taskforce also seeks to strengthen coordination across actors at operational (municipality), departmental and national (through the HDP Nexus Steering Committee) levels. Some actors, including UN agencies and NGOs, are keen to use the Taskforce and nexus approach to attract more funding to Cameroon, including to finance increased coordination.

Geographical targeting: In targeting crisis-affected regions at the municipality level, the Taskforce can strengthen development engagement in these regions, as a crucial aspect of engaging effectively on the nexus and overcoming structural and capacity barriers that have prevented development actors from engaging directly and targeting vulnerable populations. The municipalities were selected in September 2020, based on the following criteria: shock situation evolving into a protracted crisis; the stability index developed by the International Organization for Migration (IOM); the level of commitment from municipal leadership and communities; the existing or potential presence and capacity; and the impact of Covid-19.

Strategy: The collective outcome identified is based on the RPC strategy and aligned with the UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework: by the end of 2025, refugees, IDPs and host and originating communities in the Far North, East, Northwest and Southwest regions "recover indiscriminately their fundamental rights and improve their physical wellbeing and social welfare".⁷⁹ In line with the collective outcomes approach, this has been broken down into narrower and more measurable outcomes (see three pillars, below). The inclusion of the English-speaking regions is significant, as they are not prioritised in the RPC strategy and other development frameworks. This presents an opportunity to strengthen support for livelihoods of vulnerable populations in these regions, to address the persisting gap. Joint action plans will be developed for each of the selected areas of convergence, and the Taskforce is integrating the HDP nexus and this collective outcome into all relevant frameworks and policies, including the new National Development Plan, Communal Development Plan, communal annual investment programmes, UN frameworks and technical/financial partnership agreements.

The three strategic pillars of the Nexus Taskforce:

1. Basic social services. By the end of 2025, people living in areas of convergence have equitable and sustainable access to basic social services.
2. Sustainable livelihoods and economic opportunities. By the end of 2025, vulnerable people living in areas of convergence have equitable and sustainable access to livelihoods and economic opportunities.
3. Protection, social cohesion and local governance. By the end of 2025, good local governance and the consolidation of peace protect the fundamental rights of people living in areas of convergence.

Challenges: These include: legitimate buy-in from across the government; the ability of the UN to influence large donors in a country where its influence is limited; the integration of justice and peace; and how to engage in the English-speaking regions given the government's involvement in the crisis there.

Although there is a range of data-gathering and information-sharing initiatives,⁸⁰ donors primarily undertake their own assessments to inform planning without coordinating with others. Joined-up assessment and analysis can provide the basis for a shared vision and strategy among HDP actors. Several recent and planned joint assessments offer a starting point for enhancing HDP collaboration:

- The Recovery and Peacebuilding Assessment methodology used to develop the RPC strategy is a good example of joined-up needs assessment and planning that involved a range of actors including the government. It provided a strong evidence base to help create a shared understanding of needs, vulnerability and risk in the northern and eastern regions. It was used to inform prioritisation decisions by the Nexus Taskforce and used in the Humanitarian Needs Overview, the Common Country Assessment, World Bank data, market trends and human rights reports.⁸¹
- The Nexus Taskforce is also in discussion with the OECD DAC regarding opportunities to undertake a resilience system analysis as a way of deepening analysis and identifying opportunities for building greater coherence between humanitarian and development actors.
- In response to Covid-19, a comprehensive national household survey of socioeconomic needs and impact is planned by the government (MINEPAT) and UN agencies (Box 5) to create a common basis for joint planning.

Thus far, these have been one-off assessments. The Nexus Taskforce offers a platform for regular joint analysis, information sharing and review of strategic priorities, which were largely absent in Cameroon. Indeed, while it is too early to fully assess the effectiveness of the Taskforce, it has made a promising start on addressing the 'structural coordination gap and evidence gap' identified in earlier research.⁸²

Box 5: Collaboration between HDP actors in response to Covid-19

A strong level of coordination has emerged in the response to Covid-19 in Cameroon – led by the government and the UN – and focuses explicitly on the prevention, containment and longer term socioeconomic impacts of the health crisis. The government has developed the national action plan, setting out priorities such as reinforcing social, economic and financial resilience, promoting research and innovation, and addressing short and longer term needs.⁸³ It has a focus on: strengthening social protection (including adaptation or extension of existing social safety nets); free access to medical services for the most vulnerable; support measures for vulnerable households (including refugees and IDPs); delay to electricity and running water bills; ‘cash for work’ programmes or transfers of money or subsidies for basic necessities; and work with municipalities in delaying accommodation bills.

Building on a framework proposed by the United Nations Sustainable Development Group,⁸⁴ and aligning with the Cameroon government plan, the UN is supporting the government to address the socioeconomic impacts of the Covid-19 crisis, as set out in the UN Country Preparedness and Response Plan.⁸⁵ This plan is based on an initial rapid assessment undertaken by the World Health Organization (WHO) to identify regions at high risk and by UNHCR to identify risks for refugees and host populations.

There is an established division of responsibilities for implementing the UN plan. UNICEF is leading on educational and risks communication and community engagement aspects, in collaboration with the United Nations Population Fund; UNHCR and partners on support to refugees and host communities; World Food Programme (WFP) on operations and logistics; IOM on borders/entry points; and the WHO on the overall response in collaboration with the Ministry of Public Health, Secretary General and the Department for the Control of Disease, Epidemics and Pandemics. National coordination mechanisms are led by the Ministry of Public Health and WHO and through the UN Agencies’ Covid-19 Taskforce, which is led by OCHA. The RC and Resident Coordinator’s Office chairs a weekly meeting with technical and financial partners, where WHO, Centre Pasteur, the Cameroon Development Corporation, IOM and UNICEF present regular updates; ad hoc interventions of the Centre des Opérations des Urgences de Santé Publique, WFP and the Pandemic Modelling Working Group are also factored. This group tracks in-kind and financial contributions for the response to Covid-19.

Coordination structures at the local and regional levels are also crucial for an effective response and reaching the most vulnerable people in crisis-affected regions. Interviewees report that coordination takes place informally between UN agencies (e.g. UNHCR medical staff). Staff coordinate with the regional and district

hospitals and health centres in East, Adamawa, North and Far North regions. However, a challenge to coordination at local levels is that municipalities lead the response with limited funding, as a symptom of the slow-moving decentralisation process. Interviewees report that support to communities outside major cities is limited, as a result of poor funding to municipalities. There is a recurrent coordination meeting with the Minister of Health and regional health delegates, together with WHO, which has improved information sharing and response.

A separate plan has been developed by UNDP and MINEPAT – the United Nations Covid-19 Socio-Economic Response Plan for Cameroon – to support in addressing longer term socioeconomic impacts with emphasis on social cohesion; a theme not comprehensively covered in the government’s response plan.⁸⁶ It focuses on strengthening health systems, macroeconomic stability, social resilience and support to vulnerable households.

Both the government and the UN plans were informed by a survey of households and enterprises completed in May 2020, financed by UN agencies. The survey was implemented by the government with the support from the Covid-19 Socioeconomic Task Force set up by the UN RC and coordinated by UNDP and the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa. A second phase of the Covid-19 socioeconomic impact studies will be undertaken over upcoming months with an in-depth focus in three sectors: economy, social, and research and innovation. It will be important to integrate strategies for addressing the longer term socioeconomic impacts of Covid-19 into the Nexus Taskforce to ensure a sustainable nexus approach to the impacts of the pandemic.

Coordinated planning within agencies between HDP staff

Coordination within agencies is just as important as that between them and is especially relevant for multi-mandate organisations. As demonstrated in our research on donor approaches to the triple nexus,⁸⁷ there is often a strong internal division between staff members with responsibilities for development and humanitarian assistance in most donors and implementing agencies. At HQ level, different ministries are often responsible for humanitarian and development affairs and budgets are separate, which makes collaboration and coherence difficult.

However, there are some examples of efforts to break internal silos at the country level. UN agencies in Cameroon have made significant progress in putting the nexus into practice across the UN system⁸⁸ with strong leadership from the RC/HC since 2017 (see ‘Organisational issues’ section). The UN carries out its own joined-up assessment every two years: the Common Country Assessment, which is used to develop the UNDAF and UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (UNSDCF). While UN OCHA uses a different assessment to produce humanitarian response plans – the Humanitarian Needs Overview – there is significant data overlap and demonstrated complementarity. The UN is currently undertaking its Common Country Assessment to inform its UNSDCF,

which will reportedly have a strong focus on the nexus. However, some interviewees report that the UN will incorporate a nexus component under the social pillar of its UNSDCF, and it will be important that efforts to build collaboration, coherence and complementarity are mainstreamed across all pillars.

There is also evidence of collaborative working across humanitarian and development portfolios within donors. The EU's Department for International Cooperation and Development (DEVCO) and the EC's Department of Humanitarian Aid and Civil Protection (ECHO) have been cited as an example of good internal coordination, particularly in terms of mobilising funding jointly under EU trust funds and for the Pro-Resilience Action project in the East and Adamawa regions, through regular communication with headquarters, joint planning and prioritisation.

Programming approaches

Best practice approaches to the nexus for development actors

The nexus is easier to comprehend in its practical application than in concept. This section outlines several programming approaches and models used by development actors to address vulnerability and risk and build resilience, peace and recovery in Cameroon, as captured in the research. It highlights areas of best practice and key gaps and challenges for learning purposes.

Frequent context analysis and review of development priorities

Reflecting commitments to align aid with government priorities, development actors usually provide support through long-term strategic partnership frameworks. These are often renewed every four to six years, with limited opportunities for review in light of context changes. Furthermore, the context assessments that inform these strategies are largely carried out at the outset and not regularly updated. For example, the EU's National Indicative Programme 2014–2020, adopted before the onset of Cameroon's crises, was not reviewed until the mid-term review in 2017. Even then, priorities were largely unchanged despite the deepening crisis in the northern regions. Interviewees report, however, that the EU did use the RPC strategy to adjust planning in 2018.

