



How to Note Context Analysis in Fragile and conflict affected contexts

Date: June 2013

For: CHR Net Members [for consultation](#)

Copy to: Task Force Fragility

1. WHY – Context Analysis

SDC operates on the basis of a cooperation strategy (CS) in cooperation countries, i.e. in all its branches: Development Cooperation, Humanitarian Aid, and Cooperation with Eastern Europe (see *cooperation strategy guidelines*). The starting point for these cooperation strategies is the context analysis and related scenarios anticipating future developments (see *separate guidance for scenario development*). These forms of analysis are the baseline for regularly context monitoring (see *revised MERV guidance*) and are relevant for all cooperation countries.

With the new Federal Dispatch 2013-16 specific impact objectives (Wirkungsziele) strengthen SDCs commitment to work and stay engaged in conflict affected and fragile contexts. Furthermore, SDC is committed to contribute to the mitigation of root causes of conflicts and fragility, to strengthen state resilience and to improve human rights records. As a consequence, the Implementation Plan “SDC in fragile and conflict affected situation” (adopted by SDC board of directors on June 4th / 18th and reinforced on November 26th, 2012) highlights the importance of context analysis.

Context analysis serves the following purposes. It

- helps to understand the context in which SDC operates in;
- guides the hypotheses/theories of change for SDC’s country Programme, i.e. it creates an understanding of entry points for the most relevant Swiss contribution to change (addressing causes of fragility or conflict)
- functions as a baseline for regular context monitoring within the cycle of MERV
- serves as a tool to cluster a cooperation country into
 - > **type A: “low-risk countries”**
 - > **type B: “medium-risk countries”**
 - > **type C: “high-risk and fragile and conflict affected countries”.**
- Provides – jointly with the scenarios - the precondition for flexible programme and project adaption.

2. When – Frequency

Context analysis is undertaken for the preparation of a Cooperation Strategy (i.e. every 4-5 years).

3. HOW - Procedure and sources of information

The **central responsibility** for the context analysis lies with the **CoOf**. Pending on the specific set up of a CoOF (within or outside of Embassy) and its human resources these analyses can be outsourced (team of national or a mix of international and national consultants) or provided by CoOF (and the Embassy) itself.

Independently of who provides the analysis it is crucial that it reflects the entire context, i.e. the political, social and economic situation. Hence, the analysis has to be subject to joint debates and be

based on a set of sub-studies addressing different aspects of the context. The analysis also needs to look into the strategies of the main actors within the country relevant for Swiss cooperation (i.e. Government, other central actors including other donors).

A good procedure to establish a solid analysis is the following sequence:

- Define main issues to be studied
- Conduct or commission an analysis or different analyses addressing various aspects of the context (i.e. political, international and regional cooperation, social, and economic)
- Discuss results in an internal CoOF workshop (Embassy involved); external resource persons from partner organisations, other donors, government or civil society or research institutions can be invited.
- Adapt analysis
- Present analysis at the core CS development workshop.
- Produce products required for CS:
 - o 1 page analysis for the main document
 - o Less than half a page for the 'Frühnotiz'
 - o Other analyses can be part of the annexes for the CS

Due to the danger of biased analysis it is essential that the analysis is based on a mix of sources such as

- Publicly available international and national analyses from independent sources;
- Analyses and assessments from other donors and national counterparts
- Analyses as provided by Swiss NGOs and other partners of SDC
- CoOF's own analysis as well as the analysis of the Embassy.

4. WHAT -Content

The following issues should be addressed within the analysis and can serve as **Terms of Reference for a single or multiple analyses:**

➤ **Overview (Gathering data)**

- o *Geography and history:* Location within region, main relevant historical development
- o *Political conditions:*
 - Governance system, main actors, authority of state over use of coercion, capacity of state for service delivery, legitimacy of state (effective governance, separation of powers, etc.)
 - Justice system: status of rule of law; civil and political rights; access to justice
 - Participation (civil society, status of media freedom)
 - Political disturbances
- o *Economic conditions:* Production, working conditions, inequality, poverty, savings, investment, imports, exports, monetary policy, financial infrastructure
- o *Social-cultural conditions:* General living conditions, education, religions, ethnic groups, minorities, gender aspects,
- o *Security conditions:* Police, military, terrorism, crime, extraordinary security measures
- o *Environmental conditions:* Natural resource base, degradation, waste management, natural disasters
- o *International Relations:* with neighbouring countries, regional integration; other donors' presence and role

➤ **Fragility assessment (analysing data for fragility)**

- o Analysing causes and drivers of fragility and conflict
- o Negative Consequences of conflict/fragility for different sections of the population (human security) as well as for international cooperation.
- o Positive dynamics to support transition out of fragility from the side of government, other actors within country, regional and international systems

➤ **Levels of Analyses**

Context analyses for SDC Country strategies cover three levels:

- national context
- regional and international context of cooperation country

- geographical focal areas within country where SDC operates/funds most programmes

5. Financial and human resources

The financial resources necessary for conducting a context analysis come from the existing budgets of the CoOfs. If external consultants are additionally required to conduct specific parts of the analysis, this should be equally covered under the CoOf budget.