Some development actors have begun to adopt a more flexible strategic approach in crisis contexts. In line with its new Strategy for Fragility, Conflict and Violence 2020–2025, the World Bank is working to increase its flexibility and be less risk averse when operating in crisis contexts.⁸⁹ The World Bank's CPF in Cameroon for 2017–2021 only defined instruments for the first two to three years because of the degree of uncertainty of the political and security situation. A performance and learning review was produced two years into implementation to take stock of the latest developments and early results.⁹⁰ Furthermore, the CPF includes a commitment to tailor programme design, implementation and management in the Far North to the presence of active conflict, for example through third-party implementation (such as by UN agencies or NGOs), security arrangements for missions to insecure areas, third-party monitoring, and making greater use of technology (such as geo-localised video/photography and satellite imagery). This has enabled the World Bank to address operational challenges given the security context. For example, the World Bank financed the rehabilitation of the Mora–Kousseri road,⁹¹ through areas frequently attacked by Boko Haram, and relied on collaboration with the Army Corps of Engineers.⁹²

At a programmatic level, donors and implementing agencies experience practical challenges of shifting towards adaptive programme approaches. Recognising the need to plan in the context of uncertainty, some UN agencies are using multi-scenario planning. For example, FAO's strategy for the Lake Chad Basin is designed with a flexible

operational framework and multi-scenario planning.⁹³ Similarly, UNICEF has used multi-scenario planning, with a range of programmatic responses to various potential situations and mitigation strategies. As another example, during the implementation of its 2013–2017 programme, UNDP redirected its activities towards communities most affected by the conflict in the Far North.⁹⁴

Shifting towards durable solutions for refugees, IDPs and host communities

The protracted refugee crisis in the East and Adamawa regions of Cameroon has experienced a gradual shift from a focus on humanitarian assistance (direct assistance to displaced populations) to supporting longer term livelihoods in crisis-affected communities and promoting access to national social protection systems. There is also a shift from targeting refugees to engaging both refugees and host communities in support of refugees' integration and social cohesion. At a policy level, UN agencies (led by UNHCR) have advocated for inclusion of refugees in national development frameworks and supported access to public services for refugees and host communities (Box 6).

The World Bank, working in partnership with UNHCR, has been a key actor supporting this approach in line with its strategic shift to target vulnerable and crisis-affected communities. The World Bank's Community Development Program Support Project Response to Forced Displacement, funded through the IDA18 RSW, for example, has enabled a wider reach to cover both displaced and host populations. Through this project, the World Bank and partners work with local councils to develop a participatory planning processes, encouraging local authorities to consider inclusion of refugees in local government prioritisation and decision-making. Other relevant programmes include the Social Safety Net Project that has helped refugees gain access to social protection in the East and Adamawa regions.⁹⁵

While the World Bank's RSW is helping support a paradigm shift towards long-term solutions for refugees and host communities, there is currently no equivalent instrument to address protracted internal displacement. This is an important gap, given that IDP numbers are far higher than refugees.⁹⁶ Although IDP circumstances are different from those of refugees, much of the learning from refugee contexts is relevant to IDPs and challenges faced are similar. For example, many of the IDPs in the Southwest and Northwest regions live in overcrowded conditions without dignified shelter or basic hygiene and domestic items.⁹⁷ Broader area-based development focusing on community recovery (safety, infrastructure and livelihoods) can be key to return or integration. Learning from the World Bank–UNHCR collaboration on refugees in the East could inform a broader approach to forced displacement that includes IDPs, particularly in the north as a context more conducive to recovery than the English-speaking regions. The World Bank in Cameroon could consider a programme to support host communities and address community recovery and IDPs jointly with other interested development partners such as the EU, building on the work in the East and Adamawa regions and the existing National Community Driven Development Program (PNDDP, a country-wide local development programme funded by AFD, the EU and World Bank to finance employment support in the Far North).

Box 6: UNHCR support to durable solutions for refugees

UNHCR's Cameroon Multi-Year Multi-Partner Strategy 2018–2020 outlines how strategic partnerships with development players, in particular the World Bank, can be leveraged to integrate refugees in national systems and improve access to public services for both host communities and refugees.⁹⁸ UNHCR has built a strong partnership with the World Bank and played a key role in mobilising IDA18's RSW funding in Cameroon.

As reflected in its Livelihoods Strategy for Refugees in Cameroon (2018), UNHCR has sought to not only provide short-term assistance to refugees but also improve their access to land, employment, health and education. It has also advocated for inclusion of refugees and others into national social protection systems to sustainably and significantly reduce their dependency on humanitarian assistance. The strategy targets: CAR refugees living in the East, Adamawa and North regions, Nigerian refugees living in the Far North, urban refugees of all nationalities living in Yaoundé and Douala, and host populations, including IDPs.⁹⁹

Inclusion of refugees in the Social Safety Net Project began in 2019 with support from UNHCR and funding from the World Bank. As the coverage of this programme remains initially limited, UNHCR has provided additional support to widen the reach of government programmes.¹⁰⁰ This project aims to support refugees with their basic needs (via a regular monthly payment) and with longer term income-generating activities (i.e. annual cash grants to invest in livelihoods activities such as buying seeds, tools and livestock or starting a business).

UNICEF has played an important role in supporting longer term development solutions for refugees. UNICEF initially worked to support the government to build temporary schools for refugees. After four to five years, UNICEF advocated with the Ministry for Basic Education to integrate these temporary schools into the public school system, which was adopted last year. This benefits pupils mostly from the refugee community but also from the host community.

The national response to Covid-19 demonstrates where the nexus is operationalised through sequential humanitarian and development programming, as is crucial for laying the foundations for longer term socioeconomic support beyond health. For example, for hand washing where water is scarce, humanitarian actors such as UNHCR in the Far North provide additional water through water trucking.¹⁰¹ At the same time, development actors are scoping opportunities for sustainable solutions (e.g. water piping). PNDP is in touch with UNHCR to find sustainable solutions to be supported through the programme.

Laying the foundations for development and recovery during a crisis

The Far North region offers several examples of parallel humanitarian and development programming. The major bilateral and multilateral donors (World Bank, France, EU, African Development Bank, Germany, the UK and the US) support the African Union's Regional Strategy for the Stabilization, Recovery & Resilience of the Lake Chad Basin Region. In this context, a range of donors and UN agencies support economic recovery, livelihoods, resilience, security and rule of law programmes in parallel with ongoing humanitarian assistance. This is a foundation for stability and addressing humanitarian need in the longer term. Many programmes have a focus on stabilisation and countering violent extremism, which by name and concept suggests a close alignment with political and/or security ambitions.

Although interviewees highlight that these programmes usually focus on recovery and development and are only labelled as 'stabilisation' for funding purposes, this raises questions about the appropriateness of humanitarian–peace collaboration in this context given the imperative to safeguard humanitarian principles, and highlights the need to build consensus on the ambitions for peace in the nexus (see 'Integrating peace as an approach' section).

- FAO adopted a Lake Chad Basin crisis response strategy for 2017–2019 to support conflict prevention, peace and stability by improving food security, rehabilitating agriculture and build resilience.¹⁰²
- UNDP's actions have been scaled up in the Far North and focus on immediate recovery and stabilisation through strengthening security and rule of law, access to basic services, and revitalising the local economy.¹⁰³ Its 2018–2020 programme includes thematic priorities on: social cohesion, stabilisation and prevention of violent extremism; and entrepreneurship and local economic integration.
- AFD is continuing work in the North and Far North where it supports highly labour-intensive work for communities in unstable areas to access employment.
- Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) implemented a programme funded by the EU and the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) to build the socioeconomic resilience of vulnerable youth in northern Cameroon between 2016 and 2019 through cash-for-work activities, training and start-up assistance.¹⁰⁴
- The World Bank's 2017–2021 CPF has a strong focus on human development and strengthening resilience to economic, environmental and conflict-related shocks in Cameroon's northern regions.¹⁰⁵ A 2019 review further increased emphasis on the northern regions.¹⁰⁶
- FAO, UNDP, UN-Habitat and UNICEF have designed a new two-year participative programme focused on building recovery and human security in the Far North region in close coordination with local authorities.

Mainstreaming efforts to build resilience through development programmes

Building the resilience of crisis-affected communities is a pathway by which development actors can reduce vulnerability, strengthen preparedness and address the risk of crisis, filling the gap between immediate life-saving and longer term development assistance. While some donors consider resilience to fall under the responsibility of humanitarian actors (e.g. USAID), a significant number of development actors now regard building resilience as their responsibility and have explicitly focused on this issue through programming. For example, the World Bank prioritises resilience in the Far North in the 2017–2021 CPF and is supporting resilience through various programmes; the EU Bêkou Trust Fund focused explicitly on programmes to build resilience; and the UNDAF includes ‘resilience’ as its fourth pillar.

UN agencies have collaborated on combined programmes, including joint resilience initiatives in northern and eastern Cameroon.¹⁰⁷ UNICEF leads the UN’s joint programme on resilience and the fourth ‘resilience’ pillar in the current UNDAF.¹⁰⁸ FAO’s Lake Chad Basin crisis response strategy 2017–2019 is one example of this.¹⁰⁹ WFP supports refugees and host communities to build longer term resilience to enable communities to sustain their assets through crisis periods to re-establish their livelihoods quickly.¹¹⁰

Investing in building community resilience to the impacts of climate change is also important from this perspective, especially given the vulnerability of the Far North region to drought and crop failure. Some actors have a specific focus on climate change: UNDP, for example, includes an objective on the environment, natural resources and climate change in its 2017–2020 plan. However, climate change is broadly not prioritised, presenting a clear missed opportunity from a resilience perspective.

While development actors have clearly stepped up their support to resilience in Cameroon, for sustainability it is vital that the concept of resilience is not regarded as an end in itself but an approach to development programmes in places where there is a risk of crisis. As such, in addition to targeted and stand-alone programmes, it is vital that a resilience approach is systematically mainstreamed into all development programmes.

Integrating peace as an approach

Collaboration between HDP actors in regions with ongoing armed conflict in the north (related to the Boko Haram conflict) and west (related to the English-speaking separatist movement) has been challenging for many reasons. Peacebuilding in the English-speaking regions is a difficult and politically sensitive endeavour, given the government’s role in the conflict, and most development partners have avoided it. Nevertheless, as noted in Box 4, the inclusion of the English-speaking regions in the strategy of the Nexus Taskforce could open doors for a greater focus on peace. Similarly, concerns have been raised in the context of stabilisation and counter-insurgency efforts in the Far North that humanitarian action may be instrumentalised for political ends, leaving fewer resources available to address needs outside a stabilisation framework and potentially increasing protection risks for the civilian population in the short term.¹¹¹ In both contexts,

humanitarian actors have voiced concern about the need to safeguard humanitarian space, maintain independence from political agendas, and ensure needs-based targeting.

Thus, while some information sharing or coordination is possible (e.g. to negotiate access), there is limited scope for an integrated response. Nonetheless, collaboration between development and peace and security actors is possible, and development programming can be oriented to explicitly address peace and security objectives. Development actors vary in their commitments to address peace and fragility, but many have committed to stay engaged during conflict, think and work politically, and enhance the coherence of the security and development support. This is evident in stabilisation programmes in the north. In the west, many development actors initially suspended their programmes due to risks associated with the government's active role in the conflict as well as security risks, however some have begun to rethink their engagement and partnerships to reflect new security and conflict dynamics.

Although direct collaboration may not be desirable in all contexts, all humanitarian and development actors have a responsibility to ensure their support is conflict sensitive. This may fall on a spectrum from avoiding harm to promoting peace. In displacement contexts, most actors recognise the importance of promoting social cohesion between host communities and refugees and IDPs, but many are less clear on how to integrate peace and conflict sensitivity in active conflict or other humanitarian contexts. Some development actors have been slow to acknowledge Cameroon's fragility or adapt their strategies and partnership with the government to reflect conflict dynamics. They have had to balance the desire to maintain a constructive relationship with the government (by responding to its priorities) with the need for structural reforms to adequately address crisis-affected regions. As a minimum, development and humanitarian actors should take steps to internalise conflict sensitivity, including by investing in in-house analytical capacity and expertise. In addition, conflict sensitivity implies moving towards more inclusive planning processes, for example encouraging consultations around the National Development Plan.

Financing tools

Development finance for crisis regions

Cameroon's crisis regions have seen a gap in funding for longer term resilience and recovery activities. Between 2017 and 2019, the East and Adamawa regions saw a drop in humanitarian assistance as the active phase of the crisis passed, which was not directly followed by an increase in development funding. This gap undermined the continuation of recovery efforts.¹¹² Interviewees report a similar trend in the Far North. The will of development actors to explicitly target crisis-affected regions and stretch outside traditional bilateral aid programmes is generally there. However, the challenge is the systems and structures they work within. The key constraints are the needs for greater flexibility in development finance and decentralised decision-making (see 'Organisational issues' section).

Dedicated crisis-focused funds and windows

Regionally and globally managed funds are key to fill gaps in resilience and recovery activities in crisis regions. These include several EU and AFD funds (Box 7), which have played an important role in the north and east, including by funding non-governmental actors and local development approaches. In addition, the World Bank's regional funding and UNDP's Regional Stabilization Facility have mobilised substantial resources to address the Lake Chad Basin crisis, and the World Bank's RSW has been instrumental in the refugee response in the east.

However, there are risks associated with creating separation between longer term country assistance strategies and crisis-related activities. Funding through separate crisis-financing mechanisms may be less sustainable and, if driven at the global or regional level, less grounded in local needs. It is important that it complement and reinforce donors' country strategies and policy dialogue. For example, providing additional resources can leverage reforms that help provide longer term solutions to crisis, as has been the case with World Bank RSW funding. Similarly, AFD has drawn on financing from their Minka Peace and Resilience Fund to adapt its programmes to target crisis-affected areas directly (e.g. working with MINEPAT to develop a special window within the PNDP). In other cases, the links between globally or regionally managed funds and strategic priorities in-country have been weaker. Decentralising decision-making of such funds to country teams can strengthen complementarity and alignment and increase the speed and responsiveness of projects.

Box 7: Role of crisis-financing mechanisms in EU and AFD support

EU trust funds are designed for emergency and post-emergency interventions and offer faster decision-making and greater flexibility than is the case with the bilateral aid programme (National Indicative Programme funded through the European Development Fund). They have allowed the EU to be flexible and quick in approving and operationalising projects to support activities on resilience, economic and employment opportunities, and migration management. The Bêkou Trust Fund for CAR targeted the East and Adamawa regions between 2014 and 2017, linking humanitarian and development efforts. The EU Emergency Trust Fund for Africa funds four projects in Cameroon totalling €40.3 million, of which €20 million is spent on resilience activities in Adamawa, the North and Far North.¹¹³ After support to Cameroon through the Bêkou Trust Fund ended (it continues to fund activities in CAR), the EU continued to support resilience approaches in the East and Adamawa regions through the Pro-Resilience Action project, which is currently in its second of three phases and co-financed by Oxfam.

The EU's Instrument contributing to Stability and Peace, while not a trust fund but a foreign policy instrument, supports efforts to respond to the crises in northern and eastern Cameroon. It is currently funding nine projects, including stabilisation activities in the Far North.

AFD draws funds for crisis-affected communities from two regional initiatives of their Minka Peace and Resilience Fund launched in 2017: Ga Songo initiative for CAR and Kouri initiative for the Lake Chad Basin crisis in the North and Far North.

France's explicit focus on support for crisis-affected communities has evolved over time. The first phase of the project under the Debt Reduction–Development Contract tool (€5 million) was a pilot and did not focus on the areas most affected by Boko Haram.¹¹⁴ The second phase was financed by the EU Emergency Trust Fund for Africa and covered insecure areas in the Far North (€10 million). The third phase is designed to reach remote areas and aims to create 3,500 jobs in municipalities affected by Boko Haram (€15 million).

Reducing earmarking for greater flexibility

Germany's development cooperation has struggled to adapt to target crisis regions because BMZ's funding is earmarked to sectors and not by target groups or levels of vulnerability. While it is theoretically possible to adapt programmes, slow pace of change means in practice this doesn't take place. For example, Germany had significant funding earmarked for agriculture in the English-speaking regions; the security situation made it too difficult to pursue delivery, and a decision was taken centrally to reallocate the funding to other regions. Interviewees from the German government in-country report

their frustration; they would have preferred to continue to provide support in these regions – if not through agriculture, in a different way (e.g. education and health).

Where engagement in crisis-affected regions has not been possible through the bilateral aid programme, Germany has provided funds through alternative channels and support to multilateral programmes and financing frameworks (e.g. those managed by the EU). For example, GIZ implemented a project on the socioeconomic resilience of vulnerable youth in northern Cameroon funded by BMZ through the bilateral aid programme and co-financed by the EC over the period 2016–2019. In the North and Far North, the strategic focus of this joint programme changed from rural development to displacement; its work on good governance has shifted to look at how communities can absorb shocks and address vulnerabilities, and its work on health shifted to focus on health provision in refugee situations, and more recently in response to Covid-19.

Need for a high degree of budget flexibility

Budget flexibility is key to adapting programmes to respond to changes in the crisis context. However, it can be difficult for development partners to re-negotiate programmes with government ministries, and donors' approval processes can be slow and bureaucratic. As a result, this option is not often used. For example, the EU's Envelope B in its bilateral aid programme (the National Indicative Programme) mobilising additional funding "if unforeseen needs arise";¹¹⁵ however, DEVCO's process to mobilise Envelope B can take a year and requires Brussels' approval. Furthermore, funding reserves tend to be exhausted towards the end of its seven-year programming cycle. Interviewees report that the EU is expected to address this challenge by including flexible financing options in its next programming cycle.

Greater budget flexibility would allow development partners to adapt programmes in response to changing needs in often fluid crisis situations. The UK's Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office's humanitarian and development budgets are not allocated separately but decided at country level, with the flexibility to move funds between budget lines and programmes in response to contextual changes.¹¹⁶ A decentralised budget system and fungibility of budget types such as this can facilitate a nexus approach and could be considered by other donors.¹¹⁷ However, reallocating resources on its own may not be sufficient to deal with the rapid onset of a crisis and only divert funding away from other urgent priorities. One option would be to systematically include a crisis contingency financing window within bilateral aid programmes, enabling flexibility and timelier reallocation of priorities.

Strengthening contingency funding mechanisms

There have been efforts to establish contingency or risk financing mechanisms over recent years, which would enable donors to scale up funding in response to increased needs of crisis-affected populations. However, while some development agencies have integrated contingency mechanisms into existing programmes, these are not sufficient to fill gaps related to Cameroon's three crises. For example, the World Bank's Immediate Response Mechanism allows IDA countries to access up to 5% of their undisbursed

project balances following a crisis (e.g. to scale up safety nets) and the World Bank incorporates 'contingent emergency response components' in select projects, which enable projects to be restructured and the rapid disbursement of funds. However, this must be requested by the government, which limits scope to address needs in contexts where government political will is lacking. We have seen flexible funding to address Covid-19 in Cameroon, which illustrates that a rapid and flexible response is possible when driven by the centre and endorsed by the recipient government (Box 8).

The RPC strategy recommends the adoption of 'additional funding arrangements' to address shortfalls and increase flexibility in the short-term.¹¹⁸ To fill the gap between humanitarian to development funding in the northern and eastern regions, UN leadership has been looking into establishing a nexus pooled fund in Cameroon that could be coupled with a UNSDCF pooled fund under a multi-partner trust fund. A pooled fund may be attractive to donors that do not have substantial in-country presence and could enhance coordination in line with principles for operating in fragile states. The proposed nexus pooled fund would be overseen by RC/HC and would amount to approximately US\$20 million. Such a fund would allow quick mobilisation of development responses in a crisis, particularly once humanitarian assistance recedes. However, learning from other multi-partner trust funds highlights disadvantages to these mechanisms that need to be addressed, including little flexibility, project-based funding without strategic focus, centralised management lacking contextual knowledge and analytical capacity, and limited partnership options that exclude local actors (i.e. only UN agencies or government).

For a nexus pooled fund to be effective, it is important that the fund manager: (a) has procedures that allow substantial budget flexibility and relatively quick disbursement processes; (b) has political and strategic analytical capacity or can focus funds on an agreed collective strategy framework such as the RPC strategy; (c) has a decision-making process on allocations and project approval that is decentralised to the country level; (d) has the ability to fund diverse actors directly, for example central and local government, local and international NGOs; (e) and prioritises projects that engage with government to support reforms that would better address crisis regions, whether through direct partnership with government or civil society advocacy on key issues (e.g. inclusion of IDPs and refugees in social safety net systems, social spending in crisis regions). Ultimately, a pooled fund should only be considered in the interim period as it risks siloing nexus commitments further, and the aim should be stronger coordination and mainstreaming nexus-related issues into development planning to eliminate funding gaps for recovery and resilience.

Box 8: Contingency and flexible funding to the Covid-19 response

Responses to Covid-19 in Cameroon have demonstrated that programme and budget flexibility can happen quickly. With a drive from the centre, existing programming changed to cover emerging needs more promptly than demonstrated previously.

- The United Nations Population Fund reallocated core and non-core funding (US\$2 million and US\$2.5 million).
- The United Nations Office for Project Services is working on sensitisation of rural communities using existing resources within a water project.
- The Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS envisions reallocating US\$2 million and mobilising an additional US\$2.5 million.
- UNDP reallocated US\$1.2 million.
- The German government adapted a health project focusing on IDPs and refugees in the Northwest and Southwest in response to Covid-19 and reoriented funding from a programme to support the Central African Forest Commission.
- AFD reallocated €12 million from health programmes and from sector budgets to support the Ministry of Health's emergency response.

This shows what can be done by development actors engaging in crisis contexts when the impetus comes from both global and country level and highlights the need for rapid and decentralised decision-making on funding. While reallocating existing funds is one way to scale up responses to Covid-19, there is a need for additional financing to avoid diversion of funds from other priorities.

Global financing windows provide additional funding in Cameroon. For example, the government's national Covid-19 plan benefits from the World Bank's Financing Deal for Covid-19 (US\$35.8 million), the IMF's Rapid Credit Facility (US\$226 million)¹¹⁹ and WHO global funds. Cameroon received US\$7.4 million from the World Bank's Pandemic Emergency Financing Facility,¹²⁰ although this was criticised for slow disbursement and arriving weeks into the pandemic in Cameroon, failing to play a role in prevention. The complex trigger-based structure of the Pandemic Emergency Financing Facility, which requires an acceleration of newly reported cases over a 12-week period, meant it was initiated in mid-April, raising questions about the cost efficiency of risk-based insurance mechanisms for responding to pandemics.¹²¹

Proposals are also underway for a pooled 'basket fund' for Covid-19 with contributions from government, donors and the private sector attached to the United Nations Covid-19 Socio-Economic Response Plan for Cameroon, to be co-managed by the government and UNDP.¹²² This is intended to be a flexible structure, with rapid disbursement and simplified procedures to reduce transaction costs.

Organisational issues

Decentralised decision-making for flexibility and speed

The decision-making structures for most development agencies and donors providing assistance to Cameroon (and broadly) are centralised, with key decisions on programming priorities and funding made at HQ-level. As a result, decisions on funding (re)allocation can be slower than would be the case with decentralised decision-making. For example, the Minka Peace and Resilience Fund is managed by AFD's Crisis Prevention and Post-Conflict Recovery Division based in Paris. Similarly, EU trust funds are managed in Brussels and EU decisions must be approved by the 27 EU member states, and US sectoral priorities are set by Congress. This means that the role of in-country staff is often limited to monitoring and managing partners. As such, there is a disconnect between centrally driven decisions and national planning processes, undermining coordination.

Decision-making on partnerships, assessments and budget (re)allocation, to agreed limits as a minimum, should be driven by in-country staff for flexibility and effectiveness.

Operationalisation of nexus commitments

Most development actors engaging in Cameroon have central policies to drive prioritisation and decision-making that focuses on nexus-related issues. This may not be 'the nexus' explicitly – but may include fragility, sustainable solutions for refugees, building resilience and reducing vulnerabilities, coherence and coordination between actors, which lay the foundations for engaging on the nexus.¹²³

The application of these policy commitments at the country level is the key challenge faced by development actors. As demonstrated in Cameroon, this is in part due to absence of institutional guidance on how to operationalise these commitments, such as the OECD HDP nexus recommendation, and clarification of key terms. It is also fundamentally a result of other missing enabling factors such as decentralised decision-making, political will and access. Certain actors are taking steps towards production of guidance. The EU's Lives in Dignity policy, which includes action points on nexus-relevant issues such as flexible funding, coordinated assessments and programming, and joint analysis of risks and vulnerabilities, is such an example.¹²⁴ The new World Bank strategy for fragility, conflict, and violence 2020–2025 includes a table of measures to operationalise the strategy. While central guidance can play a key role, it is vital that it does not impose a blueprint and is balanced with a context specific and flexible approach.

As development actors generally see the term 'nexus' as ambiguous and unhelpful and regard it as a burden to add to existing priorities, guidance on operationalising it should

clarify how it relates to existing approaches to engaging in crisis (e.g. risk, resilience, fragility, recovery and inclusion) and existing commitments (e.g. delivering the SDGs). It would be appropriate to focus on building collaboration, coherence and complementarity with humanitarian and peace actors – as an approach rather than an end in itself – as opposed to treating the nexus as a new and distinct area of programming.

Learning from experience is central to operationalisation of the nexus, and some actors have started consolidating learning. For example, ECHO is assessing how much of the EU's Lives in Dignity communication was operationalised at country level in Cameroon (and in three other partner countries). All development actors should undertake similar assessments to build a learning base for effective engagement in crisis contexts.

In-country skills developed through training, guidance and learning

Certain development actors, including the EU, the World Bank and UN agencies, have recruited in-country staff specifically to engage in crisis settings, and/or provided their staff with training on risk, resilience, security and the nexus. In its recent Strategy for Fragility, Conflict and Violence 2020–2025, the World Bank included a commitment to strengthen its presence in crisis-affected countries.¹²⁵ When Cameroon started benefiting from the EU Emergency Trust Fund for Africa in 2017, two new positions were created in the EU delegation to work on linking relief, rehabilitation and development: one focused on peace, security and migration, and one on refugees, forced displacement and resilience. Certain humanitarian actors have taken a similar approach, where UNHCR recruited development officers to support a transition to a more durable approach.

However, most development partners operating in Cameroon do not systematically consider skills across the nexus – or on risk, resilience and peace – in their recruitment, and globally there is a shortage of staff with expertise across all areas given entrenched silos. As a result, capacity is not always in the right place. When it is, this tends to be a coincidence rather than the outcome of a systematic decision, according to interviewees.

While the recruitment of staff with specific skills on nexus-related issues is important, this must be balanced with efforts to mainstream these skills across all staff posted in contexts at risk of or experiencing crisis to ensure that the nexus is not siloed but seen as the responsibility of all staff. Training modules should be developed and rolled out systematically for all staff working in crisis-affected contexts, in conjunction with ongoing technical support (which appears to be in place for most development actors, although capacities are often stretched and there is competition between countries for it).

Conclusion and recommendations

Five years ago, Cameroon was a stable middle-income country. Today it is facing three rapidly unfolding humanitarian crises including two active conflicts. Cameroon's small development donor base and operational agencies have tried to adapt to this new context, with evidence of progress. However, Cameroon's political context, development actors' own policies and practices, and limited humanitarian and development funding have limited their ability to prevent the situation from deteriorating and support long-term solutions.

Recommendations for strengthening the effectiveness of development actors addressing risk and vulnerabilities and building resilience and peace are set out below, and lessons can be drawn for other contexts. These recommendations are intended primarily for international development actors – both working in Cameroon and globally.

Recommendations specific to Cameroon

Strategy and partnerships

Collectively support and build the capacity of the government to deliver reforms to better target vulnerable populations

Development actors must play a stronger role in encouraging structural and policy reforms that will help address Cameroon's crises. This requires navigating politically sensitive issues through dialogue with government and agreeing collective positions on critical issues, many of which are essential for achieving the SDGs (e.g. allocating domestic resources to crisis-affected regions and increasing spending on service delivery in the social sectors). This is particularly critical given the limited consultation on the new national development strategy and ongoing budget support, which could be used to leverage dialogue. The key structural and policy reforms required include government's delivery of decentralisation including funding to local government (especially in rural areas), its role in the English-speaking crisis, its adoption of the RPC strategy as a common framework for engaging in crisis-affected regions, and the inclusion of refugees and IDPs in national development frameworks. Development partners should collectively agree common positions on these issues and red lines on human rights abuses.

Development actors should review their partnerships with the government and their approach to the ongoing conflict in the English-speaking regions to address risks and support a peace process

Cameroon's development partners, and their political and diplomatic representation, should step up engagement with the government to encourage a solution to the conflict in the English-speaking regions. Development partners should continue to explore ways to stay engaged in the English-speaking regions, including supporting the government to implement reforms that will de-escalate conflict and supporting local livelihoods and services. They must also review their partnerships and approach to ensure it is conflict sensitive and considers political, conflict and human rights risks. Simply continuing to work alongside the government poses the risk of exacerbating conflict and politicising the actors involved unless adequately negotiated with all parties to the conflict and grounded in a political framework for peace agreed amongst international partners. Strengthening their partnerships with non-governmental actors and working in a decentralised manner with a range of actors at the local level could form part of a conflict-sensitive approach.

Coordination, prioritisation and planning

Strengthen tools and mechanisms for coordination between HDP actors at the country level, with cross-government buy-in and leadership

The UN-led Nexus Taskforce presents an opportunity to strengthen HDP coordination. For it to be effective, cross-government leadership and government engagement at the subnational level is vital. Working primarily with individual ministries will not necessarily generate the necessary buy-in across government to enable multi-sectoral responses in crisis regions. Thus, international actors must involve all relevant ministries within the Nexus Taskforce and strengthen coordination at the subnational level (e.g. building on regional and local coordination mechanisms established in response to Covid-19). Donors should consider the revival of the multi-partner committee (chaired by MINEPAT and the UN RC/HC) and its separate sectoral multi-partner committee platforms and link these to the Nexus Taskforce to avoid duplicating coordination mechanisms. The Nexus Taskforce should broaden buy-in with the international NGO coordination platform and engagement with key development partners, such as the World Bank and the African Development Bank, at a senior level, in order to have influence.

Mapping of existing funding allocation (in terms of geographical location and sector) will help to strengthen coordination between actors and identify funding gaps. The adoption of the RPC strategy will help to address these, as resource tracking is set out in the strategy.

Programming and financing

Strengthen the focus of ODA on crisis-affected regions and use this to leverage government investment

To deliver the OECD HDP nexus commitment and the SDGs in Cameroon, a greater proportion of ODA and public resources should be allocated to crisis-affected regions, which have the lowest outcomes across a range of socioeconomic indicators. Although ODA is only a small proportion of the state budget, by focusing support in crisis-affected regions, development actors can play a role in encouraging the government to invest public resources over time. Although the government's willingness to invest in long-term development in these regions remains a challenge, the technical and financial capacity of local authorities and presence of infrastructure (e.g. health facilities) is also a constraint to decentralised delivery. Development actors can make initial investments in these areas and move towards government co-financing. Some development partners have been slow to recognise Cameroon's fragility and the risks associated with supporting development strategies that are not inclusive, or even exacerbate regional disparities and inequalities. Development partners should ensure their country assistance strategies and partnership frameworks are conflict sensitive and reflect the needs of crisis regions. Encouraging consultation on the national development strategy, including with civil society and vulnerable communities, is vital for ensuring national development priorities reflect the needs of crisis-affected populations and integrate conflict sensitivity.

Recommendations from Cameroon but with relevance globally

Strategy and partnerships

Strengthen funding to a wider set of actors, beyond the central government, to ensure that vulnerable populations are targeted directly

Development actors should continue to engage with the central government to support reforms that will benefit vulnerable populations and promote long-term development in crisis-affected regions, even though these are long-term efforts and the government's political will is unclear. Local governments in Cameroon, especially in marginalised crisis regions, lack funding to operate effectively and are weak given the history of centralised governance, while national and local NGOs are also under-funded. Funding and technical support to local NGOs and local government authorities can address the gaps in service delivery in crisis regions in the interim and promote decentralisation. However, to achieve this, development partners need to invest in developing the organisational and technical capacity of local NGOs and local authorities and address blockages relating to risk management, due diligence and reporting requirements. This could be achieved by expanding special grant facilities for local NGOs and ensuring they are included in NGO consortia, and by funding local and national NGOs salary and organisational costs at similar levels to international NGOs so that they can retain skilled staff and manage projects effectively. Technical and organisational support is especially important in the

Cameroonian context because existing local and national government and NGO capacities are critically weak given the history of low funding and capacity building compared with other countries in the region (e.g. Nigeria). It is especially crucial with Covid-19 where local actors are present and able to respond promptly to local needs.

Coordination, prioritisation and planning

Decentralise decision-making for greater flexibility of country teams

Decision-making on budget reallocation or new programming is usually too slow to respond to a fast-changing context, and decisions are led from the centre with significant disconnect from realities on the ground. Where possible, decision-making on budget (re)allocation, partnerships and assessments should be driven by in-country staff, at least within set limits. In support of a decentralised model, donors must ensure staff at the country level have expertise and guidance and work to break down HDP silos within agencies by ensuring that complementarity is systematically built into assessments, planning and budget allocation, as a minimum.

Where it is not feasible to decentralise decision-making (e.g. with regional and global financing mechanisms), structured coordination between these and country teams should take place to ensure financing is used in a coordinated and complementary way.

Programming and financing

Systematically update development assessments and undertake risk assessments in programme planning to enable flexibility

Development actors typically undertake assessments during programme design and often update their analysis of the context and country strategies only every four years. Furthermore, their capacity for ongoing political and conflict analysis varies and their investment in this expertise in seemingly stable contexts is particularly limited. In Cameroon this has meant that some development partners have been slow to recognise and adapt their response to the deteriorating political situation. To address this, development partners should:

- Develop systems for reassessing the context and reviewing strategies and programmes on a regular basis, as the World Bank has begun doing in Cameroon. Context and conflict analysis should be part of the planning cycle (e.g. mid-term reviews, evaluations) and assessments should be led by local experts and in-country staff to ensure local buy-in and thorough understanding of the context.
- Invest in in-house political and conflict analysis expertise (e.g. recruit senior advisors and increase capacity of key staff) to enable ongoing analysis to inform approaches to implementation, even in stable contexts.
- Embed risk and scenario modelling into programme design. Some development actors, including FAO and UNICEF, use multi-scenario planning, developing a range of responses to various potential situations and identifying mitigation strategies. This should become standard practice for development actors in crisis contexts.
- Ensure results frameworks are flexible, with the option to review and adapt regularly.

Integrate nexus-related ambitions such as on resilience, risk reduction, recovery and peace into national and donor development strategies and programming

A range of resilience and recovery-focused development programmes are in progress in Cameroon, demonstrating buy-in from donors. However, often these are standalone projects and there is a risk that efforts are restricted to unsustainable funding streams. Labelling projects as 'nexus' risks undermining the approach given that the term is aligned with policy commitments that may be short lived and because development actors in Cameroon do not clearly understand the term or their role in it. For a sustainable approach at scale, it is important to integrate efforts to build resilience, risk reduction, recovery and peace into national development policies and plans and related sectoral strategies (e.g. through the development of social safety net systems and climate/shock-resilient agricultural and rural development) and move beyond blanket terms to concrete outcomes.

One aspect of this is integrating outcome-level indicators on risk, resilience, recovery and peacebuilding, such as those agreed by the Nexus Taskforce, into development results frameworks. Despite the progress made identifying collective outcomes, this process has highlighted the difficulty of articulating ambitions that are multidimensional yet specific enough for accountability purposes. Capturing learning on appropriate and tested outcome-level indicators will support this.

Integrate peace into development programming and build consensus on principles for collaboration between HDP actors in active conflict or other settings where there is a need to safeguard humanitarian space

The extent to which direct collaboration between HDP actors is possible depends on the context. In some settings humanitarian actors need to maintain independence from government or political agendas, and targeting based on need; in such cases, the goal should be complementary but parallel programming. Even where collaboration is not desirable, all actors can integrate peace into programming, at a minimum through a conflict-sensitive approach. For development partners, there is greater scope to collaborate directly with peace and security actors or with government in active conflict situations, or to orient programming to achieve peace and security objectives. However, this carries with it certain risks, including of politicising donor engagement or worsening protection risks in the short term. In Cameroon, it has been especially challenging to build consensus on how to integrate peace in collective HDP approaches in the English-speaking regions and the Far North where stabilisation and counter-terrorism agendas are at play, although the RSS offers a starting point in the latter. It is important to build clarity on principles for collaboration in active conflict situations, with collective support to social cohesion and conflict sensitivity agreed as a minimum.

Strengthen development financing mechanisms that enable programmes to adapt or scale up in response to contextual changes

Despite efforts to increase the flexibility of funding in crisis contexts, development actors in Cameroon still report that limited budget flexibility is a challenge to adaptive programming and their ability to respond to spikes in need. Many development actors, including the World Bank, EU, UK and US, have developed financing mechanisms tailored to crisis contexts, such as designated trust funds with flexible procedures, crisis reserves or windows, and risk financing mechanisms. Learning from these mechanisms should be consolidated, as a basis to refine and scale up the use of similar instruments by bilateral and multilateral donors or embed them in pooled or multi-partner funds.

Establish financing mechanisms that incentivise HDP actors to deliver in a coordinated way

The separation between humanitarian and development budgets may be necessary in certain contexts to safeguard humanitarian principles, but it also creates strong disincentives for HDP actors to collaborate or deliver in a coordinated way, even in contexts where this is possible. Donors should work towards greater budget flexibility to readjust priorities in response to changing needs, with decentralised authorisation, reduced earmarking and, where possible, a one-budget approach that does not separate country-level fund allocation into rigid humanitarian, development and peace budgets.

In Cameroon, development partners could explore a pooled funding mechanism as a way to enhance political cooperation and operational coordination and plug gaps in funding for programmes that fall between traditional humanitarian or development approaches. Such a mechanism could provide flexible support for responses that integrate humanitarian, development and peace approaches (e.g. for recovery, resilience, peacebuilding, and safety nets) or involve collaboration between HDP partners, perhaps focusing initially on support to the Nexus Taskforce's collective outcomes. For it to be effective, it is important that the fund manager: (a) has procedures that allow substantial budget flexibility and relatively quick disbursement processes; (b) has political and strategic analytical capacity or can focus funds on an agreed collective strategy framework such as the RPC strategy; (c) has a decision-making process on allocations and project approval that is decentralised to the country level; (d) has the ability to fund diverse actors directly, for example central and local government, local and international NGOs; (e) and prioritises projects that engage with government to support reforms that would better address crisis regions, whether through direct partnership with government or civil society advocacy on key issues (e.g. inclusion of IDPs and refugees in social safety net systems, social spending in crisis regions).

Appendix 1: Interviewees

Interviewee	Position	Organisation
Jean Gervais Ayissi	National Coordinator	ADEN network
Jean Yves Medang	Agriculture, Rural Development and Biodiversity: Project Manager	AFD
Anne-Sixtine Vialle-Guerin	Agriculture, Rural Development and Biodiversity: Policy Officer	AFD
Manon Dubois	Governance, Business Law, Creative and Cultural Industries: Project Manager	AFD
Iven Schad	Cameroon Desk Officer	BMZ
Salomon Ndjock	Communications Officer	Cameroonian Humanitarian Organizations Initiative (CHOI)
Richard Bale	High Commissioner	Canada High Commission
Kelly Lepawa	Field Operations Manager	CARE
Fabio Mussi	Secretary General Coordinator	Caritas
Isaac Dizaou Moudmassou	Project Manager	Caritas
Eric Banlav	Program Manager – Emergency Humanitarian Response Programs	Caritas
Michela Tomasella	Team Leader	DEVCO
Claude Cafardy	Humanitarian Adviser	FCDO
Céline Choquer	Resilience Program Officer	EU delegation
Elena Fanetti	Programme Manager Governance and Security	EU delegation

Interviewee	Position	Organisation
Gazbiah Sans	Former Senior Program Management Specialist – Countering/Preventing Violent Extremism	ex-USAID
Athman Mravili	Country Representative	FAO
Gerald Tchatchoua Toko	Program Manager	FAO
Fidele Kengni	Policy Officer	FAO
Hauke Brankamp	Head of Cooperation	German Embassy
Philippe Anderco	Senior Security and Risk Management Advisor	GIZ
Akoh Baudouin Ngah	CEO	Global Forum for the Defence of the Less Privileged (local NGO, Northwest region)
Marie-Thérèse Abena Ondo (née Obama)	Minister of Women's Empowerment and the Family	Government of Cameroon
Géorges Elanga Obam	Minister of Decentralization and Local Development	Government of Cameroon
Sadou Hermann Bakari	Ministry of Decentralization and Local Development	Government of Cameroon
Fowang Ignatius Tibong	Inspector of Services, National Institute of Statistics	Government of Cameroon
Celestin Kenge	Manager, Directorate of Civil Protection	Government of Cameroon
Hans De Marie Heungoup	Central Africa Senior Analyst	International Crisis Group
Hanafi Abdelhaq	Head of Hub and Country Director	International Fund for Agricultural Development
Fabien Nsengiyumva	Senior Economist	International Monetary Fund
Boubacar Seybou	Chief of Mission	IOM Cameroon
Gabrielle Bravo Gala	Project officer, Emergencies and Peacebuilding	IOM Cameroon
Robert Mba	Project Manager and Coordinator of Community Development Programs,	KfW Development Bank

Interviewee	Position	Organisation
	Health/HIV-AIDS and Resilience/Crisis	
Gregory Fah Fombo	Fon of Njindom, in Mbengwi Subdivision, Momo Division, Northwest Region	Local government
Mr Sikod	Fon of Tisagli village, in the Pinyin clan, Santa sub-division, Mezam Division, Northwest region	Local government
Regular Ndifor	Program Manager	Nascent Solutions
Maclean Natugasha	Country Director	Norwegian Refugee Council
Delphine Brun	Senior Inter-agency Gender Advisor	OCHA
Modibo Traore	Deputy Head of Office	OCHA
Ousmane Watt	Humanitarian Development Peace Nexus Advisor	OCHA
Antoine-Marie Bieteke	Education Consultant	Plan Cameroon
Allegra Baiocchi	RC/HC Cameroon	UN
Jean-Luc Stalon	Resident Representative	UNDP
Chiara Dezzi Bardeschi	Senior Advisor for Culture & Partnership Officer	UNESCO
Irene Aragona	UN Fellow	UNESCO
Pia Hanhijärvi	International Urban Planner	UN-Habitat
Leo Kortekaas	Senior Development Officer	UNHCR
Raïssa Touraire Ngou	Development Partnerships Assistant	UNHCR
Benoit Daoundo	Child Protection Specialist	UNICEF
Jacques Boyer	Country Representative	UNICEF
Aristide Amougou	Donor Coordination Officer	UN Resident Coordinator Office
Jahal Rabesahala de Meritens	Humanitarian Development Peace Coordinator	UN Resident Coordinator Office

Interviewee	Position	Organisation
Sunday Khan	Economist	UN Resident Coordinator Office
Agnes Okodombe	Program Manager	UNV
Haider Haider	Cameroon Country Desk Officer	USAID
Mounkaila Abdou Billo	Senior Global Health Security Agenda & Development Advisor	USAID
Adamou Salissou	Resilience, Early Recovery and Development Focal Point	WFP
Benjamin Burckhart	Senior Social Development Specialist	World Bank
Charles Che	Early Childhood Development Consultant	World Bank
Penn Amaah	Early Childhood Development Consultant	World Bank
Christine Harmelle Ename Ekoman	Health Specialist	World Bank

Appendix 2: Planning and financing frameworks

Cameroon Vision 2035

Vision 2035 is the long-term national framework for Cameroon, aiming to establish Cameroon as an emerging market by 2035. The framework has four overarching goals for the country: reducing poverty to a socially acceptable level; becoming a middle-income country; acquiring newly industrialised country status; and consolidating democracy and national unity while respecting the country's diversity.

The first 10-year phase of Cameroon Vision 2035 is defined within the 2010–2020 Growth and Employment Strategy Paper, which focuses heavily on economic growth and little on human development. The main aims include: drive economic growth to an annual average of 5.5%; cut underemployment from 75.8% to 50% with the creation of 1,000 formal jobs per year; and reduce the income poverty rate from 39.9% to 28.7%.

National Development Strategy 2020–2030

This second-generation strategy has been developed and is pending authorisation.¹²⁶ Its aims are to: raise GDP growth rate to 7–8% on average over the 2020–2030 period; increase the growth rate of the non-oil secondary sector to around 8%, and reduce the trade deficit from 8.8% in 2018 to 3% of GDP in 2030; improve the living conditions of the population and their access to basic social services by ensuring a significant reduction in poverty and underemployment.

Some, but not all, international partners were consulted in strategy development. UN agencies and some NGOs, both humanitarian and development focused, called for a focus on human development and marginalised groups. UNHCR, for example, influenced the revision of the 2010–2020 Growth and Employment Strategy Paper to ensure the needs of refugees, those with humanitarian needs and other specific needs, and ethnic minorities are addressed. However, other actors such as the EU were barely consulted. The final version of this strategy was not available at the time of writing this report.

Recovery and Peace Consolidation (RPC) Strategy

The Recovery and Peace Consolidation Strategy for Northern and East Cameroon 2018–2022 was developed by the government of Cameroon (Ministry of Economy, Planning and Regional Development) in partnership with the EU, UN and World Bank. It underscores the urgent need to reduce the longstanding socioeconomic marginalisation of the North, Far North, Adamawa and East regions. It provides a good basis for the operationalisation of the humanitarian–development ‘double’ nexus, as it aims to operate according to the UN New Way of Working initiative to aid a gradual transition from humanitarian response to development. It seeks to reduce the risks of future crises by addressing both structural causes of vulnerability and the impact of the current crises through:¹²⁷

- Progress toward sustainable solutions for displaced
- Better functioning of local governance
- Improved access to basic services
- Improved economic opportunities
- Improved territorial and human security.

However, despite its title, the RPC strategy includes a relatively limited focus on peace.

The RPC strategy was developed through a participatory process (using the Recovery & Peacebuilding Assessments (RPBA) methodology) to promote ownership and make the strategy as inclusive and grounded in local priorities as possible. It identifies key government reforms including the adoption of a strategy for forcibly displaced people and the revision of communal development plans and the Public Investment Budget to better include the needs of crisis-affected populations. Commitments from international partners include investing in the most vulnerable areas of the country and focusing on building resilience. International players also committed to map existing initiatives and fund the RPC strategy steering committee and monitoring framework.

A mutual accountability framework with clear indicators was developed to monitor government reforms and alignment of international partners. However, although the Ministry of Economy, Planning and Regional Development adopted the strategy in 2018, the accountability framework has yet to be signed off and adopted by the Presidency and therefore implementation of the RPC strategy has remained on hold. One reason for the government’s hesitancy in ratifying it might be because it includes expectations of the government to provide for IDPs and refugees. The strategy’s needs assessment finds that the Boko Haram and CAR crises have structural causes because regions have long been neglected by the government, and this may make the RPC strategy difficult for the government to approve.

There was also some divergence between the government and international partners on expectations of this strategy. The government saw it as an opportunity to host a donor conference for additional international funding, as was the case with CAR in November 2016.¹²⁸ With the RPC strategy on hold since 2018, there is a lack of a clear vision and common strategy for the North, Far North, East and Adamawa regions, as well as for the Northwest and Southwest not covered by the RPC strategy or any other commonly

agreed plan. Most international players in Cameroon are still working on getting the RPC strategy adopted. There have been discussions of including RPC strategy priorities in the National Development Strategy 2020–2030, but the final version of this is not yet published.

National Community Driven Development Program (PNDP)

In addition to national-level development plans, each municipality also has its own plan, with support of the National Community Driven Development Program (PNDP). PNDP is a country-wide government programme funded by AFD and the World Bank that aims to promote local development. It was set up in 2004 and is now in its third phase. These local plans represent a major advance in terms of identifying local needs and designing appropriate development strategies in a participative way. However, the central government has often failed to align budget allocations with local needs and objectives as identified in these plans. The local plans have also sometimes failed to reflect changing needs, in particular in crisis areas (e.g. concerning IDPs or an influx of refugees), as they run for three to five years and are not updated regularly.

The Regional Strategy for the Stabilization, Recovery & Resilience of the Lake Chad Basin Region

The Regional Strategy for the Stabilization, Recovery & Resilience of the Lake Chad Basin Region was developed by the Lake Chad Basin Commission and adopted by its member states in August 2018. The strategy is built around nine pillars:

1. Political cooperation
2. Security and human rights
3. Disarmament, demobilisation, rehabilitation, reinsertion and reintegration of persons associated with Boko Haram
4. Humanitarian assistance
5. Governance and the social contract
6. Socioeconomic recovery and environmental sustainability
7. Education, learning and skills
8. Prevention of violent extremism and building peace
9. Empowerment and inclusion of women and youth

Acronyms

AFD	French Development Agency
BMZ	German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development
CAR	Central African Republic
CPF	Country Partnership Framework
CSO	Civil society organisation
DAC	Development Assistance Committee (OECD)
DEVCO	Department for International Cooperation and Development (EU)
ECHO	Department of Humanitarian Aid and Civil Protection (EC)
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
GIZ	Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit
HDP	Humanitarian–development–peace
IASC	Inter-Agency Standing Committee
IDA	International Development Association
IOM	International Organization for Migration
MINEPAT	Ministry of Economy, Planning and Land Planning
NRC	Norwegian Refugee Council

OCHA	Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UN)
ODA	Official development assistance
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
PNDP	National Community Driven Development Program
RC/HC	Resident Coordinator and Humanitarian Coordinator
RPC	Recovery and Peace Consolidation Strategy for Northern and East Cameroon 2018–2022
RSS	Regional Strategy for Stabilisation, Recovery and Resilience of the Boko Haram-affected Areas of the Lake Chad Basin Region
RSW	Regional sub-window for refugees and host communities (World Bank)
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
UNDAF	United Nations Development Assistance Framework
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNHCR	Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNICEF	United Nations Children’s Fund
USAID	US Agency for International Development
UNSDCF	UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework
WFP	World Food Programme
WHO	World Health Organization

Notes

- ¹ Development Initiatives, with support from the UN Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) and Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC), is leading the wider policy study under the umbrella of the IASC Results Group 5 (on financing). The other focus countries are Bangladesh and Somalia.
- ² Dalrymple S., Looking at the coronavirus crisis through the nexus lens – what needs to be done. Development Initiatives, [web blog], 8 April 2020, <https://devinit.org/blog/looking-at-the-coronavirus-crisis-through-the-nexus-lens-what-needs-to-be-done/> (accessed 23 October 2020)
- ³ Inter-Agency Standing Committee, 2019. Financing the nexus: Gaps and opportunities from a field perspective. Available at: <https://www.nrc.no/resources/reports/financing-the-nexus-gaps-and-opportunities-from-a-field-perspective>
- ⁴ Development Initiatives, 2019. Donors at the triple nexus: lessons from the United Kingdom. Available at: www.devinit.org/resources/donors-triple-nexus-lessons-united-kingdom and Development Initiatives, 2019. Donors at the triple nexus: Lessons from Sweden. Available at: www.devinit.org/resources/donors-triple-nexus-lessons-sweden/
- ⁵ Inter-Agency Standing Committee, 2019. Financing the nexus: Gaps and opportunities from a field perspective. Available at: www.nrc.no/resources/reports/financing-the-nexus-gaps-and-opportunities-from-a-field-perspective/
- ⁶ Food Security Information Network, 2020. Global report on food crises. Available at: www.wfp.org/publications/2020-global-report-food-crises
- ⁷ Inter-Agency Standing Committee, 2019. Financing the nexus: Gaps and opportunities from a field perspective. Available at: www.nrc.no/resources/reports/financing-the-nexus-gaps-and-opportunities-from-a-field-perspective
- ⁸ Dalrymple S., Looking at the coronavirus crisis through the nexus lens – what needs to be done. Development Initiatives, [web blog], 8 April 2020, <https://devinit.org/blog/looking-at-the-coronavirus-crisis-through-the-nexus-lens-what-needs-to-be-done/> (accessed 23 October 2020)
- ⁹ Development Initiatives, with support from the FAO and NRC, is leading the wider policy study under the umbrella of the IASC Results Group 5 (on financing). The other focus countries are Bangladesh and Somalia. See also: [www. https://devinit.org/resources/how-can-development-actors-meet-longer-term-needs-in-crises](https://devinit.org/resources/how-can-development-actors-meet-longer-term-needs-in-crises)
- ¹⁰ Inter-Agency Standing Committee, 2019. Financing the nexus: Gaps and opportunities from a field perspective. Available at: www.nrc.no/resources/reports/financing-the-nexus-gaps-and-opportunities-from-a-field-perspective
- ¹¹ Development Initiatives, 2019. Key questions and considerations for donors at the triple nexus: lessons from UK and Sweden. Available at: www.devinit.org/publications/questions-considerations-donors-triple-nexus-uk-sweden/
- ¹² Inter-Agency Standing Committee, 2019. Financing the nexus: Gaps and opportunities from a field perspective. Available at: www.nrc.no/resources/reports/financing-the-nexus-gaps-and-opportunities-from-a-field-perspective
- ¹³ A number of key donors to the context (including African Development Bank, Korea, Japan and the Global Fund) did not respond to requests for interviews and their perspectives are therefore not included.
- ¹⁴ OECD, 2019. DAC recommendation on the humanitarian-development-peace nexus. Available at: <https://legalinstruments.oecd.org/en/instruments/OECD-LEGAL-5019>
- ¹⁵ IASC, 2020. UN-IASC Light Guidance on Collective Outcomes. Available at: <https://interagencystandingcommittee.org/inter-agency-standing-committee/un-iasc-light-guidance-collective-outcomes>
- ¹⁶ OECD. What does “resilience” mean for donors? Available at: <http://www.oecd.org/dac/May%2010%202013%20FINAL%20resilience%20PDF.pdf>
- ¹⁷ UNDP, 2017. Recovery Guidance Note. Available at: <https://www.undp.org/content/undp/en/home/librarypage/climate-and-disaster-resilience-/recovery-guidance-note.html>
- ¹⁸ ALNAP, 2018. Defining humanitarian aid. Available at: www.alnap.org/help-library/defining-humanitarian-aid
- ¹⁹ The Central African Economic and Monetary Community is made up of six states: Gabon, Cameroon, the Central African Republic (CAR), Chad, the Republic of the Congo and Equatorial Guinea.

- ²⁰ UNHCR, 2020. Cameroon Multi-Country Operation Factsheet, May 2020. Available at: <https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/77406.pdf>
- ²¹ Food Security Information Network, 2020. Global Report on Food Crises. Available at: https://www.fslnplatform.org/sites/default/files/resources/files/GRFC_2020_ONLINE_200420.pdf
- ²² OCHA, 2020. Cameroon Humanitarian Response Plan 2020. Available at: <https://reliefweb.int/report/cameroon/cameroon-humanitarian-response-plan-march-2020>
- ²³ UNHCR, 2018. Transitional safety net for Central African refugees. Available at: <https://www.unhcr.org/5c98fd437.pdf>
- ²⁴ UNHCR, 2018. Transitional safety net for Central African refugees. Available at: <https://www.unhcr.org/5c98fd437.pdf>
- ²⁵ OCHA, 2020. Cameroon Humanitarian Response Plan 2020. Available at: <https://reliefweb.int/report/cameroon/cameroon-humanitarian-response-plan-march-2020>
- ²⁶ African Union, 2018. Regional strategy for the stabilization, recovery & resilience of the Boko Haram affected areas of the Lake Chad Basin region. Available at: www.peaceau.org/uploads/regional-stabilisation-recovery-and-resilience-strategy-rss-.pdf
- ²⁷ Government of the Republic of Cameroon, EU, World Bank, UN, 2018. Recovery and peace consolidation strategy for Northern and East Cameroon: 2018–2022. Available at: <http://documents1.worldbank.org/curated/en/245081527486919288/pdf/126613-WP-P160779-PUBLIC-cameroon-RPC-english-web-DISCLAIMER.pdf>
- ²⁸ SRP - Plan de Réponse Stratégique 2014 - 2016 - Cameroun (Revisé Avril 2014). Available at: www.humanitarianresponse.info/en/operations/cameroon/document/srp-plan-de-r%C3%A9ponse-strat%C3%A9gique-2014-2016-cameroun-revis%C3%A9-avril-2014
- ²⁹ OCHA, 2020. Cameroon Humanitarian Response Plan 2020. Available at: <https://reliefweb.int/report/cameroon/cameroon-humanitarian-response-plan-march-2020>
- ³⁰ IOM, 2019. Indice de stabilité – Cameroun, Extrême Nord. Available at: <https://displacement.iom.int/reports/cameroun-%E2%80%94-dashboards-dindice-de-stabilit%C3%A9-1-12%E2%80%94-ao%C3%BBt-2019>
- ³¹ OCHA, 2020. Cameroon Humanitarian Response Plan 2020. Available at: <https://reliefweb.int/report/cameroon/cameroon-humanitarian-response-plan-march-2020>
- ³² Measured at \$3.20 a day (2011 PPP).
- ³³ Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey (MICS) data, 2000, 2006 and 2014. Available at: <http://mics.unicef.org/surveys>
- ³⁴ World Bank, 2018. Cameroon public expenditure review: aligning public expenditure with the goals of Vision 2035. Available at: <https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/handle/10986/30979?show=full>
- ³⁵ Institute of Statistics Cameroon, Household surveys from 2007 and 2014 (ECAM 3 and 4). Available at: <https://www.ilo.org/surveyLib/index.php/catalog/374> and <http://slmp-550-104.slc.westdc.net/~stat54/nada/index.php/catalog/114>
- ³⁶ Republic of Cameroon, Ministry of Economy, Planning and Regional Development, 2009. Vision 2035. Growth and employment strategy paper 2010–2020. Available at: http://www.cameroon-embassy.nl/wp-content/uploads/2016/04/Cameroon_VISION_2035_English_Version.pdf
- ³⁷ Government of the Republic of Cameroon, EU, World Bank, UN, 2018. Recovery and peace consolidation strategy for Northern and East Cameroon: 2018–2022. Available at: <http://documents1.worldbank.org/curated/en/245081527486919288/pdf/126613-WP-P160779-PUBLIC-cameroon-RPC-english-web-DISCLAIMER.pdf>
- ³⁸ Government of the Republic of Cameroon, EU, World Bank, UN, 2018. Recovery and peace consolidation strategy for Northern and East Cameroon: 2018–2022. Available at: <http://documents1.worldbank.org/curated/en/245081527486919288/pdf/126613-WP-P160779-PUBLIC-cameroon-RPC-english-web-DISCLAIMER.pdf>
- ³⁹ Emmanuel, National development strategy: document for 2020–2030 period presented. Cameroon Tribune, 29 November 2019, www.cameroon-tribune.cm/article.html/29465/fr.html/national-development-strategy-document-for-2020-2030-period-presented (accessed 15 April 2020)
- ⁴⁰ Development Initiatives, 2020. Overview of key data and financing trends for Cameroon. (Unpublished)
- ⁴¹ World Bank, 2018. Cameroon public expenditure review: aligning public expenditure with the goals of Vision 2035. Available at: <https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/handle/10986/30979?show=full>
- ⁴² MICS data for health and education.
- ⁴³ World Bank, 2018. Cameroon public expenditure review: aligning public expenditure with the goals of Vision 2035. Available at: <https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/handle/10986/30979?show=full>; International Monetary Fund (IMF), 2018. Cameroon: Selected issues. IMF country report 18/256. Available at: <https://www.imf.org/en/Publications/CR/Issues/2018/08/13/Cameroon-Selected-Issues-46166>
- ⁴⁴ Inter-Agency Standing Committee, 2019. Financing the Nexus: Gaps and opportunities from a field perspective www.nrc.no/resources/reports/financing-the-nexus-gaps-and-opportunities-from-a-field-perspective

- ⁴⁵ World Bank, 2018. Cameroon Public Expenditure Review. Available at: <http://documents1.worldbank.org/curated/en/501141543353309471/pdf/124725-REVISED-Cameroon-public-expenditure-review-2018-FINAL.pdf>
- ⁴⁶ World Bank, 2018. Cameroon Public Expenditure Review. Available at: <http://documents1.worldbank.org/curated/en/501141543353309471/pdf/124725-REVISED-Cameroon-public-expenditure-review-2018-FINAL.pdf>
- ⁴⁷ Special Fund for Inter-municipal Equipment and Intervention. Annual reports. Available at: <https://feicom.cm/rappports-annuels/> (accessed 22 October 2020)
- ⁴⁸ Bill to institute the general code of regional and local authorities, 2019. Available at: https://www.cameroonhighcommission.co.uk/docs/law_no_2019_024_24122019.pdf
- ⁴⁹ UN OCHA Financial Tracking Service (FTS). Cameroon 2018. Available at: <https://fts.unocha.org/countries/39/summary/2018>
- ⁵⁰ UN OCHA FTS. Cameroon 2019. Available at: <https://fts.unocha.org/countries/39/summary/2019>
- ⁵¹ UN Joint Steering Committee, 2019. Cameroon. Joint Steering Committee progress review. Available at: https://www.un.org/jsc/sites/www.un.org/jsc/files/general/jsc_progress_review_cameroon_2.pdf
- ⁵² UN OCHA, 2020. Cameroon Humanitarian Response Plan 2020. Available at: <https://reliefweb.int/report/cameroon/cameroon-humanitarian-response-plan-march-2020>
- ⁵³ Data reported to the International Aid Transparency Initiative (IATI). Available at: www.iatiregistry.org/dataset
- ⁵⁴ ACAPS, 2019. Humanitarian Access Overview, October 2019. Available at: www.acaps.org/special-report/humanitarian-access-overview-3
- ⁵⁵ Data provided by email from the EU Desk Officer, Cameroon (13 July 2020).
- ⁵⁶ The UK country office in Cameroon closed in 2004, with the latest bilateral commitments ending in Financial Year 2011/12. The UK now has only two permanent staff in Cameroon (a humanitarian adviser and a development councillor), based in the British High Commission.
- ⁵⁷ The US does not have a formal mission in Cameroon and did not have an office until 2018. The upgrade to an office in 2019 with a country representative starting in September 2020 was mostly for administrative, not strategic, reasons.
- ⁵⁸ Canada ceased its bilateral aid programmes with Cameroon in 2019.
- ⁵⁹ World Bank, 2020. FCS Lists from FY06 to FY20. Available at: www.worldbank.org/en/topic/fragilityconflictviolence/brief/harmonized-list-of-fragile-situations
- ⁶⁰ IMF, 2020. Country Report 2020/185. Available at: www.imf.org/en/Publications/CR/Issues/2020/06/03/Cameroon-Requests-for-Disbursement-Under-the-Rapid-Credit-Facility-Extension-of-the-Extended-49481
- ⁶¹ Agenda for Humanity. UN New Way of Working Initiative. Available at: www.agendaforhumanity.org/initiatives/5358
- ⁶² Its vision is articulated as “a more resilient population, committed to inclusive and sustainable development”. It is based on the UN’s Delivering as One approach and structured around four pillars. Three of these focus on traditional developmental priorities (decent jobs and social inclusion; health and nutrition; education and vocational training), and the fourth focuses on ‘resilience, early recovery, and food security’ (UNDAF). Available at: <https://cameroon.un.org/en/24371-undaf-cameroon-2018-2020#:~:text=Through%20the%20UNDAF%202018%2D2020,one%20is%20left%20behind%20in>
- ⁶³ UNDP and UN OCHA, 2018. Resilience for sustainable development in the Lake Chad Basin. Available at: www.undp.org/content/undp/en/home/librarypage/crisis-prevention-and-recovery/resilience-for-sustainable-development-in-the-lake-chad-basin.html
- ⁶⁴ World Bank, 2020. International Development Association, project appraisal document. Available at: <http://documents1.worldbank.org/curated/en/997491590804160101/pdf/Cameroon-Chad-Niger-Lake-Chad-Basin-Commission-Lake-Chad-Region-Recovery-and-Development-Project.pdf>. This project covers Cameroon, Niger and Chad and complements the US\$176 million Multi-Sectoral Crisis Recovery Project for North Eastern Nigeria, Additional Financing.
- ⁶⁵ Germany withdrew agricultural programmes from the Southwest and Northwest regions, France stopped its development programmes in 2017, and the World Bank pulled out from the English-speaking regions where it was running a programme to support the most vulnerable people. Some actors, such as CARE and AFD (supporting small holders and micro projects), are continuing to implement programmes where possible and the security situation allows. Others are working in neighbouring regions hosting IDPs (e.g. BMZ (the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development)). But these remain limited in number and scale.
- ⁶⁶ UNDP and Government of Cameroon, 2020. Presidential Plan for Reconstruction and Development (PPRD) for the Northwest and Southwest regions of Cameroon. Available at: www.cm.undp.org/content/cameroon/en/home/news-centre/undp-provids-anti-coronavirus-protective-kits-to-the-university-.html

⁶⁷ World Bank, 2019. Performance and learning review of the Country Partnership Framework for the period FY2017-FY2021. Available at:

<http://documents1.worldbank.org/curated/en/764681564797716427/pdf/Cameroon-Performance-Learning-Review-of-the-Country-Partnership-Framework-for-the-Period-FY2017-FY2021.pdf>

⁶⁸ World Bank, 2018. Cameroon Public Expenditure Review. Available at:

<http://documents1.worldbank.org/curated/en/501141543353309471/pdf/124725-REVISED-Cameroon-public-expenditure-review-2018-FINAL.pdf>. The analysis is based on 2015 data. See page 40 of this World Bank report for a further breakdown of public expenditure by function.

⁶⁹ UNDP and UNOCHA, 2018. Resilience for sustainable development in the Lake Chad Basin. Available at:

www.undp.org/content/undp/en/home/librarypage/crisis-prevention-and-recovery/resilience-for-sustainable-development-in-the-lake-chad-basin.html; De Marie Heungou, Hans, 2017. Cameroon's far north: from an emergency approach to a sustainable development plan. International Crisis Group. Available at: www.africaresearchinstitute.org/newsite/blog/camerouns-far-north-emergency-approach-sustainable-development-plan/

⁷⁰ This convention comprised a framework to provide support to the development of CAR-refugee hosting areas, adopted in 2016. It was implemented from 2018 onwards, with UNHCR and MINEPAT as signatories. The objective was to support the municipalities hosting CAR refugees with targeted community-based development and livelihood initiatives. This agreement ended on the 31 December 2017. It was not renewed, however informally the UNHCR inclusion lobby and facilitation continue with MINEPAT and other ministries.

⁷¹ This convention comprised a framework for the medical treatment of CAR and Nigerian refugees in public health facilities, adopted in 2017. It was implemented from 2017 onwards, with the UNHCR and Ministry of Public Health as signatories. The objective was to ensure free medical treatment of refugees in public health facilities by applying a shared subsidy regime (30% from the government; 70% from UNHCR).

⁷² UNHCR, 2018. Cameroon Multi-year multi-partner protection and solutions strategy 2018–2020. Available at: https://www.humanitarianresponse.info/sites/www.humanitarianresponse.info/files/documents/files/unhcr_strategie_mymp_2018-20_english.pdf

⁷³ UNHCR, 2018. Cameroon Multi-year multi-partner protection and solutions strategy 2018–2020. Available at: https://www.humanitarianresponse.info/sites/www.humanitarianresponse.info/files/documents/files/unhcr_strategie_mymp_2018-20_english.pdf

⁷⁴ UN Joint Steering Committee, 2019. Cameroon. Joint Steering Committee progress review. Available at: www.un.org/jsc/content/joint-steering-committee

⁷⁵ Agence Française de Développement (AFD). Inclusive Economic and Social Recovery Around Lake Chad. Available at: www.afd.fr/en/carte-des-projets/inclusive-economic-and-social-recovery-around-lake-chad (accessed 22 October 2020)

⁷⁶ Actu Cameroun, 2019. Cameroun – Extrême-Nord: le projet ISOLT-AFD pour la résilience des populations du Lac-Tchad. Available at: <https://actucameroun.com/2019/04/07/cameroun-extreme-nord-le-projet-isolt-afd-pour-la-resilience-des-populations-du-lac-tchad/> (accessed 22 October 2020)

⁷⁷ European Commission, 2016. Programme de réponse à l'impact des mouvements de populations internes et externes dans les régions du septentrion du Cameroun. Available at:

https://ec.europa.eu/trustfundforafrica/region/sahel-lake-chad/cameroun/programme-de-reponse-limpact-des-mouvements-de-populations-internes_en (accessed 22 October 2020)

⁷⁸ Government of the Republic of Cameroon, EU, World Bank, UN, 2018. Recovery and peace consolidation strategy for Northern and East Cameroon: 2018–2022. Available at:

<http://documents.worldbank.org/curated/en/245081527486919288/pdf/126613-WP-P160779-PUBLIC-cameroon-RPBA-english-web-DISCLAIMER.pdf>

⁷⁹ United Nations Cameroon, 2020. From strategic planning to implementation – Cameroon operationalizes the humanitarian-development-peace nexus <https://cameroon.un.org/en/32595-strategic-planning-implementation-cameroon-operationalizes-humanitarian-development-peace> (accessed 22 October 2020)

⁸⁰ For example, IOM's Displacement Tracking Matrix has been monitoring IDPs in the Far North, Northwest and Southwest, and UNHCR is monitoring refugee arrivals. Last year, IOM launched its Stability Index in the Far North to measure stability in return areas and identified 'pockets of stability' to enable actors to plan for more adapted programming. The Ministry of Decentralisation and Local Development is establishing an information-sharing framework on needs at the local level and UNICEF is supporting the Ministry of Social Affairs to develop a unified social registry to identify the most vulnerable populations based on multidimensional indicators at the division level.

⁸¹ UN Joint Steering Committee, 2019. Cameroon. Joint Steering Committee progress review. Available at:

www.un.org/jsc/content/joint-steering-committee

⁸² NRC, 2019. Cameroon Country Study – Humanitarian Financing Task Team Output IV. Available at:

<https://www.nrc.no/globalassets/pdf/reports/190621-output-iv-cameroon-report.pdf>

- ⁸³ Development Initiatives, 2019. Key questions and considerations for donors at the triple nexus: lessons from UK and Sweden. Available at: <https://devinit.org/publications/questions-considerations-donors-triple-nexus-uk-sweden/>
- ⁸⁴ UN Sustainable Development Group, 2020. A UN framework for the immediate socio-economic response to COVID-19. Available at: <https://unsdg.un.org/resources/un-framework-immediate-socio-economic-response-covid-19>
- ⁸⁵ UN, 2020. Cameroon, Coronavirus - Covid-19, Country Preparedness and Response Plan (CPRP).
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- EC adopted Lives in Dignity (2016), a policy framework to prevent forced displacement from becoming protracted and to decrease dependency on humanitarian assistance.
- AFD's Vulnerabilities to Crises and Resilience 2017–2021, the main framing document for engagement in fragile contexts for short-term responses to protracted crises.
- The World Bank strategy adopted in February 2020, representing a shift from post-conflict reconstruction to engaging across all phases of fragility – from prevention to engagement during active conflict, to supporting transition out of fragility.

UN agencies have also benefited from guidance from their leadership to engage on the nexus through the New Way of Working commitment and on collective outcomes in pilot countries.

¹²⁴ European Economic and Social Committee, 2016. Lives in Dignity: from Aid-dependence to Self-reliance.

Available at: www.eesc.europa.eu/en/our-work/opinions-information-reports/opinions/lives-dignity-aid-dependence-self-reliance

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